

# news & views

The Magazine of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association

WINTER 2022



## Family

Outdoor Family  
Adventures

Not Your  
Usual Family

Fifteen Family  
Reunions

# ARTA

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## Family Features

- 18** Outdoor Family Adventures

---

- 21** Not Your Usual Family

---

- 30** Fifteen Family Reunions

---

- 32** Spirituality and Wellness: Family History

---

- 34** Teaching: A Family Affair

---

- 38** Miss Mémé: Fun with Grandsons

---

- 42** My Mom: Heart of the Prairie

---

- 46** Teachers in My Family



### On the Cover:

Turn to page 30 to read more about how Ruby Okamura became part of a family rich in history and tradition.

Photo by Virginia Quist.

## contents

### Regular Contributions

- 5** From the President
- 7** From the CEO
- 8** From the Editor
- 12** From the Branches: MHADRTA
- 15** Proust: Léo Richer
- 22** Gardening: The Best-Tasting Lettuce of Winter
- 56** In Memoriam
- 58** ARTA Bookshelf

### Specials

- 14** Second Wind 2022 Report
- 14** Steppin' Out 2023 Announcement
- 16** Highlights of the 2022 ARTA AGM
- 24** Travel: Irish Pubs — Music, Stories, History, and Fun
- 40** Travel: Why Visit Cambodia Now?
- 48** Flood the Rink! I'm Lacing Up My Skates!

### From Our Committees

- 9** Communications: 2023 Photo Contest Announcement
- 10** Health Benefits: Changes to the Plans
- 26** Governance: 2022 Scholarship Recipients
- 29** Communications: 2021 Writing Contest Second Place Flash Fiction
- 36** Pension & Financial Wellness: The Discussion: Finances, Death, and Family
- 45** Wellness: 2022 Wellness Challenge Results
- 50** Wellness: Musings About Family

### From Our Partners

- 44** ARTCF: Where Needed Most: Housing, Health Care, and ESL
- 51** TW: How Much Are Your Belongings Worth
- 52** HumanaCare: Seniors' Mental Health
- 54** Allianz: Family Holidays



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Read the submission guidelines at [arta.net/nvguidelines](http://arta.net/nvguidelines).

**Deadline for submissions to the Harmony issue is January 20, 2023.**

For specific ARTA inquiries, see [arta.net/contact](http://arta.net/contact).

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## Stand for Public Education

The Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta School Council Association co-sponsored a rally in support of public education at the Alberta Legislature on October 22. More than five thousand teachers, parents, grandparents, and retired teachers attended.

Over the next few months, the rally will be followed by a series of roundtable discussions open to the public. Please watch the media for an invitation to attend and share your vision of what public education should be. ●

## Reader Request: What Does "Harmony" Mean to You?

As you can see down the left column of this page, the spring 2023 issue of *news&views* is going to address the theme of Harmony. What does "harmony" mean to you? Where do you find or create harmony? If you were to draw a picture of harmony, what would it show? Could you take a photo of what harmony is for you?

We hope to create a pictorial essay of Harmony. Please send a photo that reflects harmony for you to [nvsubmit@arta.net](mailto:nvsubmit@arta.net). ●



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# From the President

Deb Gerow | President, ARTA



## My Two Families

2018 was a very special year for me because it was the year that I realized that I have two families.

We returned to Canada after being away nearly a year living in India. Although the people there were very kind and treated us well, we had really missed our family. It was wonderful to be home again. We revelled in spending time visiting with family members, catching up on everything that had happened here while we were away, and sharing stories of our adventures. From the youngest grandchildren who delighted in the photos we shared of monkeys, geckos, and elephants in the street, to my parents who were just happy that we had come back home safely, it felt so good to be with them. Telephone calls and FaceTime visits had helped but they were just not the same as actually being together.

I was eager to become involved with ARTA again too. I realized that being surrounded by ARTA friends felt much like being amidst my beloved

family members. How wonderful to be part of a group of like-minded people who genuinely care about each other and who are willing to work together to make a difference and to improve the quality of life for fellow seniors.

Since that time, my involvement with the ARTA family has continued. During the past two difficult years of the pandemic, we learned how to carry out our work through better use of technology. Pre-COVID-19, who would have ever thought that spending hours of time sitting before our computers to meet with people from across the country would be an effective means of accomplishing our goals? It worked, but like the phone calls from India, there was something missing.

This year, ARTA has been able to cautiously resume in-person meetings. The feeling of being together at these meetings has been much like being at a family reunion. I don't think we realized how much we had missed each other and how much we would enjoy being together again.

I am so fortunate to belong to two amazing families: my own, and my ARTA family. I know that I can rely upon both these families to support me in good times and bad.

I am grateful that you, the members of my ARTA family, have given me the privilege of serving as your president, and I thank you all for this opportunity. I look forward to meeting many more of you during the coming year. •





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## From the CEO

Daniel Mulloy | Chief Executive Officer, ARTA



# Family Through Thick and Thin

*"Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down."*

— Oprah Winfrey

Family is such an interesting topic to write about. The first thought that went through my mind was about the people in my actual family: wife, son, sister, and so on. But then I thought about the people who make me feel like family — the people who give me a sense of belonging and who would ride with me in both the limo and the bus. And I thought of my close friends, teammates, and in particular my colleagues here at ARTA — I would enjoy a limo or bus ride with any of you.

The people here at ARTA are family; they help you celebrate the good times and are a shoulder to cry on in the tough times. Be it personal struggles or business pressures, the family here at ARTA have your back. It's not just the staff with you, it is also the board, committee, trust, and foundation members. They all take an interest in your life and are strong pillars of support when you need it most. ARTA's dedicated members are happy to ride in the limo with you and are also ready to travel with you by any means necessary; they show all the traits of being loyal, loving family members.

Like any family, sometimes we do not agree completely, but the staff and members of ARTA are always willing to work through any adversity because they know that the bond of family is not easily broken. And like any family, there are the kooky family members, the ones that make you laugh when you need it most. There are many ARTA family members who fit that description, and this comic relief strengthens the family in ways you may

never understand. Their personality and outlook bring joy whether in the limo, on the bus, or in any other situation. And like any family, there are the quiet, thoughtful members — the ones who keep you grounded and help you work through complex problems. These members allow you to see things from all sides; that quiet confidence is inspiring and helps to keep the family poised and focused.

ARTA is a family — not a traditional family, but a band of unique individuals with a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and abilities. It is a great family to be a part of, in both good times and tough. The ARTA family is proud to ride in the limo with you to celebrate life's special wins, but they are also humble enough to sit by you on the bus, riding with you while you both work toward the next limo ride. ●

One of the self-diagnosed quiet kooky family members,







## From the Editor

Margaret Frances Sadler | Editor-in-Chief, news&views, ARTA

# Is There a Genealogist in the House?

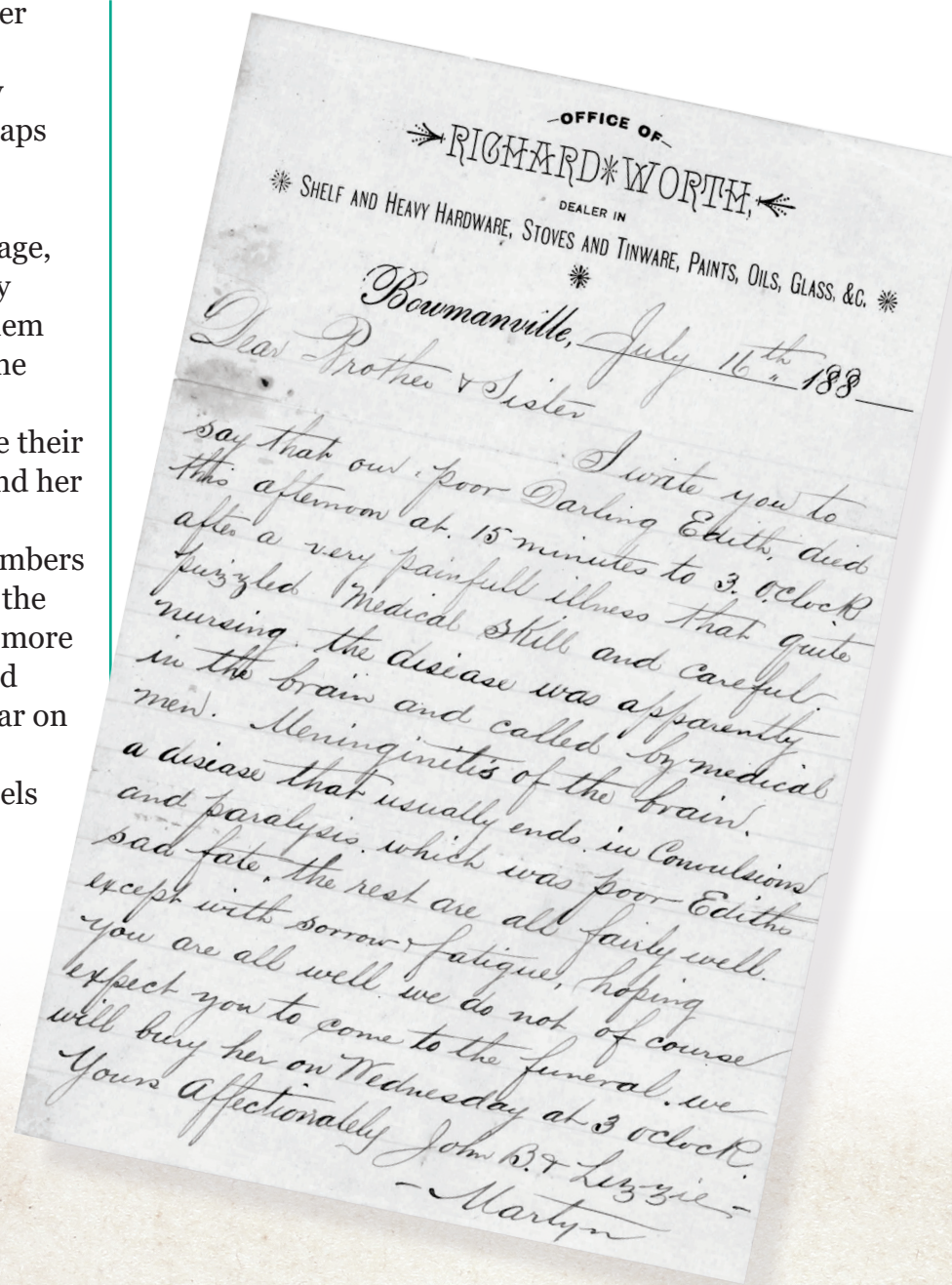
I'm a genealogist of a certain age. My challenge now is to find the next family record keeper in the younger generations. What does it take to draw my nieces, nephews, and cousins (once-removed) into the quest to know their origins?

I find that interest in family heritage comes after about forty years of life experience. Once one has attained that age, grandparents are usually diminishing in strength and/or numbers. Perhaps attending funerals heightens one's attention to family lore.

Telling family stories is important at every age, but while young children enjoy the stories, they may forget them over time and need to have them refreshed. I wonder if my nephews can recall the story of the musket that hangs over my sister's fireplace. Do my nieces remember the fruitcake their grandmother made — for many Christmases and her daughters' weddings?

For me, there's a thrill in finding family members in a census record, and then seeing changes in the family ten years later in the next census. Were more babies added? Did the older children marry and leave home, possibly to settle nearby and appear on another page of the same census record?

My husband and I used to scroll through reels of microfilm (now available online) of ships' passenger lists, hoping to find ancestors; once found, then imagining the voyages they made. My great-grandparents sailed to Canada in April 1873 on the *SS North American*; my great-grandmother was pregnant and had four little girls under the age of seven in tow. My grandmother was the youngest, at 14 months.





Land titles documents were once signed by the property owner — we can view attestations on which an ancestor signed his name. His hand rested on that page for a moment, no doubt with a great deal of pride.

Certificates of death not only clarify family lineage — since spouse, parents, and relationship of person reporting are all identified — but they also provide causes of death, revealing a family medical history. While such certificates share the facts, of course, letters were once the main way of communication within families and can tell more of the story of deaths in a family, as in the case of little Edith, age 7, written in the beautiful hand of her father, John B. Martyn.

Finding Edith's grave on a popular worldwide collection of gravesites and linking her grave with those of her nine siblings provides that genealogical connection for anyone descended from her parents' line — possibly hundreds in five or more generations.

These are the stories that fascinate me. Wish me well in passing that fascination on to the next generation. ●



## 2023 PHOTO CONTEST

ARTA is proud to sponsor its **eleventh annual photo contest**. All ARTA members — regular or affiliate — are eligible to enter. This year, once again, we have two categories: Masters and Novice. If you have won in the past, you fall under the Masters category; if you have not been a past winner, enter the Novice category. Winners will be announced in the autumn 2023 issue of *news&views* and posted on ARTA electronic media sites.

### Contest Categories

- Nature
- Well-Aged
- Travel
- Contrast

All entries must be received by ARTA no later than 4:00 p.m., May 31, 2023.

### Entries should be mailed to

ARTA Photo Contest  
15505 137 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T5V 1R9

Digital images can be emailed to  
[contests@arta.net](mailto:contests@arta.net)



Visit [arta.net/photo-contest](http://arta.net/photo-contest) for contest rules and entry form.





# Health Benefits

Gary Sawatzky | Chief Operating Officer, ARTA

## Changes to the ARTA Benefit Plans Effective November 1, 2022

Each year the ARTA Health Benefits Committee reviews potential changes to the ARTA Benefit Plans. These potential changes often arise when covered members submit change requests to the Health Benefits Committee for consideration. Each of these requests is reviewed to determine if a group benefit plan such as ARTA is allowed to cover the service or device and to make certain a significant number of members would benefit from the coverage change. Additional changes are then considered to ensure the plan continues to provide the best benefits available to ARTA members.

The following changes became effective November 1, 2022, for all members covered by the ARTA Extended Health Care plan:

1. Transport wheelchairs are now covered under the current manual wheelchair benefit. A transport wheelchair differs from a regular wheelchair in that standard wheelchairs are designed with large wheels so that people can propel themselves, while transport wheelchairs have small wheels and are meant to be pushed from behind by a second person.
2. Occupational therapists were added to the list of eligible paramedical practitioners. The Health Benefits Committee received several requests over the past year to consider adding coverage for these practitioners as they expand the services they offer, which have historically been available primarily through each province's public health care plans.
3. Supplies for insulin pumps (including sensors and transmitters) have been re-allocated from the four-year insulin pump supplies benefit to the annual diabetic supplies benefit. Often if a member needed to purchase an insulin pump, they did not have any coverage remaining for supplies for the next four years. This change allows members who have purchased an insulin pump through the plan to take advantage of the annual diabetic supplies maximum to cover their sensor costs.

