

news & views

The Magazine of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association

SPRING 2024

Dreams for the Future

Building a New Future —
With a Little Help

Spring into Biking

Retirement Dreams
and Aspirations

ARTA

ALBERTA RETIRED
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



collette

EXPLORATIONS

SMALL GROUPS, BIG EXPERIENCES

SAVE
UP
TO **\$600^{pp*}**

Use offer code: **ARTASAVE**



Choose from 40+ Small Group Explorations tours including:



Best of Italy

- Be whisked away into the beauty and history of Italy when you journey to Venice, Florence, and Rome.
- See how gondola oars are crafted before cruising the canals of Venice.
- Participate in a hands-on cooking class dedicated to Romagna's garganelli and strozzapreti pastas.



Colours of Morocco

- Experience Morocco's deep history, unique atmosphere, and welcoming people on an unforgettable journey.
- Stroll through the cobbled alleyways of ancient markets and medinas.
- Experience the desert both by 4x4 and on camelback during your 2-night camp stay.



Countryside of the Emerald Isle

- Experience the culture and welcoming hospitality of the Irish.
- Overnight amongst a labyrinth of stone walls on the remote and enchanting Aran Islands.
- Travel amongst the tranquil countryside and windswept valleys of the Dingle Peninsula.

Call Collette at **855.694.8687** or contact your local travel agent.
Use offer code: **ARTASAVE**. Visit **gocollette.com/arta** to learn more.

*Savings are comprised of retail offer together with member benefit. Offer valid on new bookings only and can expire earlier due to space or inventory availability. Retail offer savings amount will vary by tour and departure date, and is only available on select departures. Call or visit [collette.com/arta](https://www.collette.com/arta) for details. Space is on a first come, first served basis. Offers are not valid on group, existing bookings or combinable with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. Promotional pricing may remain in effect after the expiration date. Travel Industry Council of Ontario Reg. # 3206405; B.C. Reg. # 23337



Dreams for the Future

- 14** Wellness: Hope Springs Eternal
- 21** ARTCF: Supporting the Future of Seniors in Alberta
- 25** The World as I See It by Brush and Pen: Life's Next Chapter
- 26** Volunteering: Rainbow of Hope for Children in Ghana
- 28** Old School: Life in Analog
- 30** Volunteering: Building a New Future — With a Little Help
- 34** Fitness: Spring into Biking
- 36** Volunteering: Friends of Barrón
- 38** The Practice of Hope: How to Cultivate Hope for the Future
- 50** Retirement Dreams and Aspirations



On the Cover:

ARTA members Al and Barb Borkent have led a refugee committee for over eight years, sponsoring three families — now permanent residents — with another on the way. Read all about it starting on page 30.

Photo by Virginia Quist

contents

Regular Contributions

- 5** From the President
- 7** From the CEO
- 9** From the Editor
- 12** From the Branches: SWARTA, MHADRTA, and WCRTA
- 42** Gardening: Cucumbers for all Occasions
- 56** In Memoriam
- 58** ARTA Bookshelf

Specials

- 15** Steppin' Out 2024: Save the Date
- 16** Travel | Fitness: Walking Swiss Style
- 18** Travel | Fitness: The Nahanni Revisited
- 22** Travel: Maya Sunshine
- 40** Wellness | Fitness: Yoga and the Art of Healthy Aging
- 49** Take Charge of Your Health with the MyARTA Health Hub

From Our Committees

- 10** Health Benefits: New Meds for Diabetes and Weight Loss
- 32** Pension & Financial Wellness: Dreaming of the Right Financial Advisor
- 33** Governance: 2024 Scholarships
- 44** Communications: 2023 Writing Contest
 - 45** First Place Travel Vignette
 - 46** First Place Flash Fiction
 - 48** First Place Poetry
- 51** Communications: 2024 Photo Contest

From Our Partners

- 53** Orbit: Are Your Identity and Cyber Security at Risk?
- 54** HumanaCare: Better Nights, Brighter Days: How to Improve Your Sleep

ARTA supports an engaged lifestyle after retirement through member-centred services, advocacy, communication, wellness, and leadership.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Margaret Sadler

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marilyn Bossert

MANAGING EDITOR

Robert Michon

COPY EDITORS AND PROOFREADERS

Aaron Axline

Vi Oko

Tara Penner

Bev Sawyer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Laurie Semler

Amanda Shaw

DESIGN

Tony Esteves

Yvette Le

Virginia Quist

PRINTING

Burke Group

news&views is published four times a year by the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA).

To change your subscription or move to a digital subscription, call the ARTA office or email marketing@arta.net.

To contact the editor, write to nveditor@arta.net.

Contributions to *news&views* are welcome. They may be sent to nvsubmit@arta.net.

Read the submission guidelines at arta.net/link/nvguidelines.

Deadline for submissions to the Flower Power issue is April 20, 2024.

To advertise in *news&views*, contact marketing@arta.net.

Rate Sheet:

arta.net/link/arta-media-kit

For specific ARTA inquiries, see arta.net/contact.

Telephone: 780-822-2400
Canada only: 1-855-212-2400
fax: 1-780-447-0613
email: info@arta.net
website: arta.net

CANADIAN PUBLICATION AGREEMENT
#40033998

Spring 2024 | VOL. 32.3

Canadian Dental Care Plan

ARTA has been researching the Federal Government's new Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP). Thank you to all members who wrote in to share their experiences. While regulations and eligibility regarding the plan may change in the future, at the present time, it is our understanding that ARTA members are not eligible to receive coverage under the CDCP. The government's eligibility criteria consider ARTA members to have access to an existing dental plan, whether you are currently receiving dental coverage or not.

If this news comes as a disappointment, we encourage you to write to your Member of Parliament to share any concerns you have. ●



This publication is provided for general information purposes only and is not meant as legal or other professional advice. You should not rely on, or take or fail to take any action, based upon the information provided in this publication. The views expressed in each article are the views of the author(s) of each article and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association or of the Association's directors, officers, employees, and agents. If you require specific legal or professional advice on any issue, please consult a lawyer or other professional advisor. The Alberta Retired Teachers' Association, its directors, officers, employees, agents, and authors shall not be liable in any manner, or to any extent, for any loss, damage, or expense whatsoever, arising from or in connection with any use of or reliance on the information contained in this publication, including, but not limited to, any indirect or consequential damages.

ARTA sells advertising space to third party organizations such as its partners. Publication of an advertisement does not mean that ARTA endorses a product or service. ARTA does not make any representations or offer any warranties, nor are there any implied or express conditions, with respect to the quality of any advertised goods or services or the fitness of such goods or services for the purposes so advertised. ARTA recommends that all readers conduct their own research and be diligent when considering important purchasing decisions and make the choice that is ultimately in the reader's own best interest.



From the President

Deb Gerow | President, ARTA

Look to This Day

As a child, one of my favourite activities in July or August was attending camp. I enjoyed it so much that my parents knew that they should not plan family excursions when my age group was scheduled for camp. It became a must-do on my summer “schedule.”

Every morning at camp, we attendees scrambled from our beds to go outside and assemble around the flagpole. Standing on the dewy grass facing the rising sun, we would watch as the flag was raised. Then we would recite the “Salute to the Dawn,” which begins with “Look to this day.” This ancient Sanskrit poem was written in the fifth century CE. Its words have stayed with me all my life. I am sure that at age 9 not all of it made sense to me, but time has clarified my understanding.

The poet, Kalidasa, talks about the importance of every single day. He emphasizes that everything in our existence that is true and real is contained in a single day. He concludes that it is essential to live every day well. Our yesterdays will be happy dreams and our tomorrows will be hopeful visions if we do so.

This message is probably why this poem remains in my memory. I confess that I am a dreamer. I do believe that it is important to live every day to its utmost. I am fortunate to have many happy memories of days gone by, and I dream of great things yet to be accomplished.

I think that those who do the work of the Alberta Retired Teachers’ Association, whether paid employees or members who have volunteered their time for the organization, are dreamers at heart. That is not to say that we “dream the impossible dream.” Our vision is to “support an engaged lifestyle after retirement through member-centred services, advocacy, communication, wellness, and leadership.” This very achievable goal is what we work toward every day.

When our association was formed, the original members were concerned about adequate pensions, health benefits for seniors, and opportunities for retirees to overcome isolation by socializing with other members. Since that time, we have seen our pension plan become fully funded. The ARTA Benefit Plans provide exceptional coverage for health care and travel insurance. Our ARTA branches organize many events for their members to engage in, and ARTA committees support and organize activities like conferences, the ARTA Annual Golf Tournament, and the ARTA Wellness Challenge.

The recent opening of the ARTARx pharmacy offers another benefit to members in the greater Edmonton area. (We are currently dreaming of and working toward offering this service to members in other parts of the province.) In a few months we are opening an ARTA office in Calgary, which will provide better access for members living in the southern part of the province.

Through hard work and living every day to its fullest, we can look back on happy memories of past efforts and look forward to a bright future for ARTA. I exhort you all to keep on dreaming, and together we will make a difference. ●



An offer to grant you peace of mind

Are you considering retirement living?

As Canada's largest senior housing choice, Chartwell Retirement Residences is thrilled to announce an exclusive offer for the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA).

We understand that choosing the next place to call home is a significant decision deserving of time and attention. We offer ARTA members the opportunity to move into a Chartwell retirement residence, with the added benefit of receiving one month rent **FREE***!

*Conditions Apply



To learn more about this offer, call **1-855-461-0685** or scan the QR code to visit us at **Chartwell.com**



CHARTwell



From the CEO

Daniel Mulloy | Chief Executive Officer, ARTA

The Impact of Five Stars

“Don’t use social media to impress people; use it to impact people.”

— Dave Willis, author, and speaker

The other day, ARTA received a “five-star Google review” regarding the service that our staff provided to a member of the association. The impact of that review did more for our association’s morale than you can imagine.

When people go out of their way to leave a positive review, it genuinely impacts the way staff and leadership feel about themselves and the job they are doing. A palpable energy vibrates through the building when someone posts that they have had a wonderful experience.

Social media has an enormous impact on the world, both in good ways and in bad. As an association, it allows us to hear instantaneous feedback. But over the years, we have found that while people who feel frustrated often rush to the internet to voice their dissatisfaction, it’s far less common for happy, satisfied people to take time to leave positive feedback. Both are equally important for the healthy growth of an organization like ARTA.