4. The annual maximum for support stockings has been increased from \$200 to \$250.
5. Coverage for Xenical, a weight-loss medication, which was only covered under the Health Wise Plus and Ultimate Health plans, is no longer covered given the prevalence of more effective weight-loss medications in the marketplace. Members who are currently using Xenical will have their coverage grandfathered.
6. Usual and customary charges for a few devices and services were updated to reflect actual charges in the marketplace.

Earlier this year — April 1, 2022 — the following change became effective in ARTA Dental Care plans:

- The basis of payment was updated to be the current Alberta Dental Association & College Fee Guide.







Considering the past year's claims experience for each plan and the inflationary pressures being experienced in the marketplace, renewal rates saw an extended health care premium increase for the first time in five years.

Detailed information on these coverage changes is included in the benefit booklets, available online at [artabenefits.net](http://artabenefits.net), by clicking on "Benefit Booklets" under the "Additional Information" section located at the bottom of the webpage.

ARTA continues to review potential plan enhancements, while keeping the plan affordable for our covered members. Please continue to submit plan change suggestions that you think may be suitable for the Health Benefits Committee's consideration. Suggestions may be mailed to the ARTA office or via email to [info@arta.net](mailto:info@arta.net). •

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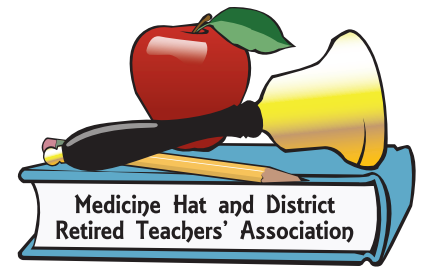
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# From the Branches

Mel Deydey | President, MHADRTA



## MHADRTA 2022 Volunteer of the Year

The **MHADRTA 2022 Volunteer of the Year** was honoured at our September meeting. Congratulations to **Lori Karwandy** who was nominated by Bonnie Spruyt and Laurel Schlaht. Lori has been a member of MHADRTA since 2018 after retiring from more than thirty years of teaching.

Lori began teaching in 1985 at George Davidson School, where she remained until retirement. She was the French lead teacher for the district and the French facilitator at local colleges and school divisions.



Bonnie and Laurel spoke of Lori's willingness to lead volunteers in a variety of activities, from her church's women's group to a French conversation group that has been running for almost fifteen years.

Outside of volunteering, Lori stays busy with golf, chess, pickleball, table tennis, aquasize, book club, and social visits with her fellow retirees.

As you can see, Lori is an active person who loves to volunteer. We are blessed to have Lori on our MHADRTA branch executive as second vice president.



## A Milestone Birthday!

MHADRTA congratulated **Clare Blore** on her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 3, which she celebrated with family and friends.

Clare (née Wagner) Blore grew up near Lemsford, Saskatchewan, and graduated as a teacher from Moose Jaw Normal School, the "then required six-week program." Her first school was a grades 1 to 9 school with about twelve students. Clare even remembers how many students were in each grade! She eventually moved to Calgary where her teaching career spanned thirty-seven years.

She and her husband Bill (recently deceased) eventually settled in Medicine Hat to be closer to family, though they loved to travel. Once in Medicine Hat, Bill and Clare joined MHADRTA where they became very active members.







## ARTAficial Flavours



**You said you wanted to travel south this winter, but you should have specified how!**

## The 2022 Clarence M. Goldade Memorial Scholarship

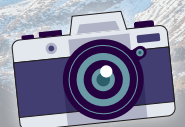
On October 7, at an Awards Ceremony at Eagle Butte High School in Dunmore, Alberta, Donna Mae Goldade presented **Kaitlind Kelly** with the Clarence M. Goldade Memorial Scholarship. Kaitlind is a first-year student at Medicine Hat College where she is studying to become a teacher. After two years, Kaitlind will be transferring to the University of Lethbridge to complete a combined degree in Education and Science with a specialty in Mathematics.

Congratulations, Kaitlind! ●

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## Second Wind 2022: A Delight

Cam Fahlman | Chair, Second Wind 2022 Conference Committee

Sponsored this past September by the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association (ERTA), *Second Wind 2022* offered a superb health and wellness conference for seniors at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre.

For those emerging from the pandemic, the theme of this year's conference, *Moving Ahead Together*, was apt: 150 registrants enjoyed a hopeful and humorous keynote by renowned gerontologist Dr. Adrian Wagg as well as eighteen additional presenters speaking on a range of topics including foot health and fraud prevention, yoga and cooking for one, living in place and road tripping throughout Alberta. With its further offerings of nineteen exhibitors, a light breakfast, two coffee breaks, a scrumptious luncheon, a fun-filled Wine Down and dozens of door prizes, 100% of responding attendees rated their satisfaction with the entire event as being very good to excellent. Of attendees, forty-seven per cent came from outside Edmonton.

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**Don't miss Second Wind's tenth conference on September 07, 2023. ●**

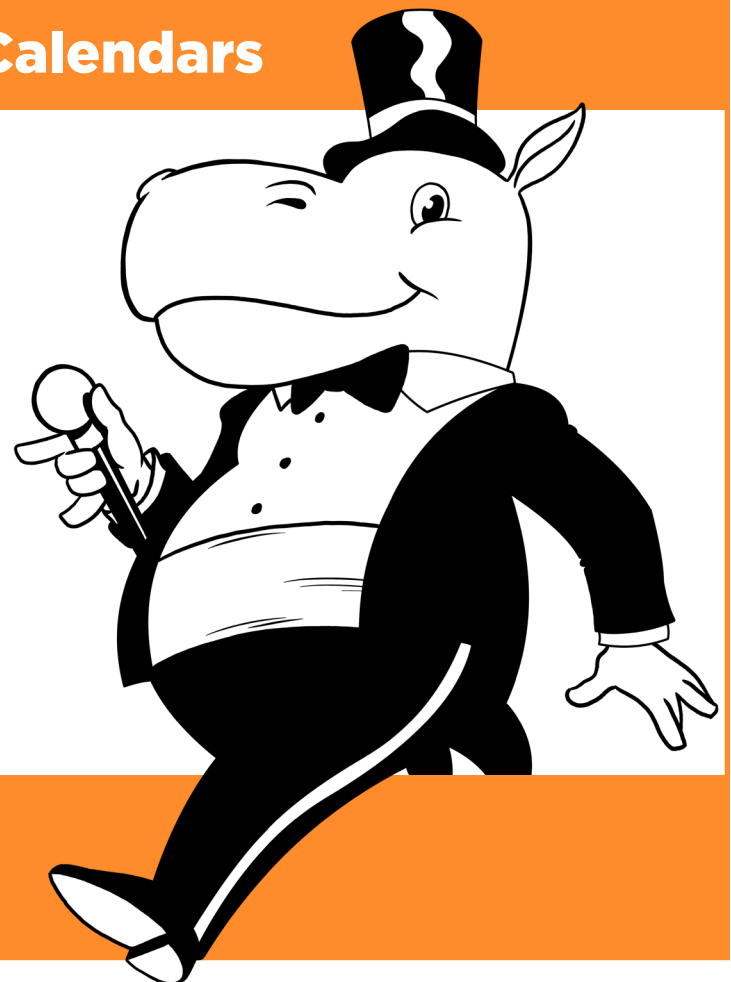
## Mark Your Calendars

# "STEPPIN' OUT 2023"

The Calgary Retired Teachers' Association is delighted to announce that the planning has begun for our annual banquet and conference.

**Thursday, April 27 and Friday, April 28**  
**Riviera Hotel and Conference Centre**  
**3515 26 Street NE, Calgary, Alberta**

(Same location as past conferences.)



**[calgaryretiredteachers.org](http://calgaryretiredteachers.org)**



# Proust Questionnaire

Léo Richer | Vice President, ARTA



## Léo Richer Responds to a Proust Questionnaire

### What is your favourite place in Canada?

Most of the time, my favourite place is wherever I am. I love Vancouver Island. The ocean seems always nearby, and it is forever bringing newness. The air has a salty tinge to it. The Rocky Mountains bring me a special joy. There is a sense of mystery, and the air is so fresh. Pastoral prairie scenes remind me of my upbringing and being at peace. There is an earthy smell and I appreciate the vastness. Central Canada has a mix of big urban centres yet offers a great variety of rural settings. The Eastern Townships have special coloration in the fall, and the mighty St. Lawrence carves its way out to sea. I cherish the east coast and the ruggedness of the land and its people. However, my very favourite place right now is the little forest right behind my home where I enjoy frequent walks.

### What is your greatest regret?

I regret not asking my parents enough questions about their lives and aspirations while they were with us. After one's parents are gone, one realizes it is a permanent loss. I treasure the conversations we had, and toward the end, their conversations turned to topics recessed in their minds. We unfortunately broached some of those too late.

### What is the most important lesson you ever learned?

Responsibility. Growing up on a farm involves daily responsibilities. Chores need to be completed daily at specific times and livestock need to be tended to. No matter if it's a lake day or minus forty degrees, the tasks need to be done. Responsibility governs all that one does in life.

### What do you appreciate most in your friends?

I enjoy their friendship as well as having good discussions and laughter. We care for each other and are there for each other at important times. I appreciate the ability to resume healthy camaraderie even after prolonged periods of physical absence.

### What is your favourite virtue?

My favourite virtue combines gratitude and thankfulness. My upbringing was interesting and healthy. All members of my immediate family are blessed with good health. I had a rewarding career, and I am fortunate to live in this great country. I'm in a good place and I thank God for how fortunate I am. ●







# Highlights of the 2022 ARTA AGM

Vi Oka | Governance Committee, ARTA

Four executive members and over sixty delegates attended the 2022 ARTA annual general meeting (AGM) at the Evario Events Centre in Edmonton on October 4-5.

Deb Gerow, Léo Richer, and Lawrence Hrycan were elected to the positions of president, vice-president, and treasurer, respectively. Eight new committee members were also elected. Executive, committee, branch, and liaison organization reports were presented to the membership, and the proposed 2022-2023 budget was ratified.

The **Communications Committee** reported that the readership of the digital version of *news&views* has increased. One Branch Brochure Grant was approved; the New Branch Member Grant was redesigned. Two newsletter workshops were held via Zoom, as well as eight teachers' convention presentations, which resulted in 300 membership packages being sent out.

The **Health Benefits Committee** advanced several new benefit plan options to give plan members more choices, and adapted travel coverage to include COVID-19. ARTARx is ready to open but awaits final approval from the Alberta College of Pharmacy.

The **Governance Committee** completed a review of ARTA's Policies and Procedures and removed the age criteria for Public and Private Sector benefit plans. Through the Branch Project Grant, CRTA and ERTA received \$7,500 grants for Steppin' Out and the Second Wind Conference, respectively. Scholarships totalling \$40,000 were awarded to twelve post-secondary students who are direct relatives of ARTA members.

The **Pension and Financial Wellness Committee** continues to monitor Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) investments, share and review financial retirement advice, encourage branch financial workshops, and advertise ARTA's resources and services to active teachers as they prepare for retirement.

The **Strategic Planning and Advocacy Committee** hosted new committee and board member orientations, two Joint Committee Chair meetings, and an ARTA retreat in Canmore. A committee member continues to represent ARTA on the Seniors Task Force of Public Interest Alberta, focusing on influencing change regarding the declining level of seniors care services. ARTA has also



Deb Gerow  
President, ARTA



Lorna McIlroy  
Past President, ARTA



Léo Richer  
Vice President, ARTA



Lawrence Hrycan  
Treasurer, ARTA



publicly weighed in on Bill 15, primarily impacting teachers, and Bill 11, impacting Alberta seniors.

The **Wellness Committee** members submitted articles for publication in *news&views* and created a monthly blog to share wellness articles. The committee continues to explore resources and research related to the wellness of seniors.

This year, the **Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation** has used funds to support programming for Parkinson Association of Alberta, the Alzheimer Society of Calgary, and Operation Friendship Seniors Society.

**ACER-CART**, the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers, is an advocacy-focused collaboration of retired teacher organizations across the country. Focuses include monitoring the implementation of a National Seniors Strategy, a national universal pharmacare program, the prioritization of home care services, and the regulation of retirement and long-term care facilities.

**ATA** President Jason Schilling acknowledged the work by retired teachers on behalf of active teachers throughout the province. The Association is launching a campaign supporting public education that requires the engagement of all teachers to prioritize education in the upcoming provincial election.

Rod Matheson, **ATRF** CEO, relayed how ATRF and AIMCo cooperate to manage \$21B in assets. ATRF staff determine the type and amount of risk appropriate to keep the plan sustainable and affordable. AIMCo contends with investment exposure and manages the investment classes. The fund pays out \$88M each month to 84,601 retirees.

ARTA is a dynamic organization in terms of membership and scope and is committed to the overall wellness of its members and of the association. ●



ARTA's presidents, current and past: Deb Gerow, Lorna McIlroy, Marilyn Bossert, Juanita Knight, and Gordon Cumming



Deb Gerow, Lorna McIlroy, and Daniel Mulloy



Léo Richer accepts role as Vice President of ARTA







# Outdoor Living

Duane Radford | Article and Photos



Sea birds were a draw  
on the Magdalen Islands

## Outdoor Family Adventures

Families often share common outdoor values that have been nurtured by bird watching, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, and outdoor trips. I developed an interest in the outdoors from one of my grandfathers and my father, which carried over to my wife, my children, and other relatives. While family members may live far apart, these experiences can provide an important, lasting bond that brings them together over and over again.

My wife and I have travelled across Canada, various parts of America, and to all the continents (except Antarctica) to experience nature and the outdoors. Because we both have university training as biologists, there's no doubt that our trips to Australia, the Galapagos Islands, and South Africa to see local wildlife were the pinnacles of our outdoor travels. When we lived in southern Alberta, American destinations such as Glacier National Park and Yellowstone National Park were within relatively easy range for family vacations. We visited these parks with our children, helping to get them hooked on the outdoors. When my wife and I vacationed farther south to Las Vegas and Palm Springs, we explored the Grand Canyon and Joshua Tree National Park, with their signature desert flora and fauna.



Wildlife in South Africa is a  
big vacation draw





**Author's wife Adrienne and fishing guide Pat Babcock, Cree River, Saskatchewan**

we also learned a lot about Canada's Indigenous peoples who have very close ties to the land, some of whom have been our fishing guides. We've enjoyed local cuisine such as bannock, Arctic char sashimi, caribou and muskox roasts and steaks, along with shore lunches of Arctic grayling, lake trout, pike, and walleye. Furthermore, there's nothing quite like the jubilant look on the face of someone holding a trophy fish, or posed with a signature landmark to capture the moment for the family scrapbook.

Whenever my wife and I travel to Ottawa to see our daughter and son-in-law, we try to visit local nature attractions. The Ottawa river pathway, the glorious Dominion Arboretum, and the Gatineau (federal) Park across the Ottawa River are family favourites. We've also made a few trips to the nearby Kenauk Reserve in Quebec, where we've stayed in cosy, rustic cottages beside or close to lakes that abound with fish. Also nearby is Mont-Tremblant, Quebec's answer to Banff, which is a wonderful natural area in the Laurentian Mountains that we've visited as a family. It's the family connection with our daughter and son-in-law that has been the catalyst to actually make such rewarding excursions happen when out east.

I've always been an avid angler; consequently, I've long had a travel bug to experience Canada's diverse fishing opportunities that are unparalleled in the world. With either my wife or my son, I have ventured to the far reaches of Canada and America in search of the ultimate fishing hot spot. These trips have taken us to places we would have *never* ventured to otherwise, such as the stunning wilds of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. We've not only had trips of a lifetime during these fishing adventures,



**Leopards in South Africa adventure**



**A travel bug took the author on a fly-angling adventure on Pitt River, BC**



My wife's sister and a niece live in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, respectively. Whenever we visit them, we build in trips to various parts of the Maritimes, an area that's loaded with nature's treasures. We've made excursions to Newfoundland and the Magdalen Islands as an adjunct to these family visits.

I don't think I've been to anywhere in Canada that has more diverse historic sites and natural areas than Newfoundland, which is a paradise for those who love the outdoors. We've feasted on moose burgers and even seal flippers while vacationing at the "Rock!" The last time my wife and I travelled to this fine province, we spent several days fly angling for Atlantic salmon at a rustic fishing lodge in the northern peninsula. Previously, we'd fished the famed Miramichi River in New Brunswick for Atlantic salmon, an experience of a lifetime after visiting relatives in Dartmouth. Men don't have to just go fishing with "the boys," because wives, sons, and daughters all make ideal fishing companions.

Our many outdoor adventures have been made even more special by sharing them with family, and these experiences have strengthened our ties to both. ●

*Duane Radford recommends, now that the worst of COVID-19 is behind us, that we make plans for some family adventures so we've got something to look forward to, going forward.*



**Koalas and kangaroos were a feature in an Australian family vacation**



**Author's wife Adrienne on the Magdalen Islands**

**As the magazine was going to press, sadly we learned of Adrienne's death on Sunday November 20, 2022.**





# Not Your Usual Family

Jane Thrall

**Fam-i-ly** : 1 a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit.  
2 all the descendants of a common ancestor.

I remember working at a business that offered a family discount to its employees. As an adult single woman with no children, I wasn't allowed to offer a markdown to anyone because the business defined my family as my spouse and children.

The definition of "family" doesn't seem to encompass all the different and imaginative households that actually exist today. Some people still seem to envision nuclear families as the default format, despite the fact that we've evolved far beyond *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*.

In more recent years, TV has introduced us to single parents, LGBTQ2S+ parents, and children raised by grandparents, teenagers, and even aliens. These shows only begin to sample the vast array of different household situations.

So what then, should be the definition of family? Census Canada defines a family as a married couple (with or without children of either and/or both spouses), a common-law couple (with or without children of either and/or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child. A couple may be of opposite sex or same sex.

That feels like a very simplified version that doesn't consider foster parents or other members of the extended family who may be caring for children. Some societies use terms like "Auntie" or "Uncle" liberally, referring to anyone who plays a role in the life of a child.

In many cultures, families are large and multigenerational with grandparents, children, and grandchildren living under the same roof. These joint families provide social support, share tasks, pool finances, and afford a sense of security.

A family is not just those who share your last name, nor should it be restricted to people living under the same roof. Families are made up of people who care for each other, despite their differences. ●

*Jane Thrall remains a family of one by definition of the government. Not to worry, like many of her Gen-X peers, she embraces the company and support of friends.*







## Gardening

Gerald Filipski

# The Best-Tasting Lettuce of Winter

If you are anything like me, you start to get the gardening itch again right about now. The other day while out driving, I passed a garden centre and had to pull in for a quick fix. While in there, I happened to see some seeds out on display and thought this would be a great time to talk about growing your own lettuce indoors.

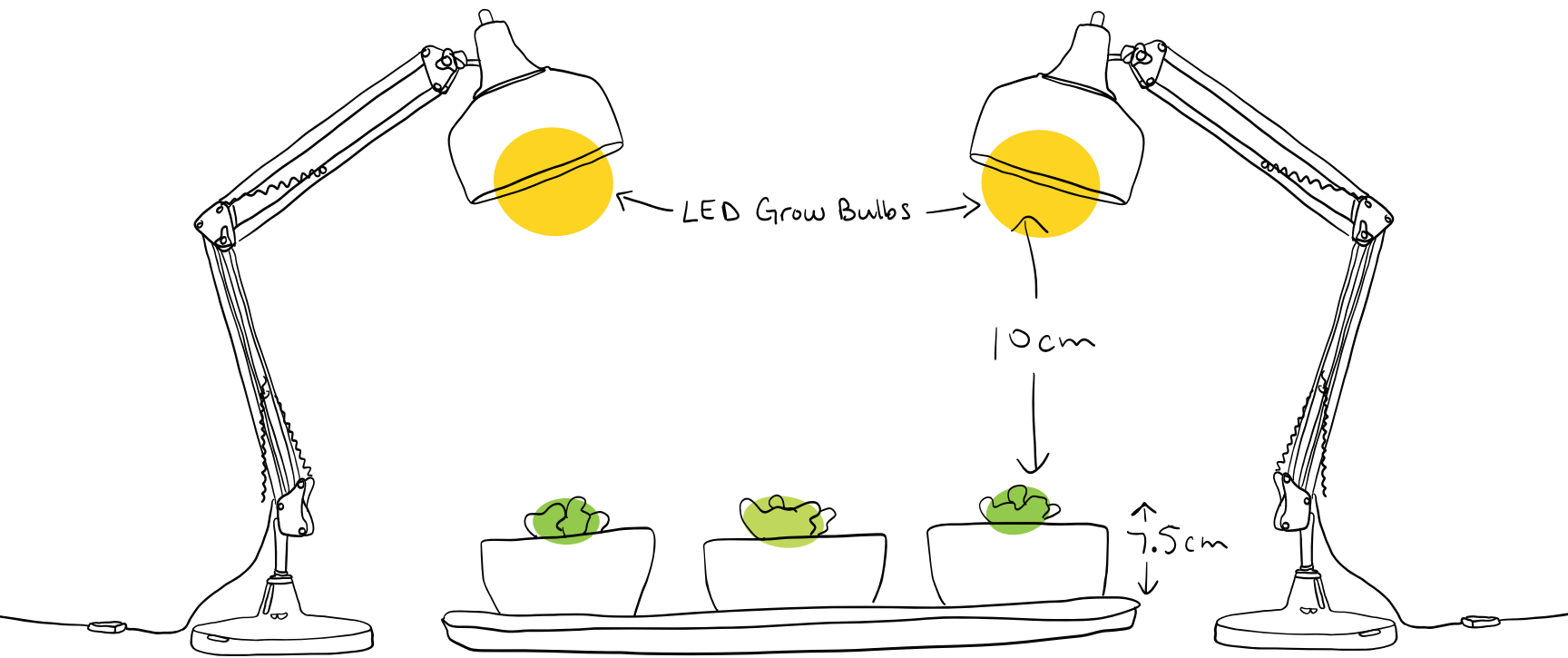
There is something cathartic about growing things indoors and also in being able to harvest your own greens in the middle of winter. It really is easier than you think, and for a small investment you can enjoy growing your own lettuce year-round. For all you condo, townhouse, and apartment dwellers out there, this is a wonderful way to stay connected to your gardening roots. Being able to get your hands into the dirt even before the spring arrives may just be too appealing.

Let's begin by having a look at what equipment you need to get started. In the past, we would have been talking about fluorescent light tubes mounted over a stand or table. This arrangement would take up a lot of room and was inconvenient

for many gardeners without a lot of indoor space. Today, LED lights are the way to go. They screw into regular light sockets so you can use a desk lamp or a simple clamp-on fixture to hold the bulb. I would recommend two bulbs, one placed on either side of the growing area. They should be 10 cm above the plants you will be growing for maximum effectiveness. They are relatively inexpensive and don't take up much room. When choosing the bulbs, look for full-spectrum LED grow bulbs.

Next on the list is a good quality sterilized potting mix. This is one of those examples of "you get what you pay for." I learned this lesson long ago when I bought a discount potting mix only to find that it was full of branches! In addition to the





potting mix, you will need a container. You can certainly go to the garden centre and look for a flat planting tray that is approximately 7.5 cm deep. The alternative is reusing plastic clamshell packaging from things like strawberries or baked goods. I love reusing things, and clamshells are excellent for germinating seeds since the lid can be closed to keep moisture in or remain open to the air. Punch a few holes in the bottom of the clamshell to allow water to drain, and place the clamshell on a tray to catch any runoff. If you are using a store-bought container, make certain it has drainage holes too.

The last item on the list is the seeds themselves. Don't use Iceberg or other head lettuce types. You want a leaf variety, such as Buttercrunch, that grows more quickly.

Now, fill your container with soil and plant the seeds according to the depth recommended on the package. Keep the soil moist but not damp. Misting the soil works best at this stage, as the mist will not disturb the seeds. Keep the lid open by only a couple of centimetres. Place the container and seeds in a warm part of the house, and in a few days you should have germination. Once germinated, you can

thin the seedlings to a spacing of 5 to 7.5 cm between plants. At this stage you can put the container and plants under the lights. It is a good idea to set the lights on a timer so you don't have to remember to turn the lights off and on, as they will need to be on for twelve hours per day.

The key here is to keep the soil moist but not wet. If your container is small and shallow it will dry out quickly, so check it every morning. Check the soil moisture by sticking your finger in it, and if it is dry, use a spray bottle to apply a light misting.

In a few short weeks, you will be able to enjoy the freshest and best-tasting lettuce you have ever had in the middle of winter. Have your friends over for dinner, serve them a salad, and brag a little by telling them that you grew the lettuce yourself. It's guaranteed to impress and taste terrific! ●

*Jerry shares a favourite quote, suitable to the topic: "Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year, for gardening begins in January with a dream." — Josephine Nuese*





## Travel

Joyce Zilinski | Article and Photos

# Irish Pubs — Music, Stories, History, and Fun

*“Ireland is a country of words. Spoken, written, or sung, the Irish are famously verbose and social people known for their warmth, hospitality, and generosity. The Irish live in the spirit of togetherness, sharing, and interaction.”* (Taken from a post in the Waterford Crystal showroom).

I came upon this statement while browsing the barware collection at a well-known crystal shop in Cork. It caught my eye, as it perfectly summed up our experience touring around this beautiful green island and seemed especially applicable at the pubs. Irish pubs are famous for their lively, fun-filled atmosphere, but we discovered they are so much more. Irish pubs are really a community hub — a place to gather to celebrate, to grieve, to solve problems, to sing, and to dance (at least before COVID-19!). But what I did not expect was to get so many history lessons in the pubs. Here are a few of my favourites.



**The King's Head** — This piece of living history is an active pub and bistro situated on a main street in Galway. The building dates back to the thirteenth century and a turf-burning fireplace from the sixteenth century welcomes you. Intriguing tales of who wielded the axe that beheaded King Charles I are associated with the King's Head pub. If you happen to visit Galway, a stop for their craft beer aptly named “Blood Red Ale” is a must.







**Sean's Bar** — Situated in the town of Athlone, in central Ireland, this little pub dates back to 900 CE and is confirmed as the oldest pub in Ireland. The history goes back to a time when travellers had to venture across the rapid River Shannon, and this inn was established for the weary and the tired. The hearth is original, and the fire is kept burning with turf, giving the dark interior a cozy feel. Can you imagine all the stories this hearth could tell of travellers who have sat here over the past thousand years. The friendly bartender is happy to share the history of Sean's pub. Just ask!



**The Confession Box** — This tiny pub in the heart of Dublin earned the name for its secret activities during the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921). The story goes that Michael Collins and his men would drop in for a pint and receive absolution and communion from sympathetic priests from a nearby church. The Confession Box is loved by locals and tourists and known for its pints of Guinness. When visiting any Irish pub, try some homestyle Irish stew — hearty and filling; each place has its own take on the recipe.

**Darkey Kelly's** — In one of the oldest parts of Dublin, this busy pub is the place for traditional Irish music every night of the week. The building was reputed to be a brothel in the 1700s run by Madame Darkey Kelly. The folklore is that Darkey was burned at the stake for witchcraft, but there is an alternate story that she was Ireland's first serial killer. Apparently, bodies were discovered under the floorboards and perhaps this madam found a way to dispose of clients who did not know how to treat a lady. Go for a pint, enjoy the music, and you decide which story you like best. ●

*Joyce Zilinski is a retired public servant and her passion for travel led her to establish a career as a travel adviser. Joyce travelled to Ireland last year and visited these and many other fascinating places.*





# 2022 Scholarship Recipients

**Ron Thompson** | Chair, Governance Committee, ARTA

The ARTA Governance Committee administers the ARTA scholarship program that awards a total of six scholarships in degree programs and another six in certificate or diploma programs. This year we accepted fifty-seven applications; the award recipients are listed below.

Thanks go to TW Insurance Brokers and ARTA who sponsor the degree scholarships. Degree applicants must have completed one, two, or three years of an undergraduate or transfer program. The Certificate/Diploma scholarships, sponsored by ARTA, are for students who have completed one or more full years of a certificate or diploma program.

On behalf of the Governance Committee, I would like to thank all applicants and congratulate all those who have been selected for a scholarship.

The following are student responses addressing the questions: What impact have teachers had in your life? Who is your greatest role model? What is your greatest achievement? If you could compare yourself to an animal, what animal would that be?

## ARTA-TW Insurance Degree Scholarships



### **\$5,000 J'ANA SMITH**

My greatest role model is my grandma. She immigrated as a child to Alberta, and had to adjust to a new language and culture while living in very humble circumstances during the Great Depression. Despite many challenges, my grandma lived her ninety-two years full of joy, finding the positive, and helping others. She was loved dearly by family and friends.