We always love to hear from our members, no matter what. While we strive to do the best we can, we know there are times when we miss the mark. Feedback is important. It shows us where we made mistakes. Sometimes though, negative feedback can do more harm than good. People can leave faceless, mean-spirited comments, not realizing the toll it takes on the staff who are

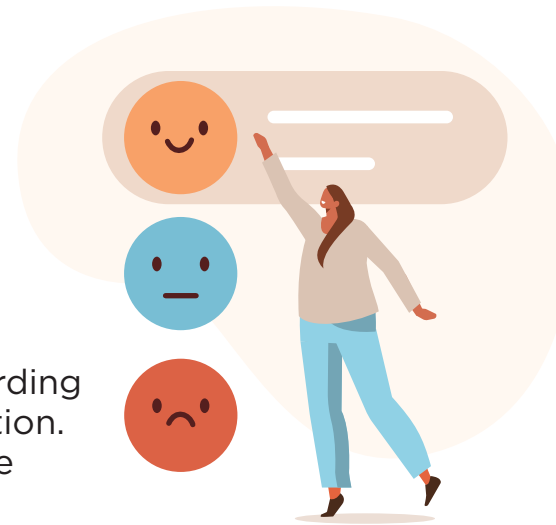
doing their very best to meet our members’ needs. Sometimes, people lash out due to an easily fixed misunderstanding, but when tempers cool, the negative review remains, causing worry for other members who read it.

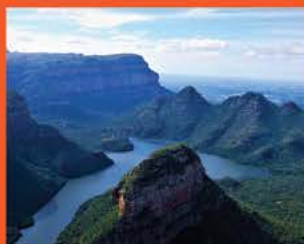
The exact opposite happens when a complimentary review is given. Moods rise, people feel pride in the work they’re doing, and it creates a drive among staff to keep levels of member satisfaction high.

To those of you who leave us five-star Google reviews or send emails of appreciation... thank you. Thank you for the impact you have had on our organization and in improving and maintaining positive morale.

To those who have reached out to voice your concerns or displeasure, we are sorry we didn’t meet your expectations. We do appreciate your comments and are always doing our best to improve. I ask only for your patient cooperation while we work to set things right.

We are always just one click or phone call away,





Explore Southern Africa: October 8-23, 2024 (14 Nights)

Wildlife, Wineries & Waterfalls! Join this Trip Merchant Journeys small group departure. South Africa is one world in one country, as it is very diverse. As you travel throughout you will witness dramatically different scenery and the various ecosystems that exist. *Highlights Include:* Cape Town – Table Mountain – Wine Region – Kapama Private Game Reserve (5 Included Game Drives) – Victoria Falls – Zambezi River Sunset Cruise – Optional Botswana.

REGULAR RATE: \$9,399 | MEMBER RATE: \$8,999

*Prices in CAD, per person, based on 2 people sharing; includes 2 domestic flights and all gratuities



Mesmerizing Morocco: October 22-November 7, 2024 (15 Nights)

Join this comprehensive small group adventure throughout Morocco, with only 12-18 passengers! Morocco has plenty to offer, including medieval cities, the maze-like Medina's, local open-air markets, Riads, mosques and minarets, the Sahara Desert, the Arab & Berber culture, the Atlas Mountains, Roman ruins, the Moroccan cuisine and the beautiful Islamic architecture/monuments.

REGULAR RATE: \$6,299 | MEMBER RATE: \$5,999

*Prices in CAD, per person, based on 2 people sharing; including all gratuities



Incredible India: October 25-November 11, 2024 (16 Nights)

Join this unique, culturally immersive trip of a lifetime to India, featuring the Old Delhi, Taj Mahal, Amber Fort, a 6-night River Cruise aboard the Ganges Voyager I (maximum of 28 cabins), and the glorious beaches of Goa! Also featuring, Diwali Festival. Experience the award-winning Ganges Voyager I River Cruise that will take you on an intriguing journey and witness the most breath-taking views.

REGULAR RATE: \$6,799 | MEMBER RATE: \$6,299

*Prices in CAD, per person, based on two people sharing a room; includes 2 domestic flights and all gratuities



Discover Colombia: November 26-December 7, 2024 (11 Nights)

Join Tom and Ryan, Founder's of Trip Merchant! Colombia is the second most biodiverse country in the world! Colombia is no longer the unsafe destination it once was. It is such a beautiful country that offers so many different experiences. *Highlights Include:* Bogota – Monserrate – Coffee Cultural Landscape – Cocora Valley – Salento – Guatapé – Boat Cruise – Medellín – Comuna 13 – Cartagea – 4 Nights at the Legendary Sofitel Legend Santa Clara in Cartagena – Getsemani – Isla de Rosario.

REGULAR RATE: \$6,299 | MEMBER RATE: \$5,999

*Prices in CAD, per person, based on 2 people sharing; includes 3 domestic flights and all gratuities

Please Note: Above trips exclude international airfare prices are based on a minimum of travellers; all departures are 16-24 passengers only (except Morocco which is 12-18 passengers); many inclusions for each departure; some dates are hosted dates; other terms and conditions may apply. Limited space available!

For more information on the above trips, and other departures available, please contact Trip Merchant at info@tripmerchant.com or call at 1-800-481-9739 ext. 3.



From the Editor

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

Light One Candle

The light persists and in it we find hope. This feature of light is commonly heard at Christmas; Amnesty International uses a candle as a symbol in its hope-filled human rights campaigns. I'm glad that Ronna Jevne is writing in this issue about hope. We can't seem to be encouraged to hope often enough.

I recently heard CBC's Matt Galloway interview Jane Goodall, the conservation icon. You can listen to it online or listen to Jane's podcasts, called Hopecast, watch the latest documentary *Jane Goodall: Reasons for Hope*, or read any of Jane Goodall's books: *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times*; *Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating*; or possibly *Seeds of Hope: Wisdom and Wonder from the World of Plants*. Notice what drives Jane Goodall?

I've told you before about two email subscriptions I have — "Reasons to be Cheerful" and "Future Crunch" (recently renamed "Fix the News"). Look for Future Crunch's "66 Good News Stories You Didn't Hear About in 2023" to read about all the progress that humanity made in 2023. Yes, we did make progress. Here are a few highlights from Future Crunch's sixty-six stories that they'd boiled down from their favourite four hundred of 2023.



Did you know there's a vaccination for malaria?

It's a stunning achievement after some seventy years of frustrating research. Millions of kids in Africa will receive the vaccination this year.

The world's solar capacity has doubled in the last eighteen months.

Imagine that. Solar is likely to be the world's dominant source of energy before the end of this decade.



More girls are getting an education. UNICEF reported that there are fifty million more girls in school today than there were in 2015.



Most places in the world are safer than they used to be.

Crime plummeted in the United States, with initial data indicating that murder rates for 2023 are down by almost thirteen per cent, one of the largest ever annual declines.

In environmental news, the UN High Seas Treaty is the first international agreement on ocean protection since 1982.

In 2023, deforestation dropped dramatically in the Amazonian countries. Many cities around the world can boast creative and effective greening projects.



As Future Crunch's CEO commented, the media report the planes that didn't land, not all the planes that did. Listening to media reports of wars and disasters, there's a tendency to despair, especially as we age. We've seen and heard so much calamity, we think we're surrounded by it. But so many planes land, the snow will melt, the gardens will grow again, birds will sing. Let hope motivate you to shine more brightly as spring returns. ●



Health Benefits

Gary Sawatzky | Chief Operating Officer, ARTA

ARTA's Benefit Plans and New Meds for Diabetes and Weight Loss

As you may have read in January's *ARTAfacts* newsletter, new antidiabetic and weight-loss medications are leading to considerable cost increases to private benefit plans, like ARTA's — and to public plans that cover these medications.

The first medication, Ozempic (which uses a medicinal ingredient named semaglutide) is used to treat type 2 diabetes. Ozempic works by mimicking the effects of a naturally occurring hormone called GLP-1, which helps regulate blood sugar levels. It is typically administered as a weekly injection and is often used in combination with diet and exercise.

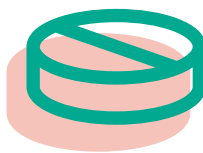
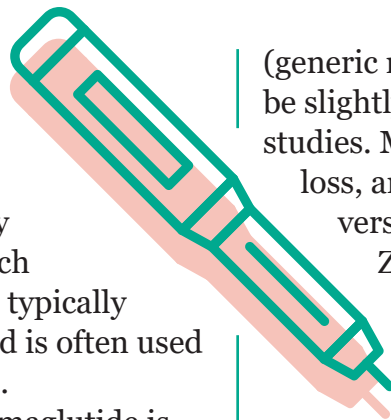
Another medication containing semaglutide is called Rybelsus, which is available as an oral tablet. While the two medications use the exact same medicinal ingredient, albeit at different dosages, most people prefer to use Ozempic because it has also been approved to reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke in adults with type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Semaglutide has several side effects, including weight loss; this has led to its manufacturer selling yet another version of semaglutide at a higher dose, called Wegovy. This high-dose version is specifically prescribed for chronic weight management in adults with obesity or who are overweight and have at least one weight-related condition. While it was approved for sale in Canada as a weight-loss medication in November 2021, stock is not yet available because of its popularity in other countries — the supply of Wegovy has not yet caught up to its demand.

The second antidiabetic medication that is just beginning to enter the marketplace is Mounjaro

(generic name tirzepatide). It has been proven to be slightly more effective than Ozempic in scientific studies. Mounjaro also has a side effect of weight loss, and, like Ozempic, it also has a weight-loss version available at a higher dosage called Zepbound. Zepbound was just approved for sale in the United States in November 2023, but has not yet been submitted to Health Canada for approval as of this writing. And following on the heels of Zepbound is an even newer medication called MariTide, which is undergoing clinical trials but promises to be just as effective as Wegovy, but with fewer side effects and is better at keeping weight off in the long term.

Both Wegovy and Zepbound have been proven to be very effective medicines for weight loss. According to scientific studies, users of Wegovy have been able to reduce their weight by up to 15%, and Zepbound users have reduced their weight by



semaglutide
molecule

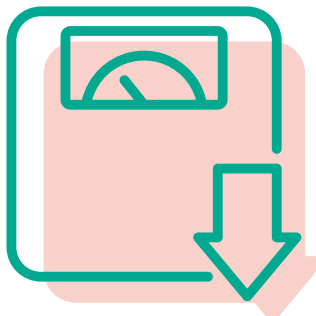
as much as 22%. These promising results have led to people trying to use the antidiabetic versions of the two medications to take advantage of their weight-loss capabilities, with some people attempting to get prescriptions to use the medications “off-label” (for a purpose that has not been approved for use by Health Canada). For example, people who do not have diabetes have been trying (often successfully) to get a prescription for the antidiabetic medications Ozempic, Rybelsus, or Mounjaro to take advantage of their weight-loss side effects. This situation has led to a significant shortage of these medications, as well as a few potential health complications for people who are taking these medications when they are not diabetic, such as pancreatitis, biliary disease, bowel obstruction, and gastroparesis.