### **\$5,000 EMILY HAWS**

My mom is my greatest role model. She exemplifies what it means to love people well, putting others' needs before her own and making everyone she encounters feel seen and heard. She empowers me daily to chase my dreams and conquer my fears. Throughout my entire life, she has walked alongside me, wiping away many tears and helping me up after I fail.



### **\$3,000 TAMMIE ROY**

One of my greatest achievements is still to come. It will be the completion of my communications degree next year. As a mature student out of school for many decades, I have maintained an "A" average while working full-time and attending school full-time. While it has been one of my most challenging experiences, it has also been one of the most gratifying.





### **\$3,000 TIGHE McASEY**

My greatest role model is my dad. I look up to him and strive to be like him because he is respectful, understanding, and puts others above himself. During my adolescence, my dad made personal sacrifices to support me in my aspirations by driving me to sports practices every day and helping me with schoolwork. I'm grateful and hope I can have such a profound impact on someone else's life.



### **\$2,000 DANNY LAURSEN**

Teachers have had such a tremendous impact on my life. I have always viewed teachers as individuals whom I look up to. Each one has shown kindness, compassion, and, most importantly, interest in making me become a better student and person. They pushed me to be the best version of myself and I thank each one of them for transforming me into the person I am today.



### **\$2,000 GABRIELLE PRIOR**

If I could compare myself to an animal, I would be a butterfly. I transform and adapt to changes within my environment despite the challenge, while exemplifying a lively spirit of creativity and beauty that transforms my communities. Our personalities are welcoming, charming, and demonstrate strong leadership.

## **ARTA Certificate/Diploma Scholarships**



### **\$5,000 MIKAYELA ROBBINS**

If I could compare myself with any animal, it would be a giraffe. They are quiet, shy, and calm, like I am. Giraffes are unique animals who stand tall and are a symbol of looking into the future. I, like a giraffe, like to be unique and look forward to the future, rather than dwelling on the past.





### **\$5,000 EMMA LUKEY**

Teachers have had a crucial role in my life: two in particular, Ms. T and Ms. C, meant so much. Ms. T helped calm my first-day jitters as I entered a new school and was always willing to help. Ms. C made my three years incredible, constantly making class fun, telling entertaining stories, and finding something to laugh about. The positive impact teachers have on their students' lives makes the world a better place.



### **\$3,000 EVAN NADON**

If I had to compare myself to an animal, I would say I am most like a mountain lion. Self-reliant, I strive for perfection and rely heavily on my intuition and thirst for knowledge. I am a go-getter and not afraid to research and take on a project. Mountain lions have a sharp intelligence, they are self-reliant, intuitive and strive for success — characteristics I relate to.



### **\$3,000 KAITLYN GREENWOOD**

Since September 2019, I have been a youth leader at Hope City Church, and one of my greatest achievements is the trusting relationships I have built with my students. I consider it an accomplishment and a privilege when one of my students feels safe enough to come to me with what they are going through and has the courage to ask for help.



### **\$2,000 CARRIE WRIGHT**

One of my greatest achievements came during the COVID-19 pandemic when I returned to post-secondary education at 45 years old. I enrolled at the British Columbia Institute of Technology and am now in the completion stages of my Interior Design Certificate. Achieving success in my courses, I have completed the first part of the program within a compressed timeline while achieving honours with my GPA.



### **\$2,000 DELANEY SAUNDERS**

Teachers are such an important part of students' lives; they have such an influence on how children succeed in life. Teachers have taught me many important life skills and they are friends who are here to support us. To this day I still am in contact with some of my teachers who helped shape the person I've become today. ●



# The Telephone Call

Ernest Jurkat

"Hello. Oh, Jill. I want to talk to you, but I will need to interrupt if the police call me on the other line. No, please don't hang up! It's been a terrible two days. Earl disappeared early yesterday morning."

"Oh, you didn't know that Earl has dementia. The doctors think it's Alzheimer's."

"Earl has wandered several times before, but early yesterday morning he slipped away and has not been found. Thank God it's May, with mild nights. The police are looking for him, and the TV has made an appeal for help. I feel so bad because I thought we had a plan to prevent Earl from wandering, but it failed, and it was my fault!"

"No, no, Jill. I'll be OK. Just let me grab some tissues."

"One good thing. Constable John Evans from the city police knows both Earl and me because we all go to the same church. John found Earl before when he wandered."

"No, I didn't know that your uncle had dementia and wandered too."

"I concocted a plan to stop Earl from wandering. I bought special door locks that are tricky to operate, and I would lock up Earl's shoes in a cupboard, so he couldn't get at them. That seemed to work, but the night before last I felt so tired, I forgot to lock up Earl's slippers. He got up during the night, dressed, found the slippers, and somehow opened the door. I was so fast asleep that I didn't hear him. It's my fault that he is lost."

"No, no! Thank you, but that's the way I feel. Please don't hang up. I'll be OK."

"We lost touch with you when your Harold passed away and you moved to Vernon. So you didn't know. Earl started slipping mentally over five years ago. Finally, he couldn't manage the farm anymore, so we rented the land to the Humphreys. You'll remember them — Sam and Grace. We stayed

on the farm so I could look after a garden and Earl could cope with a few pigs and chickens. He was still physically OK so things worked out for a while."

"Then I got my stroke. Oh! You didn't know! It's been a while since we talked. The stroke partially paralyzed my left side, which kiboshed my gardening and driving. So we sold the farm and moved to Medicine Hat. People said I should put Earl in a nursing home, but I couldn't do that. He was a great husband. Both kind and loving. Now I can see in his eyes when he is confused and afraid. He depends on me."

"And we get along. I can walk but not far and not well. So when the weather is nice, Earl pushes me in a wheelchair and we go on a walk. And the church members help us."

"Please wait a minute. There's a call on the other line."

"Yes, Maureen. Strathmore already! I'm OK but have no news. Stop there and have a coffee. I don't want you overtired and in an accident. I'm on the phone with Jill Friberg. You remember her. She makes those great brownies. I'll call your cell if I get any news. Be careful. I love you. Bye."

"Hi Jill. Are you still there? Good. That was Maureen. She is driving down from Edmonton. She left her kids with her sister-in-law. She wants to support me while Earl is missing."

"Both Earl and I remember the good times we had with you and Harold. He was a good man too. And you both could always beat us at bridge. No. No. It was no contest."

"Oh Jill. I can see a police car coming to my house. I hope it is Constable Evans with good news. Yes, I can see that it's him. And coming out of the other door is Reverend O'Neil from the church."

"Oh God, Jill! I'm afraid to open the door!" ●





# Fifteen Family Reunions

Ruby Okamura | Article Virginia Quist | Photos

Reuniting with loved ones is a delightful and pleasurable experience. It is a time to share old memories and a time to create new ones.

Upon marrying my husband, Mas, in 1968, I became an immediate member of the Okamura family, and thereby, the extended Hisaoka family. I have learned much about Japanese Canadian culture and have enjoyed interacting with the large and ever-growing Hisaoka clan. Here is the history of our fourteen family reunions since 1968.

The Hisaoka family had its beginnings in 1912 in Victoria, B.C., when Ichirohe Hisaoka met and married his picture bride, Kin Hirashima, who had arrived by ship from Japan. Ichirohe had arrived in Canada in 1907 to work in the coal mines. Due to poor working conditions and poor wages, he left to cut logs, and then to become a house boy, learning English and saving money to buy a farm.

The couple lived on Ichirohe's farm in Mission City, B.C., and raised a family of ten children. When the family was forced to leave Mission in 1942, some of their children were already married. Their daughter Fujiko was married to Masaru Okamura, and had three sons by that time, with 13-month-old Mas the youngest of those.

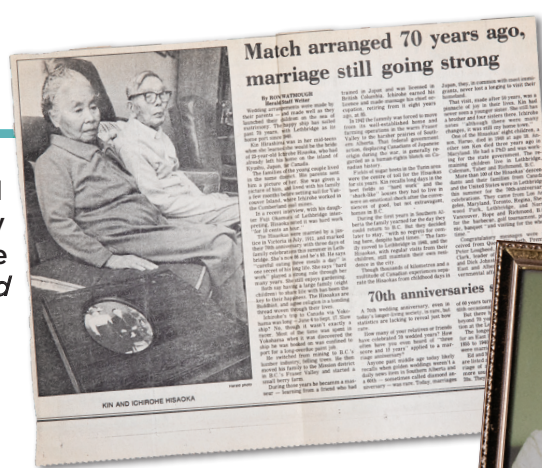
The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, had a permanent impact on the Hisaoka family and the whole Japanese community in B.C. Some 23,000 men, women, and children were branded as disloyal, traitorous, and enemy aliens. They were sent to hastily built internment camps or old ghost towns in the interior. However, *Bachan* (Grandmother Kin) and *Gichan* (Grandfather Ichirohe) made another choice. They brought all the family members to work in the beet fields of southern Alberta so the family group would not be splintered.

Leaving behind decades of hard work on their farms and orchards and taking few personal possessions with them to southern Alberta, the families survived incredibly poor working and living conditions and major racial discrimination. Gichan worked to improve the situation for his family members and other Japanese people on the farms. After the war, in 1948, Bachan and Gichan and the Okamura family made Lethbridge their permanent home.





**Ichirohe Hisaoka and  
Kin Hirashima's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
celebration article in the  
*Lethbridge Herald***



**Bachan and  
Gichan's  
60<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
in April 1971**

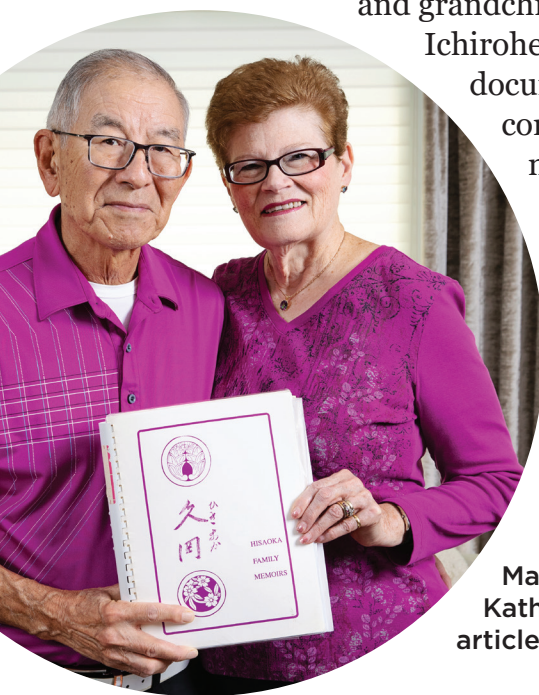
Day-long family picnics were held, but the first organized Hisaoka reunion did not occur until 1968, in Pincher Creek. Fifty-five family members gathered for three fun-filled days. The celebration of Gichan's eightieth birthday, with all his children in attendance, was a highlight. This reunion began a legacy of honouring Bachan and Gichan, and their children — our parents — for their “commitment to family.”

The next three reunions in 1971, 1976, and 1981 were occasions to honour Kin and Ichirohe on their sixtieth, sixty-fifth, and seventieth wedding anniversaries; this last one brought accolades from the Prime Minister and Queen Elizabeth. An extensive write-up of the happy couple and their family was printed in the *Lethbridge Herald*.

Bachan died at age 89 in 1982, and Gichan at age 98 in 1986. Although these brave immigrants, dedicated parents, and grandparents had now left us, their children and grandchildren continued with the reunions in memory of them.

A fifth reunion was held in 1988 in Fernie, followed by a sixth in 1991 at Panorama. A marvellous book entitled *Hisaoka Family*

*Memoirs* was presented to all living children and grandchildren of Kin and Ichirohe. This valuable document was a compilation of written memories from the original Hisaoka children and their spouses, as well as the grandchildren.



**Mas and Ruby thank cousins Marjene and Kathy Turnbull for their dedicated work in compiling articles for the memoirs and the family calendar.**

It also featured the lineage of all the families belonging to the clan, at that time numbering 137.

A seventh reunion was held in Lethbridge in 1994, followed by an eighth in Mission City in 1997. Family members toured Mission to see the locations of former farms and orchards and to drive the streets on which many had lived — definitely a solemn tour.

Six more reunions in Waterton, Fernie, White Rock, Lethbridge, Sherwood Park, and Kelowna, from 2000 to 2018, brought family together from all over Canada, the United States, and Japan. Even though sons, daughters, and in-laws from the Hisaoka family had passed away, the next generation continued to organize reunions to honour those who had gone before them. At every reunion, time was set aside to participate in memorial services for our ancestors.

Our fifteenth reunion will be held in 2023 in Kelowna. Only three children survive from the original family, but there are over 350 grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. A variety of cultures have joined the extended family, who are welcomed and loved unconditionally. I am so happy to be one of them. ●

*Ruby Okamura met her husband at university in Edmonton, before she launched a forty-year teaching career with all grades from kindergarten to Grade Nine, in Lethbridge, Sherwood Park, and Taichung, Taiwan. Since both their retirements from teaching, Ruby and Mas enjoy travelling, hobbies, and grandparenting.*





# Spirituality and Wellness

Lloyd Den Boer

## Family History

Paging slowly through an old family album, I pause at a photograph from the early 1900s. In it, a young man meets the camera's gaze with quiet dignity. Poised and confident, he has the air of someone with a bright future. Yet, I know that he would lose his life in 1903 when he was only 26. Neighbours had gathered to put a roof on a new barn. It was November, meaning that the men had to finish the job soon before the weather grew more wintry. November also meant that conditions on the roof were likely to be risky. When the young man fell from the peak to the stones below and died, he left behind a pregnant wife and three children. My grandmother, the youngest of the three, was one day short of her first birthday. Although she was too young to remember life with her father, my grandmother opened any story about her childhood by noting that he had died young.

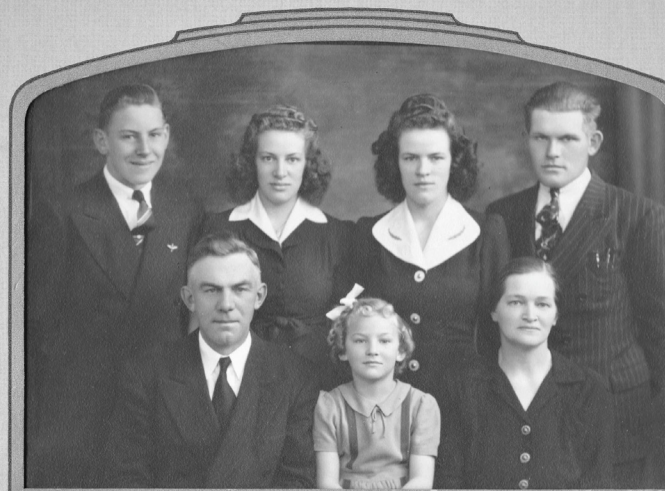
Grandma grieved the loss of a father she never knew, but the effect of his death on her family was the actual point of her stories. When my great-grandmother lost her husband, she also lost a stable source of income to support her family. After four years of poverty, she married a widower with seven children. Their marriage served the practical needs of the husband, the wife, and their children, but it

was not happy. Grandma gave few of the unhappy details, yet she always closed her stories by saying that she was raised in a home without love.