Ozempic has been quite popular with ARTA’s members — the benefit plan paid over \$400,000 for Ozempic in 2023, and our plan was the second

payor (behind public-sponsored plans) in most cases. ARTA’s benefit plans currently cover Ozempic and Rybelsus under its prior authorization program, meaning your physician needs to complete a form outlining the medication’s treatment protocol and confirming it will be used as approved by Health Canada. In other words, these medications cannot be used off-label and receive coverage from ARTA’s benefit plans — we only cover drugs for use as approved by Health Canada.

Mounjaro is not currently covered by ARTA’s plans, but coverage is expected to be approved once it has been reviewed by the public health care plans, by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health, and by our claims adjudicator.

We will continue to monitor new breakthrough drugs that enter the marketplace and report our findings to ARTA members. ●



Solid, dependable, and reliable.

The Teachers’ Pension Plan is fully funded this year for the first time in its history with a 101% funded ratio, and the Private School Teachers’ Pension Plan remains fully funded with a funded ratio of 109%. What that means for our members is that as a result of prudent management, your pension plan remains on a solid foundation, and you can continue to count on it to be there for you.

Full details in our 2023 annual report at
www.atrf.ca/annualreport



ATRF.ca



From the Branches



ARTA Volunteer of the Year Award

Terry Whitehead | President, SWARTA

With many wonderful members in our branch, choosing just one member for the ARTA Volunteer of the Year award was challenging. Congratulations to Valeria Lazzaretto!



During a forty-year teaching career with the Holy Spirit School District, while raising three children, Val has been a volunteer musician with the Lethbridge Symphony for the past fifty-two years! Playing in the Lethbridge Symphony has allowed her to maintain a level of expertise on the violin because in her words, “Preparing for concerts does force one to practice!” Making personal connections with other musicians and like-minded individuals has been of great benefit and she considers the decades as a volunteer musician to be a major highlight in her life.



This involvement also led to other musical endeavours, and over the years Val has served on the executive of the Carl Orff Society, played (in the pit orchestras) for numerous Lethbridge Musical Theatre and other productions, assisted with several high school musicals, and volunteered with the Lethbridge String Youth Program. Currently she is on the Board of Directors for the Lethbridge and District Music and Speech Arts Festival Society.

Outside the realm of music, Val completed several terms as president for the Hungarian Cultural Society of Southern Alberta and continues to volunteer in various capacities with them as well as the Hungarian Old-Timers' Society. Presently she is on the executive for St. Basil's Catholic Women's

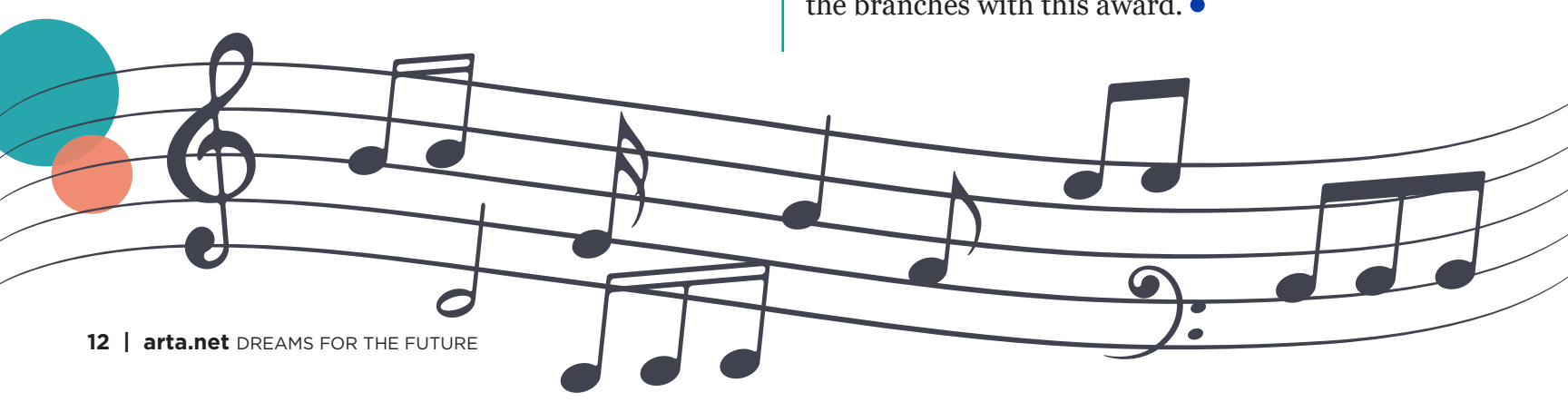


Terry Whitehead, Vaughan Coupland,
and Valeria Lazzaretto

League and serves in several church ministries regularly. When time allows (beyond providing some care for grandchildren and elderly relatives), Val helps out with casinos, bingos, ceremonies and special events for a few other local societies, assists with yard maintenance for the L'Arche Home in her neighbourhood, and sometimes even manages to offer homemade baking when needed.

We are so fortunate to have Val as one of our members!

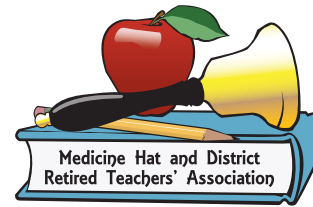
Thank you to Vaughan Coupland for presenting the award on our behalf and to ARTA for supporting the branches with this award. ●





2023 Scholarship Winner

Mel Deydey | Past-President, MHADRTA



Donna Mae Goldade presented the Clarence M. Goldade Scholarship for the final time at the Eagle Butte High School awards ceremony on Friday, October 27, 2023. This year's recipient Kiara Reesor, a first-year student in the faculty of education, Medicine Hat College, was unable to attend. The award was accepted by Laura Hausauer on her behalf.

The Clarence M. Goldade Scholarship, established in 2014 following a very successful ARTA golf tournament, commemorated educator and ARTA member Clarence Goldade, MHADRTA president from 2009–2011.

The intent was to establish a series of scholarships to help post-secondary students studying to become teachers. When the scholarship was first awarded in 2014, it was a one-time \$1,000 provincial scholarship awarded to a student entering second-year studies in education. In the nine subsequent years, a series of \$500 local scholarships were presented annually to a graduate of Eagle Butte High School in Dunmore, part of Prairie Rose School Division — the division where Clarence Goldade was a long-time educator. ●

**Laura Hausauer and
Donna Mae Goldade**



WCRTA President Honoured with Volunteer Award

Rob Pearn | Vice President, WCRTA



Wolf Creek
RETIRED
Teachers' Association

Frank Tschabold has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Wolf Creek Retired Teachers' Association for the past ten years.

Frank stepped in as president, replacing Juanita Knight when she was elected president of the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association.

A "behind the scenes guy," Frank does all the necessary planning for our WCRTA breakfasts and luncheons — books the facility, books a caterer, and is there early to make sure everything is set up and ready.

Frank is passionate about recruiting newly retired teachers to become involved with ARTA. Every year, he speaks at the Wolf Creek School Division Retirement Banquet and Awards, handing out ARTA packages to each new retiree.

Frank is most deserving of this Alberta Retired Teachers' Association Volunteer Award. ●

Gary Sawatzky presented Frank with the ARTA Volunteer Award at the Wolf Creek Retired Teachers' Association Christmas luncheon on December 8, 2023, in Ponoka, AB.





Wellness

Ron Jeffery | Member, Wellness Committee, ARTA



Hope Springs Eternal

As I sit down to write this article, it is the coldest day of the winter in mid-January. I look out at the snow through frosted windowpanes and see in my mind freshly cut, dew-drenched, green grass — signs of the spring to come. I think of possibilities of what I can do; what I can be; how I can make a difference in the lives of those I love and to those who need love, caring, and encouragement.

As we move further into our retirements, we often think of the past — where we have been and what we have accomplished; perhaps, too, of disappointments and dreams unfulfilled. Yet a new spring always renews in us dreams of hope and possibilities.

Reflecting on the past with the objectivity of age can help us move forward.

To Live Life

Ron Jeffery (1995)

To think of yesterday is to remember our memories.
To think of tomorrow is to dream our dreams.
To think of today is to live life.

I was walking by an elementary school the other day and saw, through a classroom window, the face of a student looking out at the world. Were they dreaming of their future? It is a fast-moving, complicated world today, with technology in so many ways dominant.

This is the world our youth and our own children and grandchildren must now navigate. Will they have the skills to meet the challenges of their world? Growing up mid-last century, it seemed simpler then — we spent more time with family and with friends, playing outside, eating ice cream on the lawn, watching our world go by. There were no computers; television was just developing and was often a reason for our families to gather and watch the latest episode of our favourite programs. We listened to music on a transistor radio as our parents yelled at us to “turn down that noise” of rock and roll. We would go out early in the day to play and come home when the sun went down. We had fewer organized sports and more pick-up games on the street. Cars were to impress the girls; they were noisy and didn’t have seat belts! We weren’t “tethered” to our parents through a cell phone or driven to and from school for safety. We didn’t practise “lockdowns.” We didn’t know what an active shooter was.





Most of us survived; developed dreams and lived our lives the best we could, meeting challenges and fears as they came and working to make the world a better place to live for ourselves and our families.

Over time there are those of us who stop dreaming; stop hoping; stop planning; stop achieving. We have stopped “looking out the window” at the world and reimagining our place in it.

Whatever time we have left with whatever limitations we might encounter along the way can and should be meaningful. Like the child in the window — we never have to stop dreaming and hoping. ●

Ron Jeffery taught with the Calgary Board of Education for thirty years and worked in educational travel for 16 years, even to this day hosting longstay tours for retirees. He continues his passion of photography and volunteering with ARTA and CRTA committees.

Was our youth and world perfect? Of course not. We lived after two world wars; witnessed the Korean War, Vietnam, and Kent State; feared the Cold War; had nuclear bomb shelters in backyards and escape route signs if missiles were incoming — we knew what the Doomsday Clock was. Women stayed home while the men worked. Open discrimination was tolerated. We saw an American president and his brother assassinated on television. A simpler time perhaps but certainly not perfect.

STEPPIN' INTO SPRING 2024

Thursday, April 25 and Friday, April 26, 2024

The Calgary Retired Teachers' Association invites you to join us at the annual “Steppin' Out” Conference. We look forward to welcoming retired colleagues and friends from across the province and are saving a spot just for you!

Thursday evening will see you enjoying a delicious meal followed by entertainment provided by **3rd Time Lucky Quartet**. Their repertoire includes barbershop classics, pop hits, folk songs, touching ballads, and musical theatre tunes.

Friday's Keynote Speaker: Retired news anchor Darrel Janz. Building on stories from his long career as a journalist, Darrel will be focussing on the importance of finding purpose in retirement.