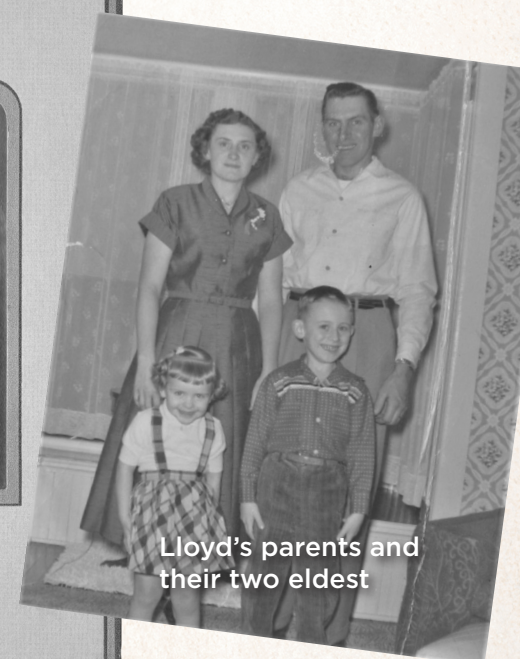
What makes children feel loved and happy? "Happy families," Tolstoy observed, "are all alike." He added, "Every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Tolstoy's puzzling statement opens *Anna Karenina*, a novel in which the notable



Andrew De Haan, the great-grandfather who died young



Lloyd's Den Boer grandparents and their family



Lloyd's parents and their two eldest



characters have intense passions and dramatic lives. Intense passions may generate remarkable stories, filled with romance and treachery, but they do not generate happy families — at least not in this novel. By contrast, Tolstoy implies, there are few stories to tell about happy families. When families are happy, nothing remarkable appears to be happening. I think of a time when my father, night after night, rocked one of my twin brothers to sleep while my mother tended to the other. While he rocked, as I remember, Dad sang quietly. Here was no great drama, just a weary father quietly rocking and singing to one son while his weary wife bathed the other. Yet, this unremarkable moment is an instance of the kind of ordinary life that sets the conditions for family happiness to thrive.

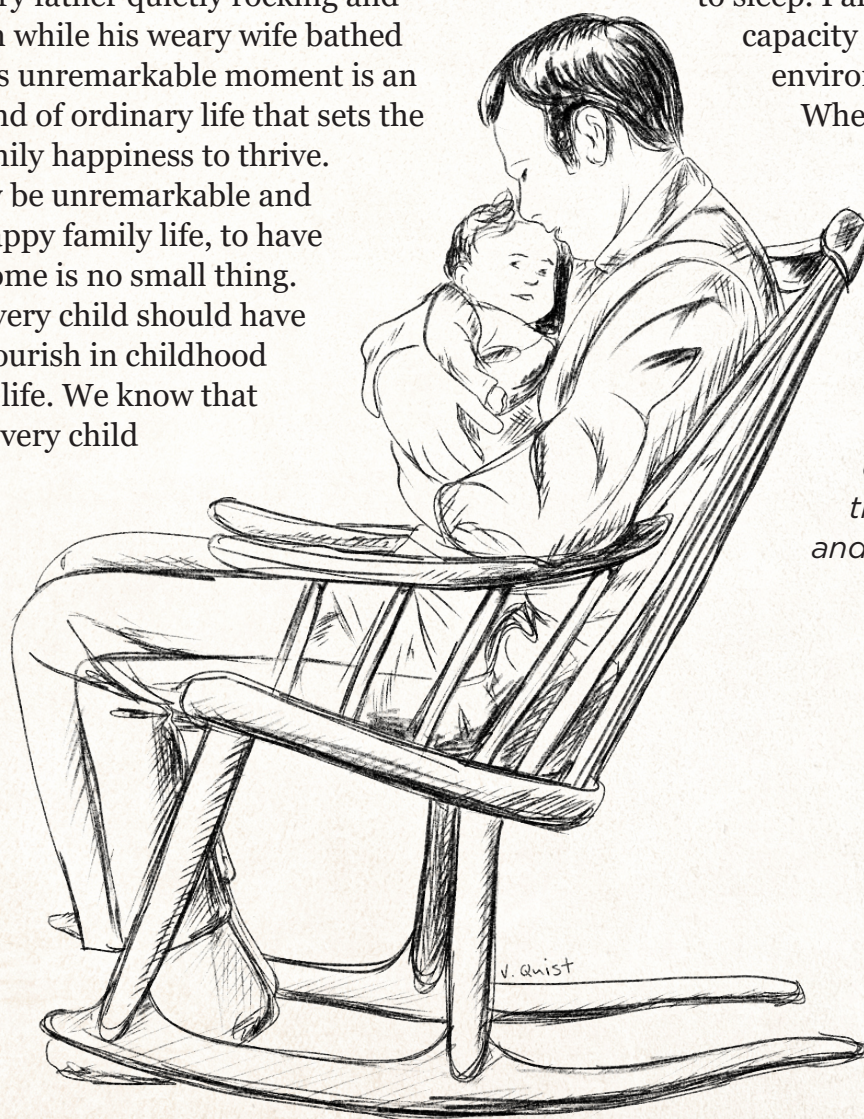
Whatever may be unremarkable and ordinary about happy family life, to have a stable, loving home is no small thing. We believe that every child should have a fair chance to flourish in childhood and to succeed in life. We know that a fair chance for every child includes a family that will provide

for their material needs and raise them lovingly. My grandmother's story illustrates how easily circumstances outside a family's control can disrupt its capacity to do these unremarkable, ordinary things.

Despite the limitations of her childhood, my grandmother became a wife, mother, and grandmother whom everyone cherished. The woman who described herself as a child raised in a home without love, herself raised a son who sang nightly to his own sons while rocking them to sleep. Families have an inherent capacity to become the stable, loving environments that children need.

When circumstances beyond their control undermine that capacity, families deserve our support. ●

*Lloyd Den Boer is a retired educator who lives with his wife in Edmonton. They treasure ordinary family life with their four married children and their eight grandchildren.*







# Teaching: A Family Affair

Eileen Hines | Article

*“Teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges.”*

— Joyce Meyer

Five generations of teachers, and counting. My mom, a teacher herself, had an aunt, one daughter (me), one daughter-in-law, a grandson, two granddaughters, and a great-granddaughter who all trained as teachers. Even my siblings and my children who didn’t become teachers still got a taste for the profession by coaching minor sports. Connection with — and commitment to — the next generation has been a profession, a passion, and a source of joy for all of us. We are all teachers at heart!

My mom started at a time when many teachers went to “Normal School,” the mid-nineteenth-century teacher training for the rapidly expanding public education sector. She, however, went to the University of Alberta. Mom’s first job was a one-room school in Jumbo Hill with a wood stove, the odd chink in the walls between the logs — perfect to see if the superintendent was coming — and a stable for the kids’ horses.

She taught when the teacher handled everything. Thirty-two students? Handled. Special needs nobody understood yet? Handled. Poverty and foster kids who needed extra support? Handled. There were no special education consultants and no educational assistants, but also no disrespect from anyone. She had community support and more options for discipline — letting parents know about their children’s misbehaviour was often the worst punishment. It was a time when personal responsibility was considered important, and communities supported their members. She believed that catching kids being good was the best form of discipline, and in meeting the kids where they were at — regardless of what the curriculum said.

I always knew I would be a teacher. I worked as a “TA” in Mom’s classroom as I was earning my degree, and later I incorporated many of her strengths and ideas. As teachers, we are encouraged to seek out new ideas and teaching strategies, learn



them, and use what fit our classes and our teaching styles, but I didn't see any sense in throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

From my mom, I learned the importance of rhythm and rhyme, of labels with words and pictures, of repetition, and of endless stories. (If I didn't read three stories aloud each day, I could hear my mom's voice in my head.) I learned to encourage parents to think of themselves as their child's first teacher and best advocate, which meant I had eager parent helpers in my classroom right until my retirement. My mom also showed me to set the tone of the classroom: to model cheerful, helpful, respectful, and active behaviour.

My daughter is also a teacher, following in the footsteps of her gramma and mom. She, however, chose secondary education, with a major in Social Studies and a minor in Mathematics. She started teaching a week after she finished university and has been ever since.

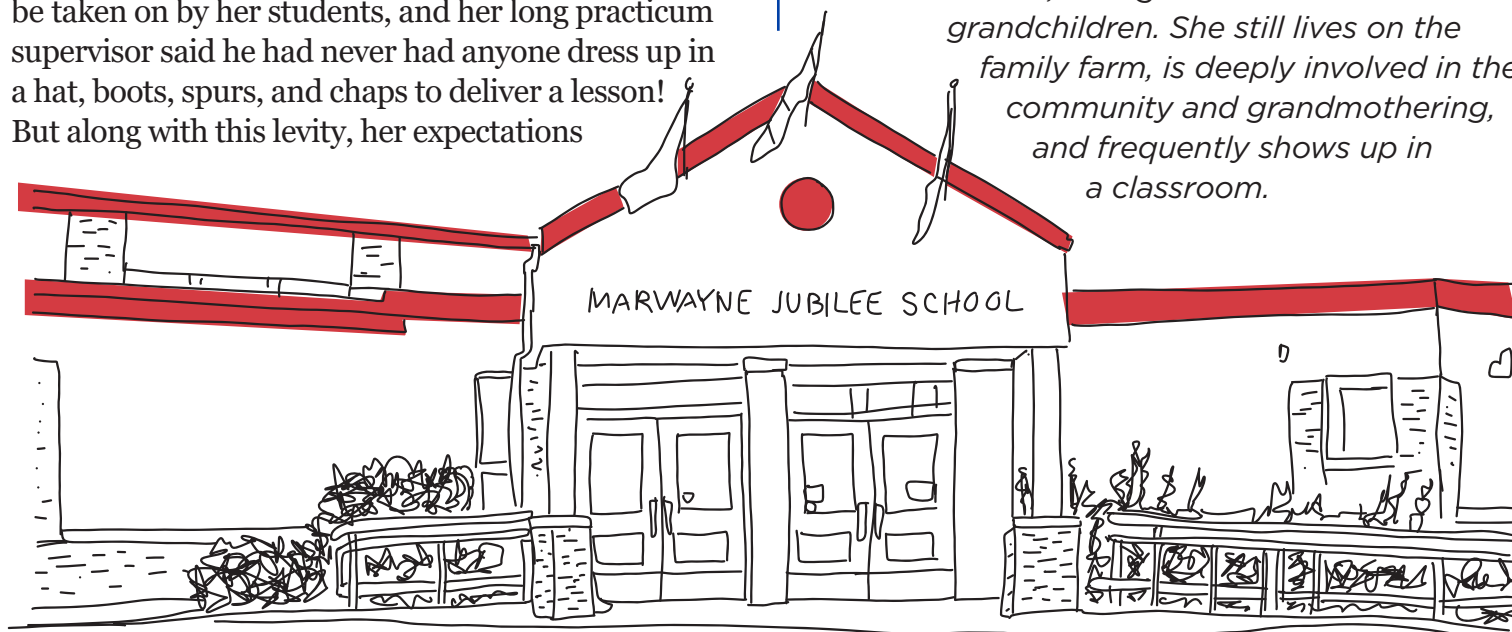
She has had a more diverse career than either her grandmother or me. Her career took her to different communities, whereas Mom and I had always taught close to home. Still, my daughter saw the value of community, and always tried to live where she taught so she could build relationships both inside and outside of school. She brings a lightness to her classroom — she frames assignments as missions to be taken on by her students, and her long practicum supervisor said he had never had anyone dress up in a hat, boots, spurs, and chaps to deliver a lesson! But along with this levity, her expectations

are consistent, help is given, and respect is mutual. She's had to adapt often over her career, catering to many boards and administrators, the ever-changing Ministry of Education expectations, and of course, COVID-19.

During the school lockdowns, she was forever asking me how to say "I'm here, I'll listen, I'll help" in different ways. Her most vulnerable students disappeared, even when on screen. In a classroom she could quietly drift over to reteach, motivate, comfort, help, whatever was needed, but not through a screen, and vulnerable students will rarely, if ever, risk asking for help when others can hear.

Teaching has changed a lot over five generations (and counting): from one-room schoolhouses with nine grades to Individualized Program Plans, from Gestetner copiers to digital scanners, chalkboards to smart boards, and notebooks to Chromebooks. Yet despite these changes, the connection between teacher and student remains. Even with all the technology, only a teacher can share a love of learning, support a fragile child, turn failure into progress, or excite students into giving their best. Only a teacher can open the door to a future of possibilities — one inch at a time. ●

*Eileen Hines taught in Marwayne, Alberta, for her entire career, where she also raised her five kids, who gifted her with twelve grandchildren. She still lives on the family farm, is deeply involved in the community and grandmothereing, and frequently shows up in a classroom.*







# Pension & Financial Wellness

Ray Hoyer | Chair, Pension & Financial Wellness Committee, ARTA



## The Discussion: Finances, Death, and Family

I'm sorry, but I have two pieces of bad news to deliver. First, you are going to die. Yes, I double-checked the statistics, and there is no doubt about it. The second bit of bad news: your spouse (or other family member if you have no spouse) may not know what financial challenges or obligations you have, or where you have them! Many couples have one “financial manager” between them for family finances. What happens if the manager dies first? Have you had *the discussion* with them? Here is a collection of some things you might consider discussing.

What about the will? Both spouses and the proposed executor should know where a copy is located and who the lawyer is. In addition to this document, where are other important documents such as your marriage licence, birth certificates, social insurance numbers, bank records, insurance policies, lists of assets, recent tax returns, and perhaps, baptismal certificates?

Many of the items listed above can be accessed online. Do you have a list of passwords for all sites? This list might include bank accounts (maybe for several institutions), online trading accounts, insurance policies, and of course the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) online portal in addition to the My Service Canada Account. These last two sites are both government sites, but they are not the same

and do not necessarily share passwords.

If the deceased was a Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributor, you will want to apply for the death benefit, a one-time payment of \$2,500.00. You may also qualify for the survivor's pension (conditions apply) of up to sixty per cent of the deceased partner's CPP pension. You must apply for both of these within a year of the death or there will be a loss of benefits.