Riviera Hotel and Conference Centre
3515 26 Street NE, Calgary, Alberta

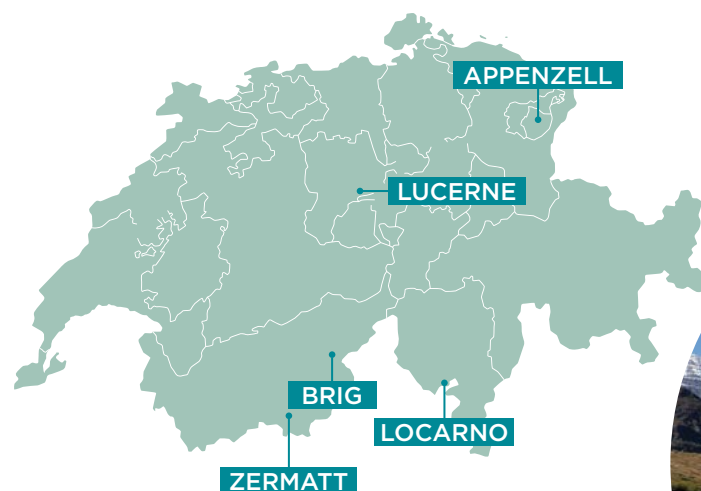
Complete program and registration details online.

calgaryretiredteachers.org





Walking Swiss Style: Alpine High with Effort Low



As we age, the walking and hiking trails we used to explore in our younger years may present challenges. There's often too much elevation gain over too few kilometres. In Switzerland, however, those problems are usually eliminated by using buses, trains, cable cars, and lifts.

About thirty years ago my mother and I spent three weeks travelling together when she was in her seventies, about the same age as I am now. She was quite fit and healthy but not great at climbing — no problem. While spending a week in Lucerne we took the train to Engelberg and then the gondola to the Trübsee, a lovely hanging lake about eight hundred metres above the town. We were greeted by the sound of cow bells as we took the level path around the lake. Later we took a chair lift to the Jochpass where abundant wildflowers such as vivid blue alpine gentians bloomed. Walking back down to the lake is not recommended for those with knee problems!



Trübsee near Engelberg, Lucerne area

Later we spent a week in Locarno on Lake Maggiore. Our small hotel overlooked the lake, and we dined outside under the spreading tree branches. As in many European countries, it's usually best and most reasonable to stay in a B&B or small family-run hotel and take half board, usually a buffet breakfast and three-course dinner.

One day we took the post bus to the Valle Verzasca. The bus bugled the first notes of the "William Tell Overture" as it careened around the many bends in the road, sending people scurrying into doorways and cars to the minimal shoulder. We descended for our walk at Sonogno, the last village of stone houses. From there, trails led up into the mountains, but we took the path along the river that followed the valley bottom. Unique stone barns bordered the trail, and huge boulders littered the stream. Crossing the river to return to town, we noticed a beautifully kept graveyard with carvings of mountain climbers and



Stone houses, Sonogno, Valle Verzasca



**Berggasthaus Aescher,
Ebenalp near Appenzell**

**Matterhorn from Stellisee
near Zermatt**

epitaphs such as “Died on the Rothorn.” We loved this area so much that we returned a second day and started walking at the other end of the valley near the small car-free town of Corippo, a short climb from the bus stop. From there we walked to the iconic seventeenth-century stone bridge in Lavertezzo. As we approached, we became aware of someone with a rifle down below us closer to the river. We decided to just keep walking, and soon realized he was an actor in a film.

Years later, my husband and I stopped in Switzerland on various European vacations and used the same approach to hiking. From Brig, we took a train to Fiesch, then a gondola to the Eggishorn. From the upper terminus, we had a panoramic view of the Aletschgletcher, the largest glacier in the Alps and a World Heritage Site. We went for a walk from the lower station, but paths extended over the entire area in all directions.

On a return from Italy to Munich, we stopped in Appenzell in the east. Our hostess had provided us with a pass for three days on the lifts; however, it was cold and wet and we had to make alternate plans. On our last morning, she called to the top of the Ebenalp and was told that it was sunny up there. As soon as the gondola left the ground, we were enveloped in the mist, but soon we came into the sunshine and saw the highest peaks sticking out above the clouds. Removing several layers of

clothing, we set off on a path that circled the top of the mountain. We discovered a restaurant built into the hillside, and then traversed a monk’s cave before heading back up to the station.

One of our most memorable walks was the “five lakes walk” in Zermatt. It is quite a long walk if one completes the whole circuit from the Blauherd station, but even a walk to the first lake called Stellisee is spectacular as the famous Matterhorn is reflected in the calm lake. Unfortunately, this was the one occasion on which the inn where we thought to have lunch was not open, and we had to wait until we made it back to the lower Sunnegga station after the only uphill portion of the walk. Thankfully, we always carry water and snacks.

Switzerland offers so many opportunities for exploration whether you’re a young mountaineer or a nature lover and casual walker.

With a Swiss Pass you can travel easily on all modes of transportation including buses, trains, and boats, plus get a reduction on the hefty cost of many lift tickets. *Wunderbar!* ●

A retired teacher-librarian, Rosemary Kennedy lives in Calgary with her husband and travelling companion, Selim. She’s seen out walking in Calgary every day without the aid of cable cars but often accompanied by friends.



The Nahanni Revisited After Nine Years of Graceful Aging

One of the greatest of our northern rivers is the South Nahanni in the Northwest Territories, and I have experienced it twice. Both my trips were wonderful, but the second was also a rude awakening.

We crossed a scree slope and ascended the steep trail toward the summit of Sunblood Mountain. We were in the Nahanni National Park Reserve, but the trail was rough. Spectacular views rewarded us, however, as we toiled upwards. Finally, we reached the summit, far above the Nahanni which snaked out of sight through blue-green mountain ranges.

Sunblood Mountain seemed much higher than nine years ago when I made the same trek. The elevation gain was formidable at about 1,000 metres, but why had it seemed so much higher this time? I concluded the answer was aging. Most body functions diminish after age 30, and my strength was no exception. The steep trail down was also demanding. I was the oldest of our group and the last to arrive at the riverbank where a canoe took me back across the river only a few hundred metres upstream from thundering Virginia Falls.

The next day we rafted through colourful Fourth Canyon in the sunshine but then were challenged by cold rainy weather. I had not packed enough clothes in my day bag, and the north is not kind to those who are unprepared. I was grateful when the guides opened our main packs so those who had underestimated the weather could put on more clothes.

We camped at The Gate and made the spectacular ascent to the top of the cliffs above the river. The climb had been steep, and it became obvious that I had sprained my right calf on

Five-Star Campsite

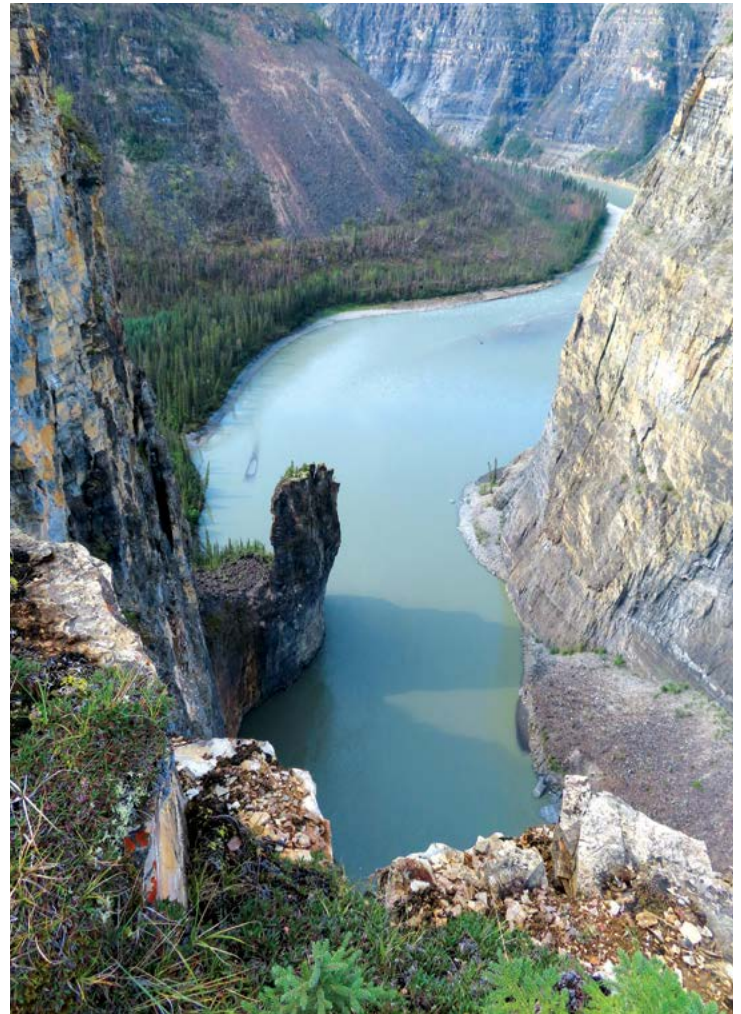
Sunblood Mountain. I was the last of our party to cross the tumultuous creek near our camp on the way back.

We paddled through the towering Gate of the Nahanni and, after a beautiful morning between the soaring walls of Third Canyon, stopped at The Library for lunch. Stacks of short horizontal rock strata reminded R. M. Patterson, who came this way in the 1920s, of books in a library, and the name stuck.

In Painted Rocks Canyon, we hiked to a fossil-laden cliff. My wife Ruth was not wearing waterproof footwear and my large grandson piggy-backed her through the creeks. On the way back, I carried her over the last creek. She is quite petite, but as I hoisted us up the steep bank, I felt a sudden pain in my calf. I had not been kind to my calf sprain.



Ruth and Werner with grandchildren Max and Amyah, on summit of Sunblood Mountain



Pulpit Rock was far below during the climb to the cliff tops beside The Gate

Good weather continued as we rafted through Second Canyon and Deadmen Valley, where the beheaded bodies of the McLeod brothers were found in 1908. Then we stopped at a campsite so beautiful the guides had named it “Five-Star.” If we approached the beaver pond behind camp, there would be a resounding tail slap as the beavers dived for cover.

The next day the incredible walls of First Canyon dwarfed our rafts. At Whitespray Springs, water so pure the guides did not treat it gushed into the river with tremendous force.

We hiked up Lafferty Canyon as far as possible, donned bathing suits, and swam through several pristine pools. They seemed much colder than nine years before, and I began to shiver violently. Fortunately, warm clothes soon restored my elderly body. The next morning, we braved Lafferty’s Riffle

and soaked in Kraus's Hot Springs. As we passed through The Splits, we saw bison, and a wolverine ran along the rocky shore until it spotted us and disappeared.

Miraculously, even though Yellowknife five hundred kilometres to the east had been evacuated because of forest fires, it was still smoke-free and sunny when a Twin Otter landed on the river at Nahanni Butte to fly us out.

It had been a remarkable journey. However, the Nahanni Valley, almost timeless by our standards, had demonstrated that humans live on a very different time scale. My 78th birthday was a month away, and I was reminded how much I had aged in the nine years since my previous trip. ●

Werner Becker is professor emeritus at the University of Calgary and author of Rafting the Great Northern Rivers. He lives with his wife and travel companion, Ruth, in Calgary.



Upper pool in Lafferty Canyon: pristine but very cold

**WEEK OF
APRIL 22,
2024**

HEART AND SOLE WELLNESS WALK



**Get out, get active,
get *together!***



- Bonnyville
- Calgary
- Cold Lake
- Edmonton
- Elk Point
- Grande Prairie
- Lac La Biche
- Lacombe
- Lethbridge
- Medicine Hat
- Morinville
- Okotoks
- Peachland, BC
- Red Deer
- Sherwood Park
- St. Paul
- Stettler
- Vermilion
- Wainwright

Find out more about the ARTA Wellness Walk in your region
landing.arta.net/wellness-walk-2024



ARTCF

Robert Michon | Manager, Communications



Supporting the Future of Seniors in Alberta

The Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation (ARTCF) works hard to find partner charities across Alberta that align with its mandate of helping Alberta's seniors access secure housing, health-care resources, and English as a second language education. At the end of 2023, ARTCF renewed its support for two programs, the Parkinson Association of Alberta and Alzheimer Calgary, and partnered with a new organization that is helping those with dementia remain in their homes for longer, Jewish Family Services Calgary.



The **Parkinson Association of Alberta** has been a partner of ARTCF for many years now, and their popular tele-support groups allow Albertans living with Parkinson's disease to connect with each other remotely, share their experiences, and offer support. ARTCF's renewed financial support of \$25,000 is allowing the Parkinson Association of Alberta to further expand their network, especially when it comes to rural and northern Alberta. It also allows the organization to offer specialized support groups for those who are having very specific experiences with Parkinson's disease, such as groups for those with advanced cases, groups for those with new diagnoses, and those without a personal support network in their own lives.



Alzheimer Calgary is another long-standing partner of ARTCF. Their focus is on education around Alzheimer's disease, both for people living with the disease and their loved ones. Upon receiving a diagnosis, many families are unsure how to proceed. Alzheimer Calgary works to build resources that educate, reduce stigma around the condition, and empower families to move forward with confidence and hope. ARTCF awarded Alzheimer Calgary with \$30,000 to expand their programming in 2024 and beyond.

Of course, these charitable efforts could not have been made without the support of ARTCF's generous donors. With low administrative overhead, 95% of the money donated to ARTCF directly funds programs like those listed above. Visit arta.net/artcf to learn more about our foundation's mandate, and to make a donation yourself. ●



A new partner for ARTCF, **Jewish Family Services Calgary** is building and expanding a program called "Memory Care," which offers at-home, one-on-one support to those living with dementia. Each participant in the program receives a personalized approach to their care, which uses their existing interests and abilities to build and maintain cognitive, physical, social, and creative health. ARTCF awarded Jewish Family Services Calgary \$20,000 to invest in the Memory Care program, bringing hope and comfort to many.



Maya men remove crusted underwater salt to provide for community needs

Maya Sunshine

Once temperatures dropped and the winter rains began, I started dreaming about snorkelling in the tropics. That first plunge into the crystal blue ocean at Puerto Morelos, Mexico, in late January 2023 was exquisite. December to April is a great time to visit Mexico's sunny Riviera Maya where sunshine and beaches abound. An experienced local diver led our group of eight hailing from Canada, the Netherlands, France, and the United States on an underwater adventure in and around the coral reef. Schools of brilliantly coloured fish swam around the giant corals while grouper and angelfish hid from the barracuda lurking nearby.

The underwater marine environment was fascinating; the water and outdoors refreshing. But the troubling brownish tinge on the coral told its own story. The National Reef Park is struggling to stay healthy. I learned more about the reef's precarious health in a report handed out by a concerned ecological group that conducts extensive research on the Mesoamerican reef. Measures are being put in place to improve the situation while development along the coast, global sea warming, and sargassum from the Sargasso Sea continue to cause concern.

It's easy to get to Cancun by air; there, you can immerse yourself in nature and Mexican culture on the Riviera Maya. At the Sian Ka'an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, I floated down ancient Maya canals in an inner tube accompanied by exotic local birds. In Rio Lagartos, a UNESCO Biosphere, a local guide took us to see a pink salt lake, crocodiles, cormorants, and flamingos.

The Maya have inhabited the southernmost part of Mexico since 500 BCE, possibly earlier. Numerous restored archaeological sites are a doorway to Maya culture. The grandeur of their ancient structures and the organization of communities built over two thousand years ago is awe-inspiring. The Maya had a deep understanding of many areas of knowledge including astronomy, the cycles of the seasons, and agriculture.

After a relaxing week in the sun at a resort, including a few day trips, my husband and I made our way by taxi and ADO (*Autobuses de Oriente*) bus to Valladolid, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Mexico's *pueblos mágicos*. At the nearby Ek' Balam ruins, an informative guide from Temozon, a Maya village, showed us around. In Valladolid, we lingered in the centre square to eat and appreciate the local vibe.

**Snorkelling in the
Mesoamerican reef,
Puerto Morelos,
Mexico**



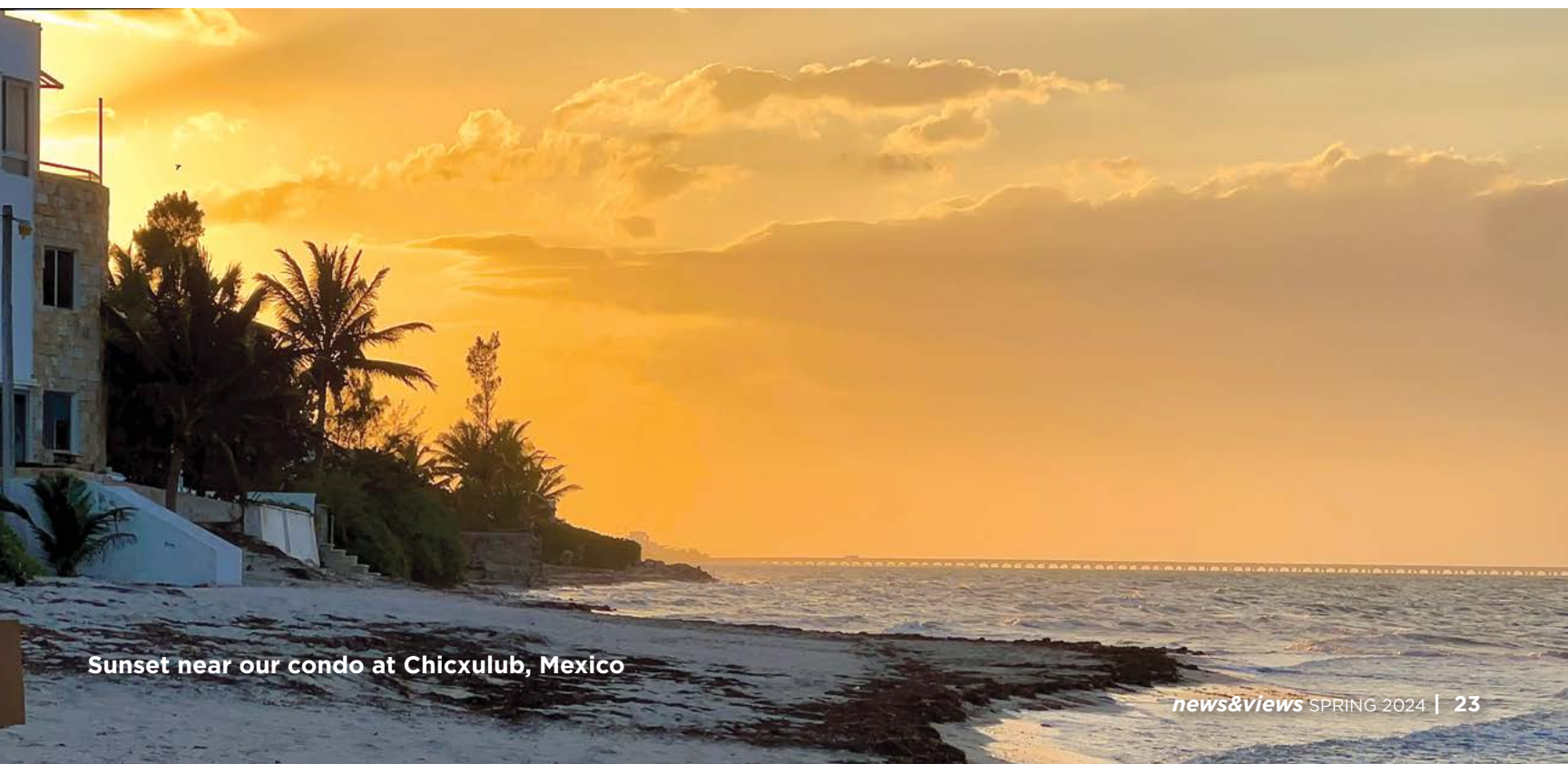
A few days later, from the bus window on our way to Mérida, we saw crews busy constructing the Maya train track. This train, from Playa del Carmen to Campeche on the Gulf of Mexico, is an enormous undertaking that will help with travel for tourists and Mexicans and reduce vehicular traffic.

For February we rented a spacious fourth-floor apartment, accessible only by stairs, in a small apartment complex by the ocean. Friends of ours have been going to Chicxulub, a small fishing village, for over twenty years. The apartment was reasonable, and a friendly community of Canadians and Americans occupied most of the other units. Daily at four o'clock, residents gathered for a happy hour around the pool to chat. What a great way to meet your neighbours!



The Chicxulub pier through the window at the Beach Club

A short walk into Chicxulub or a brief ride on a *guajolote* (rickety old school bus) or *combi* (mini-van) took us to the centre square just two blocks from the pier and a dinosaur statue. Market stalls offered local Mexican produce, the bakery provided fresh bread, and meals or snacks were available at a kiosk or restaurant. Two grocery stores, a pharmacy, and other shops provided for most needs. I also got an exceptional hair cut from the local stylist, Gabby. Personal safety concerns were minimal.