Although the Old Age Security (OAS) benefit is rather small, you are allowed to receive the benefit for the month in which the pensioner passes away. There is an allowance for survivors if your income falls below an income threshold of less than \$27,240. This amount is adjusted annually.



You should also notify CRA if GST credits are being received in order to discontinue them. In addition, CRA expects a personal tax return for the deceased to be filed within six months. You will want to request a Tax Clearance Certificate from the CRA. The clearance certificate confirms that an estate has paid taxes and other amounts owing at the time the certificate was issued.

In addition, Alberta Health Care Insurance, any additional health care plans (like your ARTA Benefit Plan), life insurance claims, Alberta Seniors Benefits (income qualification), motor vehicle registration and insurance, and homeowner's insurance need to be notified of the death.

Cancel their passport, subscriptions, and memberships. Pay off credit card balances and cancel the cards. Are there "awards points" that can be transferred? You will want to arrange name changes for titles to real estate and other investments owned by your partner.

If you have separate bank accounts, RRSPs, RRIFs, or annuities, all of these must be notified in a timely manner. Is there a safety deposit box? Where is the key? Lastly, of course, your pension provider (ATRF for many of us) needs to be informed of your life changes.

Many of these organizations will require a Funeral Directors Statement of Death — a form

that states the name, date of birth, date and place of death, usual residence, age, and gender of the deceased person. Funeral homes typically include a number of these statements as part of their service package. An official death certificate is issued by the province and contains much of the same information. A local registry office can help with this, for a fee. The death certificate will be required for some real estate transactions, larger insurance claims, and probating a will.

On a positive note, most funeral homes can take care of many of these forms, needing only your signature and the specific details of the deceased. Having all this material at your fingertips is one less challenge during what is sure to be a very difficult time.

Many people find discussing their death ghoulish or morbid, and really want to ignore it for as long as possible. Having *the discussion* is far from morbid. It is actually a freeing experience and allows those who we love and are left behind to take care of a major challenge. ●

*Ray Hoger is the newly elected chair of the Pension and Financial Wellness Committee. His wife and two grown children know where his "just in case" binder is and have seen its contents on several occasions.*



**Ask her where the bank account password is!**





# Miss Mémé: Fun with Grandsons

Lorianne Tenove | Article and Photos

I have been waiting for them to come for two years, and they finally arrived in early January 2022 for a month — my oldest son Brendan, my daughter-in-law Kaitlynn, and their three children.

The initial plan was that Lachlan, age 5, and Sterling, age 3, would attend Colegio Rex to be immersed in a Spanish bilingual program for a month and have a taste of what a school is like in Mexico. However, Plan B was called into play when the never-ending pandemic sent our students back online in January. I decided to bring the grandsons to a school of two, and I would be their *mémé* (short for *mémère* or *grand'mère*), teacher, principal, and field trip planner.

Each morning, Lachlan would knock at the door, indicating that they were ready for school, in school uniform with backpacks, water, and snacks, and off we went, flagging down a *pulmonia* (half golf cart, half Volkswagen) for a ten-minute drive to school. Over time the boys became very accustomed to flagging down their own *pulmonias* or red trucks (*aurigas*) for a delightful drive along the harbour. Cars and taxis were not allowed because they were too boring, although we did take the odd bus.

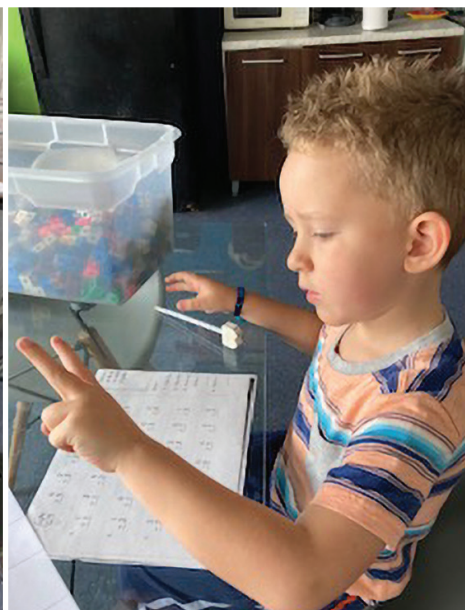
I was excited about this experience but planning school days for a three-year-old and a five-year-old who happen to be brothers is not exactly easy. We did, however, have a whole school to ourselves, along with the maintenance staff.

I know routines and structure are important for children, so I arranged for a learning space for each of them with similar but differentiated activities.

Each morning, they had to write in their learning journals and draw about their experiences the day before. Lachlan would write, “Yesterday, I went swimming in the *alberca* (pool)” and drew pictures of what he did in the pool. This took about fifteen minutes. Sterling did the same and it took him about one minute. He loves to say, “I’m done!” and I love to say, “No, you are not!” Thus the differentiation part!

I incorporated some math, science, art, Spanish, and outdoor play. We observed lots of different insects, which they did not like, and looked for lazy iguanas in trees and fences, which they did like. Snack breaks started outside and progressed to inside where we were bug free!

The maintenance staff were intrigued with these two Canadian dynamos who had more energy than all of us. A thousand *holas*, *buenos dias*, *como estas*, *gracias*, and *muchas gracias* were said throughout the day, much to the delight of the staff. I know many adults in Mazatlán who will not even attempt this simple etiquette within another culture. They have a lot to learn from my grandsons, I tell you!





One day, I put on a Spanish children's show for the boys and the first comment from Sterling was, "Hey, they speak Spanish just like us!" I think this teacher should get a raise.

Afternoons were usually spent at a beach close to a restaurant in case of bathroom breaks and extra snacks. Lachlan adores the ocean; he could spend all day jumping waves and, if allowed, would go further into the water, which would have given me a heart attack. Sterling loved playing in the sand and creating his own structures with or without sand toys. He is very independent and as long as there are plenty of snacks and drinks, he is good to go.

There are many vendors on the beach. I will usually say, "No gracias" and for some reason this became Sterling's job. He would see a vendor a mile away and say, "No gracias!" The vendors would look down at this little three-year-old don't-mess-with-me kid and laugh. Believe me, when a three-year-old says *no gracias*, you listen.



The days ended with sand-covered children with sun-touched faces, ready to head home to Mama, Papa, Baby Stella, and the ever-inviting swimming pool.

This mémé/teacher was pretty tired at the end of every day and very much appreciated the refreshment that was awaiting her! I do know that this was a gift given to me in a time that has been so challenging. Whether these darlings remember the lessons

I taught them or the adventures we experienced together, I am not sure. What I do know is that I love who they are and who they are becoming and how very fortunate we are, as grandparents, to have special moments in our lives to be with our grandchildren, wherever they are. ●

*Lorianne Tenove is a retired administrator from Alberta who keeps trying to retire but always seems to find another adventure! She is the head of an Alberta accredited school in Mazatlán, Mexico. Lorianne has three children, two stepchildren, and three very beloved grandchildren who call her "Mémé."*





## Why Visit Cambodia Now?

Cambodia is a fascinating country to visit — home to such extremes as Angkor Wat, the Killing Fields, and beachside resorts.

Cambodia is one of the easiest countries to enter. Canadians can get a visa on arrival in the country, with no testing or quarantine required. However, to board a flight into Cambodia, you do need to show proof of an onward flight out. Take note of this if you are leaving your departure date open.

Independent travel is a great option for those with an adventurous side and can be easily organized with the assistance of your hotel or guest house and the internet. Internet access is easy with Wi-Fi at hotels and restaurants or very inexpensive local data plans for your phone. Transport within the country can be done by minibus between cities or by private hired car. Within centres and to nearby sights, tuk-tuk drivers are always willing to drive you for very reasonable rates.

You can find quaint and delightful accommodations using internet hotel booking reservation services. A boutique hotel costs C\$50–60 per night for two people, usually with breakfast included.

There are a variety of meal options from street food to upscale sit-down restaurants serving local and international cuisines. Traditional Cambodian dishes include rice, meat, and vegetables in flavourful combinations without being too spicy hot. Amok, the Cambodian national dish of a mild coconut curry with fish or chicken, is a must-try. An average meal for two people costs about \$20 at a local restaurant.

Cambodia has many brands of fine, refreshing beer. Fruit shakes made with fresh fruit are also a great way to quench your thirst.

Despite the economic difficulties experienced by many Cambodians due to harsh lockdowns during the pandemic, it remains a friendly and hospitable country. November to January are the best months to visit Cambodia, since they are the coolest and driest months.

The tourist industry in Cambodia has been heavily affected by the pandemic but slowly tourism is starting up again. When we visited in April



Laverne and David,  
sunrise at Angkor Wat



Water buffalo  
in Kampot



2022, we saw small numbers of foreign visitors, including families, enjoying Cambodia over the Easter break. However, there was also a notable absence of tour buses at major sites like Angkor Wat, due to travel restrictions of Asian nationals by their home countries. This means these sites are uncrowded — like it was years ago.

It's essential to bring a letter of insurance, as you will be asked for it. In some cases, you need the letter even for transiting countries such as Thailand. Make sure your letter includes the names of all individuals and the dates of coverage for the entire trip. Otherwise, you will be asked to buy more insurance on the spot. Ensure that all your vaccinations are up to date and malaria prophylactics taken depending on your destinations. The low cost of living and travelling in Cambodia makes it an ideal spot to linger and become immersed in the country's culture.

As retired teachers, our skills are in high demand helping with local English classes. The first time we visited Cambodia with our children, we had two volunteer teaching opportunities. The first was in Siem Reap with a local charity associated with a Buddhist monastery. The second was in the southern town of Kampot. We worked alongside Cambodian teachers, giving students access to native English speakers to practise their skills as we modelled different teaching styles and strategies

for the teachers. The three weeks we spent teaching evening English classes were a highlight of our trip, making personal connections and deepening our travel experience.

There are a great number of volunteer opportunities, but they do require some legwork before arrival to confirm. We avoided volunteer groups that require the volunteer to pay to volunteer — known as voluntourism. Most respectable volunteer opportunities will ask you for at least one to two weeks of your time and for you to pay your own living expenses.

On our recent visit to Cambodia, we enjoyed reconnecting with people we had met on earlier visits, rediscovering its magnificent sights, and trying new experiences such as helium ballooning and cycling at Angkor Wat.

Cambodia is one of the first southeast Asian countries to open up after the pandemic, with the balance close behind. Several regional airlines are reintroducing flights between major cities in Southeast Asia, making it easy and inexpensive to add countries to an extended itinerary.

We hope that as the pandemic recedes, travellers will take advantage of the ease of travel to Cambodia to enjoy the country — and perhaps stay a while — without the throngs of travellers that will eventually return. ●

*Calgarian David Dziadyk is a retired teacher and ARTA member; his wife Laverne Bissky runs a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Southeast Asia.*



Angkor Thom



Sunset at Kampot





# My Mom: Heart of the Prairie

Helen Berscheid | Article and Photos

Our family lived on the bald Saskatchewan prairie on a mixed farm complete with cows, pigs, chickens, a few turkeys for Christmas and Easter, and, of course, a farm dog and cats. Training in this occupation came from our ancestors, who were the first settlers in the district on a section of land down the road toward the lake. It was a good life filled with hard work, twice daily chores, and endless Life Lessons.

We had a special exemption from boring meals because my mother had a talent for cooking and enjoyed baking. She could whip up a cake with an out-of-her-head recipe at a moment's notice!

She had a chart of all the cuts of meat that guided us when butchering the animals. Everyone was called upon to help. Cutting up the carcass came after the tallow, fat, and sinew had been trimmed off. Those would later become lye soap. All the scraps of meat were trimmed

from the bones to be ground into hamburger. When we had enough beef, pork, and game meat, we could produce our annual supply of homemade sausage. Now that was a treat! In Mom's recipe stash could be found plain, spice, or garlic sausage, to name a few. She even tried her hand at salami.

Everything was mixed in a large, enamelled baby bath and a taste test was prepared in the frying pan. If Mom was satisfied that just the right flavours were in the mix, considering that the sausage might be boiled in water for preparation, then we proceeded with the production, and a sausage stuffer was used to make the links.

Onto the stuffing tube were threaded the casings, which had been thoroughly rinsed. One person turned the handle, another kept the sausage meat loaded in, and a third gently guided the filled casings and gave them a twist into desired link lengths. It took a couple minutes for all hands to coordinate and for the first sausage links to look right! The lengths of links were strung up on poles to go into the smoke house. Picture rows of sausage links, ham hocks, slabs of bacon, and a few unidentified items hanging from the rafters. The smoking had to be done over the weekend because it required us to check the fire every three to four hours for several days. The stove had to be lit but not too hot. Damp sawdust was tucked into the stove to rev up the smoke factor. Occasionally Mom would experiment using apple wood to see if it improved the flavour. I could not confirm that it did because all our food was inhaled as fast as it hit our plates, and you better not be late to the table for meals!



Laura and Helen at the card table



Helen and her siblings on the family farm





Mashed Potato Chocolate Cake  
 1 cup butter or marg.  
 2 cups wht. Sugar - less.  
 3 eggs - beaten  
 1 cup Sour milk.  
 1 cup mashed potato.  
 2 cups flour.  
 2 tsp. Soda  
 1 tsp cloves  
 1 tsp. nutmeg  
 1 tsp Cinnamon.  
 3 tablespoons cocoa  
 1 cup raisins } optional.  
 1 cup walnuts }  
 Bake at 325 - 45 minutes.

Laura's handwritten recipes.

You have it on good authority that the Mashed Potato Cake recipe is the best ever!

Sauerkraut Cake  
 2 1/4 cups flour  
 1/2 cup cocoa  
 1 tsp Baking Soda soda  
 1/4 tsp salt.  
 2 1/2 cup margarine  
 1 1/2 cups wht. Sugar.  
 3 eggs.  
 1 tsp vanilla  
 3/4 cup strong coffee.  
 2 1/2 cup Sauerkraut.  
 Bake at 325 - 45 min.  
 I made this cake with grated zucchini & it turned out good too.

You could never forget the sight of opening the smoke house door after it was finished and cooled! The roof and rafters were pitch black, and the sausages, hanging limp, were brown. The smell of smoked meat burst into your lungs like an expensive perfume! We could not spend too much time admiring it though because it was cold outside. Us kids, armed with bowls and buckets and the baby bath, would stand in the snowbank waiting our turn to be loaded up with food to bring inside.

When every counter and tabletop was piled high with these impressive delicacies, we used waxed butcher paper to wrap each parcel. Each one was carefully labelled and expertly packed into our large freezer for a season's supply. This exhausting job would yield delicious results for months to come.