Sunset near our condo at Chicxulub, Mexico

The ancient Maya cities of Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Dzibilchaltun, Xcambó, and others can be readily visited from Chicxulub in a day. One



Bougainvillea adorn a local restaurant in Chicxulub, Mexico

day we visited Maya ruins, did some bird watching, and toured salt flats where the local Maya community mines underwater salt using traditional methods. That day we met a couple from Lloydminster — a teacher and her husband on a spring break get-away. In Progreso, ten minutes away, we watched the carnival parade with friends and listened to music in a local club. The state's capital, Mérida, a thriving cultural hub, is half an hour away by bus. There, the city's beautiful colonial architecture, along with its cultural and musical events, make it a must-see.

In the Yucatán, when the tropical sun gets too warm, a refreshing dip in one of its many

cenotes relieves fatigue and is a great way to cool down. Use of insect repellents and sunscreen is discouraged to protect the fragile ecosystem. It's an enchanting jungle experience, and if you're lucky, you won't come away with a spider bite like I did. But that's another story! ●

Delia McCrae went to the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1969, after finishing high school in Edson, Alberta. She enjoys travelling in the Spanish-speaking world and finds the Maya people to be gracious hosts.



Experience Newfoundland on a Merit hosted Island Wide Tour

Explore this beautiful destination for 8-nights with local hosts Peggy and Wayne Connors and learn why Newfoundland is one of the best places to see and appreciate nature in all its glory.

Enjoy excursions such as sightseeing in Gros Morne Park, tour of historic St. John's and excursion to Cape Spear.

merit travel

Contact a Merit Travel consultant to learn more today!
MeritTravel.com/ARTA | 1-844-408-1770

licoca ON-4499356 | BC-34799 | QC-703 563 | 5343 Dundas Street West, 4th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M9B 6K5
330-1257 Guy Street, Montreal, PQ, Canada H3H 2K5. Merit Travel is a registered trademark of H.I.S. - Merit Travel Group Inc. All rights reserved.



The World as I See It by Brush and Pen

Hiroshi Shimazaki | Words and Art

Life's Next Chapter



Hiroshi Shimazaki, *Immigrants Leaving Ellis Island, circa 1910*

The first time I was in New York City was 1967. I remember at Battery Park enjoying the sweeping view of the harbour and sketched the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island, while listening to the variety of languages drifting by. As America's largest and most active immigration station from 1892 to 1924, Ellis Island welcomed over twelve million immigrants. This painting, generated from archival photos, depicts immigrants from Europe leaving Ellis Island after a lengthy quarantine. Manhattan beckons. ●

ARTA member Hiroshi Shimazaki is a geographer/artist who has been practicing watercolour landscape sketching and painting for sixty years. Here he offers one window into an artist's mind.



Volunteering

Margaret Bennett | Article and Photos



La'Angum Learning Centre

Bantambaari School

Students at Nwodua School

Rainbow of Hope for Children in Ghana

The *harmattan* blankets West Africa with fine Sahara dust from November through March. The sky is grey and the horizon blurry. Many of the trees are devoid of foliage to conserve moisture during the scorching dry season.



We visited Ghana to assess four schools, as representatives of Rainbow of Hope for Children (ROHFC). This small non-government organization (NGO) operates out of Wainwright and has a special interest in education. Efforts such as these in Ghana are carried out all over the world, including, for example, Tanzania, Indonesia, Brazil, the Philippines, El Salvador, and Jamaica.

I am on the board of directors and volunteered with my husband and another director, Joe Gubbels, to visit Ghana to inaugurate a newly constructed school and assess the needs of three others in impoverished northeastern communities. We were joined there by Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels, also a director and resident of Ghana.

We hired a vehicle and a capable driver in Accra and drove north for two days to Tamale. There we learned that before we could venture into the

villages, we were obliged to pay a courtesy call on the local king and chief in his palace. This was the first of many calls to Mamprusi nobility, and the procedure never varied. We paid “kola money” to one of the elders, as the chief and elders gathered in the meeting room, then were given bitter kola nuts, which we were to share with others. The meeting concluded with warm invitations to return and visit any time.

Outside the city we unintentionally took the scenic route to visit our first school, Nwodua School, amid a cluster of small mud huts. The school was typical of most Ghanaian schools — long concrete buildings, one for lower elementary, one for upper elementary, and one for junior high, with covered porches on each side. The local chief had donated a piece of land to construct a library, and a capable young mother, Esther Adania Sejoah, had been appointed to manage the project.

The following day we continued to Nalerigu. Construction of a kindergarten in the village of Bantambaari had recently been completed.

Previously, the children had to walk six kilometres to the nearest elementary, with their mothers sometimes carrying the littlest ones on their backs to and from school. The journey was difficult even in our four-by-four, following a rough trail across the dusty savannah.

The opening of the school had been planned around our arrival and the entire village turned out to inspect the solid concrete structure with a corrugated metal roof and steel desks. The villagers had accomplished most of the work themselves; the women hauled water from the river in buckets on their heads to mix the concrete. Two dedicated volunteer teachers will be given training to qualify for the government-paid salary. We had brought suitcases full of books, and the students, who had never held a book before, were thrilled to flip through the pages and examine the colourful pictures.

This school visit was followed by a festival of speeches, drumming, and dancing, at which I was honoured to be “enskinned” as a chief and queen. I was given a new name, *Sumaya*, “queen of happiness,” clothed in hand-woven robes, and obligated to dance. The people stuck paper money on my sweaty forehead, payment for the drummers, while chanting “le le le.” At the end of this remarkable day, we were given live guinea fowl as a token of gratitude.

The following day’s visit to La’Angum Learning Centre was just as exciting. This impressive school embraces the Montessori method under the capable direction of headmaster Mr. Majeed. A biogas digester is being installed to convert the waste from the outhouses into gas to cook hot

La’angum
Learning Centre

Gambaga

Nalerigu

Bongbini School

Nwodua
School

Tamale

lunches. Currently, the volunteer cooks prepare vats of various combos of manioc, corn, and yams on charcoal fires for four hundred people in an unbearably hot kitchen. Our tour concluded with drumming and dancing in the courtyard, a specially planned celebration.

Our final visit was to Bongbini School, with another large enrolment and insufficient space. In fact, 125 kindergarten children were crammed into one room with two teachers and a chalkboard painted on the concrete wall. There were no other supplies. Students in all the grades were similarly squeezed into tight quarters, sitting on broken concrete floors. The head teacher, Adishetu Adam, is anxious to construct a kindergarten with assistance from ROHFC.

The children in all four schools we visited are enthusiastic learners with dedicated teachers who make do with little else besides their own ingenuity and a piece of chalk. It encouraged us to see progress being made step by step, and we’re excited to be part of these efforts to offer a quality education to children in Ghana — their ticket to a better life. ●

Margaret Bennett and her husband, Richard, have spent most of their fifty years together in Vermilion, where they raised their five children. After retiring, they were missionaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar. Their first project with ROHFC was in Bali, Indonesia beginning in 2012.

Kumasi

1 Accra, Ghana

Bongbini
Kindergarten





Old School: Life in Analog

Jock Mackenzie | Article and Photos

Old school? As a retired teacher, I look back to the '70s when I began my career, and I have mixed feelings. Do I miss Gestetner ink ruining my new bell bottoms? No. Do I wish I still had reams of paper? No. A wristwatch that did nothing but tell time? I could go on. No, I don't miss many things. But over my thirty-plus years in education and life experiences that followed, I've learned to see our world as grey. It's a beautiful shade of grey — neither black or white, not all good or all bad.

I am now in my 70s and, occasionally, I embrace things that are “old school.” In that spirit, much of this article has been written with a pen, on pieces of paper, by talking directly to people, touching actual objects, and spending time thinking on my own.

At one point (sadly, I have lapsed), I wrote (well, printed) monthly letters to my daughter's young Wil and Maisy. I chose nicer-than-average paper, a good pen, and selected a postage stamp I thought they'd like. Getting an actual letter is rare and even I am thrilled to receive one.

While it isn't a paper letter, I also prefer letters on paper — books. Yes, books on tape serve a purpose, as do e-books, but I encourage you to consider my preference. Why? The feel (holding one, turning the pages, even the cover design) and the memory of years and years of good books well-read is special.

Sharing a book with a friend creates an opportunity to visit and interact in person

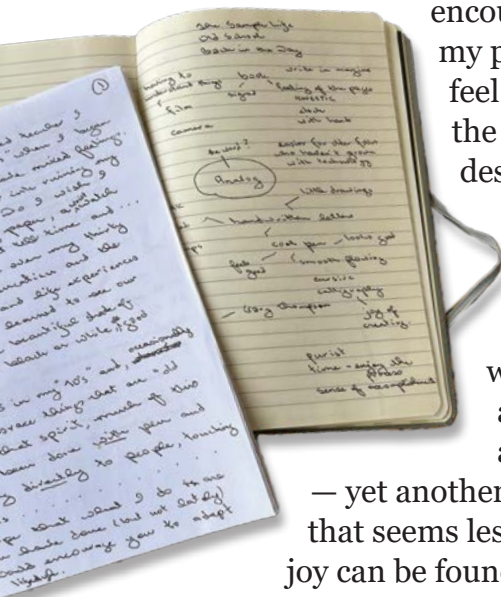
— yet another old-school activity that seems less frequent. And daily joy can be found in appreciating an

attractive bookshelf and remembering the journey each title offered.

And then, there are the myriad objects one creates or collects. For myself, I enjoy carving — by hand. I prefer not to use power tools or the increasingly popular CNC machine. Clearly, Computer Numerical Control production is woodworking wizardry, but my perfectly imperfect cribbage boards, cottonwood houses, walking sticks, and golf balls are satisfying because of the journey as well as the destination.

Recently, my son Andrew told me that he thinks of me whenever he sees my hand-carved handiwork hanging from his golf bag. Handcrafted gifts can be extra special.

Yet another aspect of amazing analog adventures is the resurgence of vinyl records. I haven't yet returned to this memorable pastime, so I sought expert advice. Eric Cheroske has been in the music business for years (gotyoucoveredmusic.com). He suggested several reasons for the dramatic increase in long play (LP) record popularity after noting that, in 2022, 41 million vinyl records versus 33 million CDs were sold in the United States. He says the biggest reason is the sound — vinyl offers a fuller, deeper, richer quality.





Album covers and liner notes are another advantage. Especially for older eyes, the printed information is readable. Having the lyrics makes it so much easier to sing along. Cover artwork brings Eric boundless notes of nostalgia. His final comment was, “Try a trip to a record store. Just find a bin of old LPs, savour the smell, flip through the albums, and feel the rush.” I intend to.

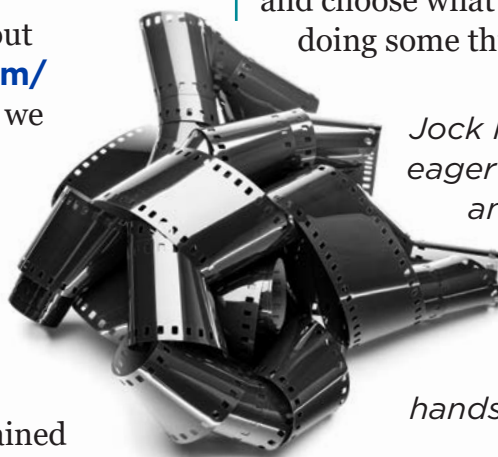
My final recommendation is film photography. Again, not my schtick, but photographer Mike Bates (500px.com/slidemkr/galleries) intrigued me as we sat on his patio discussing, not film versus digital, but the blending of the two. Mike said, “If you have analog lenses, a twenty-dollar adapter, and a digital camera, you can meld the best of both worlds.”

He then showed me a unique two-lens German analog camera and explained

that its use created a true challenge — Where would he use it? What time of day? What would be his subject? Could he use the camera to its full advantage? The result would be a self-portrait: not a picture of himself, but a statement, a figurative portrayal of his time and expertise.

I also asked why a senior could be encouraged to return to film photography. Mike said, “For the challenge,” and added, “I used to do that. Let’s see what they’re doing now.”

For many of us, what we are doing now is appreciating one of the greatest joys of retirement — time. We have a lifetime of experience; we have seen the digital world enter our lives and we both exalt in and decry its existence. I encourage you to consider a meander down memory lane, to pick and choose what’s right for you, but do think about doing some things the “old-school” way. ●



Jock Mackenzie, retired teacher, is as eager to learn new tricks as relish the analog life. As you may have read in other issues of news&views, Jock takes books to prisons and little libraries, has tried blowing glass, and now enjoys hands-on meal preparation.



**Opening
APRIL
2024**

ARTA is coming to Calgary!

And we plan to stick around.

ARTA Calgary
Suite N125, 6815 8th Street NE
Calgary, AB T2E 7H7

**Visit the ARTA Calgary
office for all your
membership needs.**



Volunteering

Robert Michon | Manager, Communications



Building a New Future — With a Little Help

Just under a decade ago, in the autumn of 2015, ARTA members Al and Barb Borkent were approached by a fellow member of their church in Sherwood Park and asked a question that would redirect the focus of their lives: “Hey, would you like to join our refugee committee?” They agreed, not knowing exactly what they were getting themselves into. Now, almost ten years later, they are at the centre of a network of families that they have helped to settle in Canada; families that, with a little help, have been able to build a promising new future for themselves.

Coming to Canada as a refugee isn’t as simple as showing up at a port or border crossing and asking to be let in. For most applicants, it’s a long process with a constant need for checks and documentation. First, those applying for refugee status need to leave their home country and prove to the Canadian government that it’s not safe for them to return. Then, they go through criminal record checks, security checks, and provide medical information. This process can take months or even years. Then, finally, when the application is approved, privately sponsored refugees can



come to Canada, but only if they have a sponsor waiting on the other side: someone who will look after them while they get settled and show them how to navigate life in their new home.

That’s where Al and Barb come in. They act as private sponsors for refugees trying to find safety and security in Canada. “When we first got started, we were given a list of one hundred names and



told to pick two families we wanted to sponsor,” says Al. “From there, we had to start raising money. The government wants to see that you can provide for the family while they’re getting set up; depending on the size of that family, you





As seniors in our community, we see an opportunity to mentor the younger generation to continue on with the work we're doing."

— Barb Borkent

might need to raise \$40,000 to \$50,000."

Al and Barb are active participants in the application process. They call their MP's office for regular updates and do what they can to speed things along. "Every time we call to get an update, it seems to motivate the government to move things along a little faster," Al jokes, "So, we like to keep in touch."

After the family arrives, Al and Barb set them up in the community. This means helping them find housing, work, doctors, banks, drivers' training, English classes, or whatever they need to be successful in Canada. It may seem like a lot of work, but as a sponsor you're not just providing a service for someone in need, you're inviting a family to be part of your life and claiming a certain degree of responsibility for their well-being.

"We basically see it as an opportunity to serve," says Al. "Living in Canada, we're very privileged. We've always been well provided for, and looking at the world around us, we see such need everywhere. There are so many opportunities to help."

Their first family arrived in 2016 from Syria by way of Lebanon. Since then, they've sponsored a number of other families fleeing Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. Some families have since relocated to be closer to relatives in other cities or to find better

work opportunities. Most, however, have stayed in the Sherwood Park area, where Al and Barb remain in regular contact, even years after the families became self-sufficient.

Besides helping refugees directly, there is another aspect of Al and Barb's work. That list of one hundred names they were given back in 2015 made it clear to both of them that no matter how many applicants they are able to help, there are always more in need. But with enough people pitching in, their impact can be greatly expanded.

"As seniors in our community, we see an opportunity to mentor the younger generation to continue on with the work we're doing," says Barb. "We take them under our wing and show them what the steps are to become a private sponsor. We also reach out to other churches who want to start sponsoring families and share tips and lessons we've learned."

Currently, Al and Barb are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their latest family from Syria. By now, they're used to the routine, but there is always a certain sense of excitement as the arrival date approaches. After that, they plan to sponsor another family, and another, for as long as they are able and as long as there are people to help. ●



Pension & Financial Wellness

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

Dreaming of the Right Financial Advisor

Our articles and webinars recommend that you speak with a professional advisor before making any financial decisions. But how to find the right financial advisor? The answer: It depends!

There are independent and company-affiliated financial advisors. An independent advisor should generate personalized strategies based on your interests, risk level, and financial situation. An independent financial advisor charges a set fee: an hourly rate (\$100–\$250 per hour) or a set percentage (1%–1.5%) of your investable funds. Independent advisors are perceived to provide unbiased service and offer a wider range of investment choices.

A company-affiliated financial advisor might have their choices influenced or restricted by the company's "set menu." There may be no up-front financial cost, but they earn a commission on your financial purchases. You should ask how, and how much, they are paid over a one-year period, and if they can't give you a straight answer, I suggest a hasty retreat.

Also consider the certification of your potential financial advisor. In Canada, there are Certified Financial Planners (CFP), Qualified Associate Financial Planners (QAFP), Registered Financial Planners (RFP), and Chartered Financial Analysts (CFA). They are backed by three separate professional organizations: QAFPs and CFPs by FP Canada, RFPs by The Institute of Advanced Financial Planners, and CFAs by the CFA Institute. These certifying agencies provide training, ensure ethical behaviour, and have a complaint process for perceived ethical breaches.

Some planners may have several designations from different organizations. Ask about unfamiliar abbreviations and then research: How are they certified? How much education is required? Is there a solid code of ethics? Is there a clearly defined enforcement/discipline process?

fee-based

company
affiliated

A good financial advisor should provide a personalized financial plan and give you the opportunity to discuss insurance, tax, and estate planning. Your advisor should have a communication plan and be willing to help you increase your financial knowledge.

Remember, you are about to employ someone to look after your financial future. Ask friends and acquaintances, and use the internet. With today's technology, you can even have an advisor in another city (make sure they understand your provincial laws and regulations). Talk with several independent and company-affiliated advisors and ask questions. If you are unsure about any answers, cross that person off your list.

One question to ask: Do you prefer mutual funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs)? Both mutual funds and ETFs invest in a diversified portfolio of securities from companies around the world, can focus on specific world regions

or a particular category (e.g., banking, energy, technology, dividend-paying securities), and are well regulated here in Canada. However, their management expense ratios (MERs) — the cost of operating the fund — are different. Mutual funds typically charge 1.5%–2.5% while the ETFs charge 0.25%–0.35%! Over time, this difference could mean thousands more dollars earned with an ETF.

ARTA's extended health care coverage includes Greenshield Counselling (formerly Inkblot), which includes financial counselling. A thirty- to sixty-minute introductory meeting can allow you to determine if you are happy with the advisor and understand how much it would cost to continue. ●



In the spirit of full disclosure, retired teacher Ray Hoger explains that he invests almost entirely in ETFs, and he has not held a mutual fund for over twenty years.

ARTA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

SPONSORED BY ORBIT INSURANCE SERVICES

The **ARTA scholarship program** is made possible by the generosity of ARTA members and Orbit Insurance Services, a service partner for home and auto insurance. Orbit Insurance Services provides, through ARTA, scholarships to students who are **related to an ARTA member**. These scholarships recognize academic achievement, community involvement, and volunteer work.

The scholarship criteria have been updated this year to make the **scholarships more accessible**: the diploma and degree scholarship categories have been combined into one category, which will award up to eight \$5,000 scholarships. Applicants will no longer be required to specify one or the other.

Applications for the 2024 scholarships are now open and close on July 31, 2024.

Up to eight
\$5,000
scholarships
available!



To read the full criteria and to apply, visit arta.net/scholarships.



Fitness

Sheila Bean

Spring into Biking

In the spring, when drivers bring their cherished vintage cars into the sunshine, I haul out my own seasonal vehicle — my bicycle. Not vintage but still beloved.

I've always had some sort of bike, including a couple of ratty, ill-fitting jalopies bought at the Regina police sale when I was a kid. I rode them around my Saskatchewan farmyard, juddering over ruts and gravel, and quickly wheeling up onto the grass when I heard the crescendo roar of an approaching tractor.

As an adult, my previous bike was an attractive turquoise cruiser, with a basket that begged for

a bouquet, bottle, and baguette. But I lacked the strength and stamina to tackle hills and distances, meaning that I couldn't keep up with my husband, meaning that I mainly biked alone — fifteen minutes to the gym and back.

Just as COVID-19 was gaining traction, I bought an e-bike. Game changer! I still pedal, but now a battery gives my legs a boost. I can bike forever! Hills are possible! I realize that — per pedal stroke — I'm not burning the same energy as a legs-only cyclist, but I'm biking oodles more than I would otherwise. I pedalled three thousand kilometres that first season.

From the outset, I resolved to smile. Some cyclists look as if they have a thorn on their saddle, and I didn't want to wear that expression on my face. I decided to truly enjoy the gossiping birds and the leathery forest smells in Fish Creek Park (Calgary's massive provincial park, linked to a thousand kilometres of city trails). I also decided to say "hello" to everyone I meet, from sleeping babies to speedsters on their skinny bikes. Some folks don't hear me, or choose not to hear me, but sometimes I receive a spark of eye contact, a little wave, or even a "hello" back. Kind of a micro-greeting.

Although I stick to park paths, sometimes they can be crowded, and not everybody obeys the rules — leisurely spreading across both lanes, walking a dog off-leash, or leaving dog poop or dog-poop bags on the path. Some cyclists speed dangerously and frighten pedestrians. A few riders sneak no-pedal motorbikes into the park.