Home from Mass on a Sunday, there was a promise of cinnamon buns for a special treat. Plump and juicy, rolled out of dough layered with butter, cinnamon, and sugar, and a thick topping of fresh cream, their scent of baking filled the house. After devouring the buns, we scooped up and licked the leftover caramelized sugar and heavy cream from the bottom of the pan before it was washed.

Even that treat was short-lived as there were chores to do, morning and night. We gathered the eggs and fed and watered the chickens. We fed and watered the pigs and cattle in the barns. Those cows don't milk themselves by hand! And finally, the fresh, warm milk was poured into the cream separator for the supply of milk and heavy cream. Is it any wonder that the baking tasted sooo good?

My amazing mother passed away at 104 years of age, just weeks after her birthday in June 2022. We gathered at her ancestral home, the farm where we all grew up in Saskatchewan, for celebrations and, of course, pictures. All twelve of her children remember her delicious meals — and her beating us at cards! *Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts....* •

Middle child Helen thinks that she may never meet a person as amazing as her mom.



Laura Berscheid



# Where Needed Most: Housing, Health Care, and ESL

If you've donated to the Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation (ARTCF) before, you know your money is being used to help support Alberta seniors in the areas of housing, health care, and English as a second language education. But have you ever wondered who, specifically, has been benefiting from your generous gifts? Here are some of the organizations who have been active partners of ARTCF over the last year:

**Parkinson Association of Alberta** uses ARTCF funding to help run tele-support groups, enabling those with Parkinson's disease and Parkinson's Plus Syndromes to connect, receive advice, and express solidarity with others across the province.

**Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories** has used ARTCF funding to run Minds in Motion, a program designed to provide regular mental stimulation to those with early to mid-stage Alzheimer's disease.

**Alzheimer Society of Calgary**, with help from ARTCF, runs caregiver education sessions and public education events to make life easier, not just for those with Alzheimer's but for their loved ones as well.

**Operation Friendship Seniors Society** provides safe and affordable housing for seniors in Edmonton's inner city, and funding from ARTCF helps them maintain and develop their facilities.



**Do you know of an Alberta-based registered charity that helps seniors in the spheres of housing, health care, or English as a second language education?** Send them an ARTCF grant application, found at [arta.net/advocacy/artcf](https://arta.net/advocacy/artcf). •

## 'Tis the Season of Giving

**What do you get for that person in your life who already seems to have it all? Why not make a charitable donation in their name?**

By donating this holiday season, you'll be making a huge difference in the lives of seniors across the province, and you'll be eligible to receive a tax receipt in recognition of your generosity.



To make a donation, visit  
**[arta.net/give](https://arta.net/give)**







# 2022 Wellness Challenge Results

**Jennifer Hope** | Manager, Marketing and Promotions, ARTA

The 2022 Wellness Challenge has wrapped up, and it was clear that ARTA members were excited to get back to their pre-COVID-19 fitness routines. This year's challenge brought in more participants than the past two years. It was nice to see that participants returned to their group fitness classes such as strength training, Pilates, and Zumba. We received many comments from our participants that they appreciate the annual Wellness Challenge as it provides some motivation to get moving. Not only were the winners of the challenge rewarded with some great prizes, but prizes were also awarded to a selection of all participants through a random draw.

- The Calgary Retired Teachers' Association (CRTA) was very busy this year! Not only did they win the overall participation prize with a total of 158,559 minutes, but Margaret Inkster, member of that branch, was the overall Wellness Challenge winner.
- Once again, the Okanagan Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (OKARTA) took home the overall branch participation award with forty per cent of their members submitting their wellness challenge results.

Stay tuned for the 2023 ARTA Wellness Challenge announcement and join in the fun. ●



Left to right: Linda Manwarren - ARTA Wellness Committee Chair, Brian Scott - CRTA President, Marilyn and Fred Resler (President) - OKARTA



## merit travel

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Norma MacDonald, teaching Grade 1 and 2 school children, Nampa, Alberta, early 1950s



## Teachers in My Family

Robert Proudfoot | Article and Photos

I grew up in Beverly (Edmonton) and went to Lawton Junior High. We studied historic Beverly, a blue-collar town built on coal mines and meat packing plants, populated by diverse peoples. I learned from my mother Norma that, before Lawton school's opening in 1957, Beverly Central School operated nearby from 1914 to 1955, and her mother, Olive Webster, taught there during the First World War.



Olive Webster (second from right) and fellow teachers at Beverly School, 1915

Olive Webster came west from Prince Edward Island in 1911 as a single, young lady, taught in various schools enroute, and upgraded her credentials to Second Class Certificate at Calgary Normal School. She then gained employment with Edmonton Public Schools in 1914 at Oliver, but was reassigned to Beverly Central School in 1915.

Grandma was transferred in 1917 to Colonel Farquhar School. With one classroom open, she was in charge of "surplus" children in Grades 1 to 3. Every day, Grandma rode the

streetcar, then walked 1.5 miles to school. She was small, but her pluck, discipline, and desire to train children about productivity and knowledge motivated her students to progress and become responsible. Grandma taught in a substandard building that was cold, lacked electricity or indoor toilets, and suffered floods and falling plaster. She received two glowing appraisals from Inspector Fife: "Good, conscientious and capable teacher who is doing excellent work...citizen-making teaching... who manages her school well." After Col. Farquhar School closed in 1918, she taught at Queen's Avenue School in 1919, but then resigned, married George MacDonald, and homesteaded in northwest Alberta's "Peace Country," where Norma was born.

George, as Chairman of Wanham School Board, welcomed Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Holodomor into their farming community during the Depression. Norma and fellow pupils in the one-room school befriended kids who did not speak



Norma Proudfoot, EPS Teacher at  
Fulton Place Elementary School 1983.



English or understand local customs, but whose families knew how to farm. Norma met a Ukrainian immigrant named Mary. Eli, a local bachelor, helped Mary learn to read the many books that lined his cabin walls in exchange for her mother's freshly baked bread. Through shared kindness and collaboration, immigrants like Mary learned without losing their dignity, heritage, language, or souls.

Norma attended high school and university in Edmonton, where she earned her BEd degree in 1947. She taught for the Edmonton Public Board during the late 1940s, and then at Nampa, in the Peace Region of northwestern Alberta, before marrying in 1953. With husband Robert Proudfoot, she suspended her career and raised seven children, until 1979 when she returned to teaching at Fulton Place until 1985. Mom was a patient and caring teacher who nurtured potential gifts and qualities of her students so they could take their place in society. She mentored many young adults in Sunday School and overseas in Zambia, Ecuador, and Tanzania where Dad was promoting technical education. He was an instructor and then administrator at NAIT (1962 to 1984), where he valued the aspirations and abilities of students from around the globe.

My grandmother and mother did not openly identify as Indigenous Canadians. Grandma was born in 1888 and raised in PEI, known by Mi'kmaq natives as *Epekwitk* (*Abegweit*), meaning "cradle in the waves." She was Canadian and came from generations of Islanders traced back to Captain John Webster. Captain Webster came in 1758 with the British army to capture Louisbourg and Isle Saint-Jean from the French, served as Commissariat at Fort Amherst on St. John's Island, helped repel American invaders during the Revolutionary War, and was elected to the PEI House of Assembly.

Shortly before Norma died in 2015, she acknowledged that her great-grandmother Isabelle was an Indigenous woman who married Charles Webster. This frugal couple ran a wholesome Christian household and raised sheep — two of their sons became doctors, and Olive, a bright scholar and musician, graduated from the prestigious Prince



Norma (right) with parents  
Olive (back left) and children

of Wales College, Charlottetown, as a teacher in 1904. Isabelle and her children lost their status as Indigenous Canadians and members of the Mi'kmaq community under the federal Indian Act.

Grandma seldom spoke about her heritage, but Mom wrote snippets in her essay *The Price of Belonging*. Grandma opened their home to Indigenous women like Mrs. Pickard, who sewed with her, and was a close church friend. Norma understood how pioneers got along and that marriage between white and Indigenous people happened. The MacDonalds ate bannock and made tea and jam with fruits from the boreal forest; Norma read poetry and stories by the Mohawk/English writer Pauline Johnson and *Tales of Abegweit*. She relished her Scottish heritage and PEI roots but appreciated her "dark" Webster relatives from down east. I am pained by the harm done to students of "Indian" residential schools; my mother believed that church-run schools cared, and provided Western education, by which students could succeed. We disagreed — and she was a teacher!

I wish that my ancestors were still alive to help me better understand how they lived and to encourage me to carry on. ●

*Robert Proudfoot, an Edmonton-based freelance writer, editor, and English tutor, writes to reflect his intercultural experiences in Africa, Latin America, and Canada, encouraging readers to appreciate the environment and embrace humanity's rich diversity, complex struggles, and fascinating history.*





# Flood the Rink! I'm Lacing Up My Skates!

Sheila Bean | Article F.H. Seely | Photos

I hit the ice two years ago after a thirty-year absence, and eureka, modern figure skates are magic! Wider. Warmer. Actually comfortable and supportive. When I take off my new skates, I don't have that "ahhh" sensation of freeing my aching feet from prison.

Even with proper footwear, my return to the ice wasn't pretty. I clutched my husband's arm as if I were drowning, and each step was cautious and wooden. Talk about mindfulness. Wearing his hockey helmet and elbow pads, I lived each moment with full attention and intention. My entire body strained. As I let go, and my husband fluidly coasted away, I worked up a sweat, feeling accomplishment after only a lap or two.

Day by day I practised. Steps turned into glides. The elbow pads came off. I soon made it through several laps and did not fall.

To escape the rut of constantly skating counterclockwise, I switched direction every ten laps, for a total of eighty. I didn't even need to count. Ten, reverse, ten, reverse. After a few weeks of eighty, I pushed myself to one hundred. But here's the thing: Once I pitched beyond eighty, I lost track of which group of ten laps I was on.

Whispering the numbers helped me to remember every single lap, and I tagged many with special memories. Some marked celebratory milestones, and a few were sad.

Numbers earned meaning in other ways, too: 7 because it's a prime, 51 because  $17 \times 3$  is always a surprise, and the whole rollicking 9-times table. I threw in random links to popular culture, from Highway

Number One to 99 Red Balloons and a Heinz 57 of ragtag connections in between. Expo '67, anyone? The '88 Olympics?

Sometimes I counted in French, almost knocked off my game by the quirks of the seventies and eighties, and then sliding into home with the nineties. I lingered on the Van Doos, an Anglo tangle of the Canadian Army's Royal 22nd Regiment. What a hoot to say "cinquante-cinq," not to mention multi-number pileups such as "quatre-vingt-dix-sept."

Would you look at that! While counting, I learned to dominate forward crosscuts. With calming breaths and extreme concentration, I handled a few backward crosscuts, as unsteady as a newborn kitten. Careful, now. Not too many.

I met neighbours at our community park: a tot pushing





a chair, adults who'd hauled out their ancient blades, sparsely dressed teenagers debating the merits of burps versus farts, the woman whose toque looked just like a sundae. One man remarked, "This is my first time on skates since my stroke."

One family sat out and nibbled on snacks, silently watching our small Zamboni restore icy perfection, this slow-moving miracle as mesmerizing as gazing into a campfire. A meditation. Sometimes I hit the sweet spot and got freshly flooded ice all to myself, such as on Christmas morning.

My return to skating has been my debut on outdoor ice. Growing up in rural Saskatchewan, I always skated at the town rink, even soldiering through ten years of slippery progress as a figure skater. Despite my pinchy skates — bought used from a basement shop in Regina — I soaked up laughter and music, and afterward spent a few nickels on Hickory Sticks or gumdrop rings. (Never a licorice pipe! Ew!)

When I devolved into an unruly teenager, I stayed afterwards for the hockey game, the two activities separated by supper at the rink. We ate in the same general area as the curling ice — a sensory universe all its own. Rowdy games of five card stud. Volunteers churning out unequalled homemade fries in cardboard tubs. Steam and smoke from the sizzling griddle. The tempting aroma of onion rings. Cigarettes poisoning the atmosphere. Muffled shouts and gentle clunks from the curling rocks colliding like tectonic plates on the other side of the viewing glass.

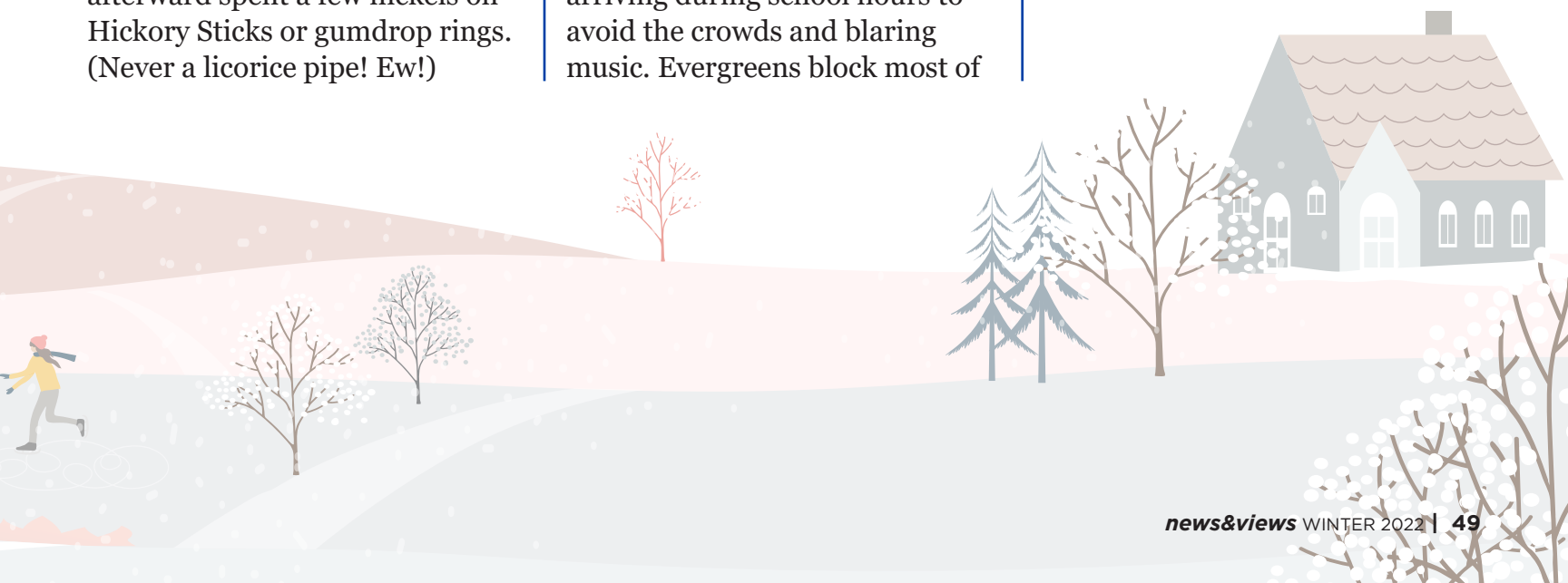
Even without artificial ice, my childhood skating season felt luxuriously long. Calgary's outdoor ice season is remarkably short, interrupted by the exhalations of the occasional chinook.

So I'm ready to nab it. Poised to inhale the clean, bracing air, arriving during school hours to avoid the crowds and blaring music. Evergreens block most of

the wind. After about twenty laps on a chilly day, my fingers will warm up. After forty, I'll unzip my jacket and flap my mitts from my fingertips. Ninety-nine is typically my victory lap, when I imagine a flag draped across my shoulders as the crowd roars.

Although counting laps propelled me through my first year of skating, last year I didn't need to count at all. I'd made it back onto the ice, and now I was free to enjoy the scenery and let the numbers float into the frosty air. ●

*Sheila Bean taught with the Calgary Board of Education for seventeen years. Since retiring, she has taught at Stampede and Jube schools and has dabbled in journalism (her previous career). The skating rink awaits.*







## Musings about Family

What does “family” mean to you? The word family came into the English language during the fifteenth century from the Latin word *famulus*, meaning household. Over time, our understanding of family has changed. The Government of Canada now defines a family as a group of two or more persons (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption who live together. Some individuals define family as relatives who share their home. Others consider blood relatives near and far as family, while still others view their beloved circle of friends or their pets as family members.

I believe the shared love, commitment, and support found in all these groups are key. Which brings me to what I call my “family of the heart,” another very important type of family. This broad perspective on the word family is important to me largely because my biological family is spread far and wide, and I am married without children.

The interdependence or linking of lives that is a hallmark of families everywhere is evident in my family of the heart and demonstrates the dynamics of a strong family. There is a commitment to each other as shown in an investment of time and energy. A genuine affection guides communication so that it is positive and affirming, and yet challenges me to grow when necessary. When stress or crises occur,

we pull together and support each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Our guiding values and commitments to important causes come into alignment. Notably, our recent experiences with the pandemic and its restrictions on social interactions heighten our awareness of the importance of family, however you define it.

I know my life is richer through my family of the heart. ●

*Linda Manwarren took retirement in steps with the final one in 2019 from St Mary's University as a practicum advisor. She loves having more time to spend with her heart family as well as the time to travel to the biological one.*





# From Our Partners

Laurie Bauer, CAIB | Business Development Manager, TW Insurance Brokers



## How Much Are Your Belongings Worth?

Over time, we accumulate a lot of ... stuff. We're gifted items, create emotional attachments to pieces and collections, hold on to items from another time in our life, and get stuck with items our kids left behind. Whether you're downsizing, clearing out some old clutter, or passing on special items to loved ones, these milestones are a great opportunity to review the value of your belongings in your home. How much would it cost to replace each item? If you're like most Canadians, you would likely be surprised at the total value. When reviewing your home, condo, or tenant's insurance policy, you want to make sure you have the right amount of coverage; you don't want to be underinsured or over insured and paying a higher premium than necessary.

### It All Adds Up

When you start calculating the cost of your belongings, the sum might surprise you. Your kitchen includes big and small appliances, pots and pans, dishes, tools, and more. An average estimate of the items in a kitchen is around \$4,500.

Consider the items in your bedroom. A mattress, pillows, bedding, and furniture. Don't forget clothing and jewellery! Replacement value could cost hundreds or thousands of dollars.

### Knowledge Is Power

Knowing the value of the contents is very important when determining how much insurance coverage you need. Overestimate the value of your belongings and you could pay a higher premium than necessary. Underestimate and you won't have enough coverage to replace your belongings.

Most policies offer a limit on the value you can claim on individual items, such as bicycles, art, jewellery, and antiques. You may want to consider adding an item separately (scheduling) to your policy if its value exceeds the limit. Your insurance company may request an appraisal.

### Record Keeping

If cataloguing your belongings feels overwhelming, you're not alone. The Insurance Bureau of Canada has some free downloadable tools to help. Scan the QR code below for more information. If the colder weather has you spending more time indoors, take advantage and work through the process. When you're done, determine a safe place to store copies of your information, both physical and digital versions.

Should you find yourself in a difficult situation, being prepared with proper documentation can relieve a lot of stress.

To discuss your contents coverage options and the impacts on your premium, or to get a free no-obligation quote on your property insurance, call a TW broker at 1-855-894-2782 or visit

[twinsurance.ca](https://twinsurance.ca) for more information. ●



Scan QR for  
tools to help





# From Our Partners

Eva Kidane | Nurse Care Specialist, HumanaCare



## The Importance of Seniors' Mental Health

Senior mental health is often overlooked, even though it is just as important as mental health is for everyone else. The relationship between seniors and mental health issues can be even more trying as individuals age and face increased difficulty with normal functions. Here are some reasons why seniors face mental health issues.

Seniors' mental health can be at risk for several reasons.

- **Higher Risk of Isolation.** Being isolated from others can lead to feelings of depression and other mental health issues, and seniors are at a higher risk as they age.
- **Declining Cognitive Functioning.** As we age, our brain does not operate as it used to, thus affecting how we process things, feel, and view situations, others, and ourselves.
- **Impact on Overall Health.** Isolation and depression can increase our risk of premature death. Turning to bad habits to make us feel better (smoking, drinking, or overeating) can lead to obesity, stroke, heart disease, and even suicide.

Multiple common mental health issues become evident in the elderly and senior population.

- **Depression.** Depression is more than occasionally feeling sad — it is constant feelings of anxiety, guilt, anger, shame, emptiness, worthlessness, irritability, or hopelessness. General apathy about life may also develop as a result, which can lead to suicidal thoughts.
- **Anxiety disorders.** Feelings of anxiety that don't go away or that consistently get triggered in certain kinds of situations increasingly interrupt normal activities. Common anxiety disorders include generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

- **Dementia.** We are aware of Alzheimer's disease, but several other forms of dementia exist as well. As a person's memory deteriorates, it may lead to other symptoms such as confusion, personality changes, erratic behaviour, and communication difficulties. Some professionals prefer to classify dementia as a brain disorder rather than as a mental illness. But, despite how it's classified, it can have a substantial impact on a person's mental well-being. That's why, when it comes to the health of seniors and the elderly, mental disorders like dementia need our awareness — even if they aren't always easy to classify or talk about.
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).** Seniors who have seen or survived a dangerous or shocking event can develop this challenging mental condition. Long after the event, they may continue to have "fight-or-flight" feelings, especially when triggered by certain sights, sounds, smells, or situations. Even when they are safe at home, they can experience a host of symptoms that make it difficult to live a normal life.
- **Addiction.** Some seniors have substance abuse problems or behavioural addictions that negatively affect their lives. But, with the elderly, addiction is often overlooked by friends, family, or caregivers. Even doctors sometimes fail to diagnose addictions in the elderly since the symptoms can mirror those of other mental health conditions.





It is important to understand the early symptoms of mental issues in elderly adults and help them return to a healthy and happy life. Here are some simple actions you can take to help yourself or a loved one.

- **Connect.** Seniors must connect with others. Try a social hobby, sign up for a class, or try a group workout activity to improve physical health.
- **Exercise.** Exercise plays an important role in senior care. Seniors should exercise to improve both mind and body, as it can be as effective as medication in alleviating some symptoms of depression. Exercises like tai chi and yoga can help relieve mental stress. Mental exercises like games and puzzles can also help.
- **Talk With Your Doctor.** If you suspect that you are experiencing a problem with your mental health, then please see your family doctor. They may start you on a course of treatment that will help you recover or put you in touch with specialized professionals or local mental health supports.
- **Eat a Healthy Diet.** Good nutrition can have powerful and positive effects on our mental health and overall vitality. Focus on eating a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean and high-quality proteins, healthy fats, whole grains, and calcium-rich foods. Avoid sugar, refined carbs, and heavily processed foods.

Be proactive with your mental well-being. And don't be afraid to talk about it. Take an active role in doing whatever you can to feel your best. ●



# From Our Partners

Debbie Robinson | Director, Marketing & Corporate Social Responsibility, Allianz



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## Family Holidays: Guide for a Stress-Free Get-Together

1950s crooner Perry Como sang “Oh, there’s no place like home for the holidays ... For the holidays you can’t beat home sweet home!” And it’s true. There’s nothing more comforting than enjoying childhood treats and embracing family traditions with your loved ones. But going home for the holidays can also be stressful — not just the journey to get home but the pressures and expectations that can come along with it. Here are some holiday tips to minimize anxiety and maximize joy.

### Tidy Up!

Leave your home as you would like to come home to it — clean and hopefully un-burgled. Invest in inexpensive timers to turn on lights in the evenings, to give the illusion of someone being home. Put clean sheets on your bed and fresh towels in the bathroom. Let neighbours know your plans so they can keep an eye on things and pick up any mail or parcels that arrive. Savvy travellers know that returning to a clean, organized house is one of the greatest pleasures of travelling, so invest a few hours before going.

### Stay Within Budget

It’s tough to stick to a budget around the holidays, but be realistic and make sure that holiday bills don’t start your new year off on the wrong foot. In addition to going out with friends when home for the holidays, the budget can get blown on gifts as well. As much as you want to, don’t offer to get (every) round at the pub and remember that the real gift for family is being together for the holidays.





### Pack Sensibly

A great way to stick within your travel gift-list budget is to buy online ahead of time and ship things directly to your destination. Remember that you probably don't need a lot of clothes either — extra gloves, hats or scarves can always be borrowed. Think comfortable and easy-to-pack.

### Bring Your Best Self

Going home for the holidays is a great way to connect with family, but remember that there is lots going on for others as well. Bring some fresh ideas like a new card or board game to the mix or learn a great new dish to add to the holiday meal repertoire. Holidays are also a great time to catch up outside (unless there's a raging blizzard). Bundle up and get outside for a walk or visit the local gym with your siblings. Everyone will feel better with a workout under their belt, and it makes the holiday baking that much sweeter.

### Be a Savvy Traveller

Travelling during the holidays is a big deal. There are more people, longer lineups, and more headaches for the unprepared. In addition to sticking to your holiday packing list, be prepared for potential weather complications, restrictions on luggage allowances, and delays and hectic times.

If you're travelling outside your home province, take the time to read your ARTA Emergency Travel plan certificate and confirm you have the right coverage. If you have any questions, contact your ARTA Member Support Centre at 1-855-444-2782.

If you're travelling outside of Canada, it is critical to plan ahead, do your research, and regularly review all requirements for your departure, arrival at your destination, and return to Canada. As with every trip, we recommend you review and follow Government of Canada travel advisories. ●

**From everyone at Allianz  
Global Assistance, we wish you  
and your family a happy and  
healthy holiday season!**

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# IN MEMORIAM

*For what is the worth of human life unless it is woven  
into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?*

— Marcus Tullius Cicero

**Robert Neville “Nev”  
Anderson**  
Calgary

**Sandra “Sandy” Carol (née  
Richardson) Askin**  
Edmonton

**Billy Bob Brumbalow**  
Edmonton

**Maria “Mary” Buchta**  
Edmonton

**Edith Elizabeth (née Witney)  
Collin**  
Beaumont

**Albertha “Bertha” (née Dam)  
De Vries**  
Lethbridge

**Darlene (née Pasemko)  
Drever**  
Edmonton

**Francis “Frank” Edward  
Dunnigan**  
Edmonton

**Johanna “Jo” Helen (née  
Andres) Dyck**  
Coaldale

**Carl Engstrom**  
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**Grant Edward Fearn**  
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**Valerie “Val” Gaye  
Finnemore**  
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**Patricia Margaret Gillespie**  
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Carstairs

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Edmonton

**Paul Dexter Leavitt**  
Calgary

**Annette (née West) London**  
Lethbridge

**Janet “Jan” Ann (née Jones)  
MacGregor**  
Edmonton

To honour an ARTA member or a retired teacher who has passed away,  
please email the editor at [memoriam@arta.net](mailto:memoriam@arta.net).



**Joan Estelle MacLeod**  
Calgary

**William McConnell**  
Calgary

**John Malcolm McEwen**  
Edmonton

**Jean Edith (née Carmichael) McKenzie**  
Edmonton

**Connie Lorraine (née MacKenzie, formerly Matthews) Nelson**  
Red Deer

**Reme (née Agustin) Nelson**  
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**Garfield Nichols**  
Coldbrook, NS

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**Svend Aage Schmidt**  
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Lethbridge

**Leone Ector (née Baker) Stacheruk**  
Coleman

**William “Bill” Alexander Tajenar**  
Calgary

**Rena LaVern (née Sillito) Walters**  
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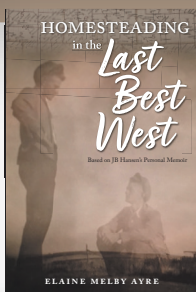
**Larry John Wasylik**  
Red Deer

**Iain Douglas Watson**  
Edmonton

**Noreen Claire (née Godfrey) Woitenko**  
St. Albert



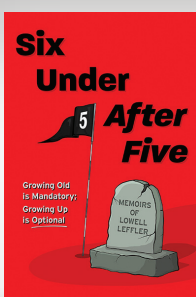




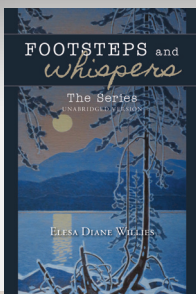
***Homesteading in the Last Best West*** by Elaine Ayre. Friesen Press, 2022. Memoir. This book is based on the author's grandfather's personal memoir relating his homesteading in southeastern Saskatchewan in 1909.



***No Good Asking: A Novel*** by Fran Kimmel. ECW Press, 2018. Fiction. What can happen when one family reaches out to a little girl on the run from dire circumstances? Deeply moving, highly recommended - *BookList Reviews*.



***Six Under After Five*** by Lowell Leffler. Friesen Press, 2021. Memoir. A humorous collection of short stories based on growing up in rural southern Alberta in the 1950s and '60s.



***Footsteps and Whispers: The Series*** (Unabridged) by Elesha Diane Willies. First Choice Books, 2019 (3rd ed.). Nonfiction. Grande Cache: Alberta's gateway to the mysterious. Enjoy stories and poems of people's unusual experiences with animals, spirits, and the land itself. Beautifully illustrated.

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