But there are great moments, too! One fellow strolls with a parrot on his shoulder, and another guy brings a duck to swim inside a hula hoop in the



creek. There are creative recumbent bikes, and oh, the hoverboards! (Are they allowed?) One woman leaned forward on a hoverboard, wearing a niqab and a long, flowing robe, looking majestic. Fly fishers and picnickers lug their gear. One day a pedestrian bravely negotiated the path with a white cane.

Biking is so much fun that sometimes I pop into the park on my own, which I never used to do.

OK, I'll come clean: I did fall and break my arm two years ago, on flat, dry, uncrowded asphalt. I was biking slowly. I took my eyes off the path and, well, slipped off, just like that. Strangely, as I lay on the path with my husband attempting to help me, no one stopped to ask if I was okay. They just whizzed past my head on their bikes. Oh well, I healed and hopped back on.

If you have an old friend hiding in your garage, I urge you to tune it up and join us on the trails! Make sure that your helmet hasn't expired (they do) and consider carrying a bike lock (theft is real). Google your local bike laws, such as whether adults can ride on the sidewalk, and how to use bike lanes in traffic. There could be a 20 km/h speed limit on paths.

If you're biking on a path, think of it like driving a car on a single-lane highway. Stick to the right, whether or not there's a yellow line. Ride single file. Pull out to pass only when the oncoming lane is clear, and ding your bell. And remember, pedestrians are precious.

You might explore mountain trails, ride on city streets to fetch your groceries, or bike in the snow on fat tires. Maybe you'll get a stretchy Tour de France outfit and enter a race. You might like the mechanical advantage of a regular bike or the extra advantage of an e-bike. Or perhaps you'd prefer a three-wheeler.



If your bike is stolen, photographs might help you and the police to identify it. Take several photographs and record brand details and the serial number. In addition, you can effortlessly register your bike on Bike Index, a non-profit bike registry that works on its own and with many police departments to recover stolen bicycles.

Alone, with a friend, or with a cycling group you find online, for exercise, transportation, or plain old fun, I think you'll agree that biking is a thrilling way to leave your car at home and experience your world. ●

Sheila Bean taught with the Calgary Board of Education for seventeen years — retiring just before COVID-19. She still dabbles in teaching and writing. If you see her on the bike path, ding your bell and wave hello!



Register at artaevents.net

Monday, July 8, 2024 | Shotgun start at 10 a.m.
The Quarry Golf Club, Edmonton, AB

**A day of golf while supporting a great cause —
What could be better?**



Volunteering

Carol Berndt | Article and Photos

Friends of Barrón: Brighter Tomorrows in Rural Mexico

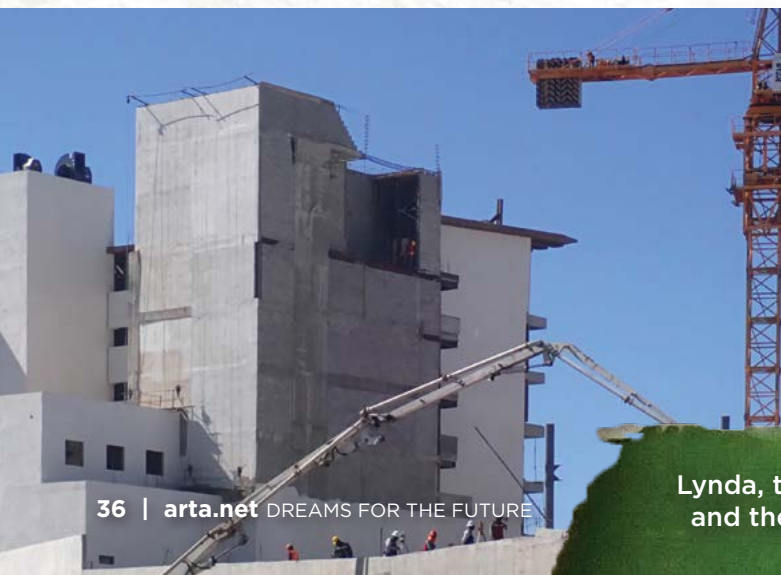
When ARTA members Dale and Lynda Lyster, retired Calgary educators, bought their beach and golf retirement property sixteen years ago outside of Mazatlán, they discovered that a few kilometres away lay Barrón, an impoverished village of four hundred families. Barrón's four schools serving 250 K-9 children were in shocking condition with crumbling walls, dirt courtyards, hot and crowded classrooms, collapsing furniture, and over-painted blackboards. The few books and four computers were inaccessible to the children. Most students quit school after Grade 9 as the cost of tuition and busing to attend high school elsewhere was prohibitive. Most went to work as labourers in the surrounding *ejido*-owned farms.

The Lysters initiated a fund-raising effort, the "Friends of Barrón" (FOB) among fellow residents. FOB purchased paint, roofing material, toilets and plumbing supplies, electrical wiring and coaxial cabling, furniture, whiteboards, books, computers, and classroom supplies. They created scholarships and "adopt-a-student" sponsorships for high school, preparatory school, and university. Over the past fifteen years, eighty scholarships



have been awarded. Thus far, thirty-six students have graduated as teachers, engineers, social workers, nurses, dentists, psychologists, physiotherapists, lawyers, chefs, accountants, and merchant marines.

Since families had no access to medical care in the village, FOB arranged for volunteers to offer dental clinics in the schools and organized a medical clinic with volunteer doctors from Canada and



Lynda, their "adopted" student Kenia who has graduated as a nurse, Dale, and the principal of the elementary school. (Unidentified photographer).

Juntos hacemos la diferencia

(Together we make a difference)

the United States. This led to FOB funding the lease and operating costs for a Mexican dentist and medical doctor to provide care in Barrón four days a week. FOB is partnering with a charity, La Viña, to build and supply a new permanent clinic that will provide medical, nursing, dental, and pharmacy care, as well as youth activities and services for the homeless.

FOB is always looking for volunteers to teach English to students in the secondary (junior high) and prep (high school) schools. Future goals include adding volunteer-taught digital workforce skills and artificial intelligence courses, creating job pathways for digital and hospitality fields, and encouraging work experience placements in a nearby luxury hotel currently under construction. FOB's potential partnerships with Mazatlán service organizations include plans to build a community centre providing additional health services. The volunteer-run American-registered charity, FOB Canam Inc. is grateful for donations, one hundred per cent of which go to school infrastructure improvement projects, updated computers, scholarships, or the medical/dental clinics. ●

Carol Berndt and her husband visited their former colleagues, Dale and Lynda, during a vacation to Mazatlán in December 2023. The Lysters took the Berndts to Barrón to view the community and learn more about the inspiring efforts and future goals of FOB.

For more information, see their website

fobnews.org





The Practice of Hope: How to Cultivate Hope for the Future

Ronna Jevne

There is no shortage of uncertainty in today's world. Ongoing wars, climate change, pandemics, homelessness, and the rising cost of living seem so far outside of our control. In our personal lives, uncertainties arise from health concerns, financial instability, difficult friendships, or privilege, all of which have the potential to deplete our hope.

But we have a choice: we can live in fear, or from a place of hope. Life will be very different depending on your choice. Hopeful people are proven to be happier, more productive, more creative, more goal oriented, and better able to manage life's stressors. But how do we become more hopeful?

First, let's clarify what hope is. Hope can be differentiated from other related concepts such as desire, wishing, resilience, coping, faith, or courage. And although there is a clear consensus about the value of hope, there are variations in the definition of hope.

My personal definition is that hope is a small voice in our heart that says "yes" to life. If nurtured and strengthened, it pulls us forward in life. It allows us to envision a future in which we are willing to participate. If that voice is silenced, hope wanes or dies.

Hope includes what we feel, what we believe, how we behave, and what has meaning for us. In addition, hope is about possibility, not probability. Probability can be low, but hope encompasses possibility as an option.

Two other features are unique to hope. Firstly, hope is often connected to our senses; secondly, hope has a goodness factor — which is to say, hope doesn't generate from ill will.

Practising Hope

Research has confirmed that hope can be learned and, with practice, can become our default response to life circumstances. A *practice of hope* is the intentional use of strategies to cultivate this outlook in your own life. Obviously, one size does not fit all; what is hopeful for one person may not be for another. That being said, here are some general tips to get you on the right track.

Remove obvious threats to hope

If you have a chronic condition, do what you can to comply with behaviours that help you heal. If you are in an unhealthy relationship, recognize what is and is not within your control. Perhaps seek outside help to achieve a perspective. Consider watching less news.

Know your hope story

Each of us has a *hoping self*, crafted from the events and relationships experienced throughout our lives. Imagine telling someone the story of how your hope has developed, been depleted, or strengthened over your lifetime.

Use hope language

Avoid “ain’t it awful” conversations that leave you feeling hopeless.

Use language that implies a future.

“When I get through this —”

or

“I haven’t mastered that *yet* —.”

Prepare a hope kit

In a container no larger than a shoe box, put in items that trigger your hope.

They may be real or metaphorical.

For example, you may put in a huge eraser to erase your mistakes, or a special candle to “light up your life.”

Hope mentors

Who modelled hope for you?

It may be Grandma, Terry Fox, a student you taught, a colleague you admire, or a character in a novel. What about them inspires you? How might you imitate them?

Associate with hopeful people

You know who they are. They are the ones saying, “why not?” rather than “no, tried that once.” Actually talk to each other about what is hopeful.

Hope rituals

For memorable events in our life, we have one-time rituals. To renew our hope, we use recurring rituals. For someone faith based, it may be a daily devotion. For those inclined to fresh air and fitness, it may mean a morning run. For another, it may be journaling regularly.

Have a vision for yourself

Write a statement about the future in which you would like to participate. Don’t worry about setting goals that seem out of reach.

It was Robert Browning who said, “Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp or what’s heaven for.”

Use your senses

What sounds or music give you hope?

What smells trigger memories of hope? What textures are soothing?

What foods are associated with good feelings? What images do you associate with hope?

Practise, practise, practise

What will you adopt as your practice of hope? ●

Do a hope collage

Ask yourself, “What gives me hope?” Gather your own or magazine photographs and create a visual representation of hope.

Ronna Jevne, ARTA member, professor emeritus of psychology (University of Alberta), writer, photographer, presenter, pilgrim.



Yoga and the Art of Healthy Aging

Photos by Peter Hares

My personal journey with yoga started when I was in elementary school, tagging along with my mom to her weekly community yoga class. With this early-established interest in health and well-being practices, I continue to follow the yoga path throughout my life. Five decades later, my experience with yoga has become even more enjoyable and beneficial.

The ancient Indian practice of yoga traces back over five thousand years. It has stood the test of time, and has become one of the most popular regimes to support a healthy lifestyle for an aging population. Yoga offers a complete package for physical, mental, and emotional health by focusing on physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation.

The word “yoga” comes from the Sanskrit root word *yuj*, meaning to join or to yoke. Yoga represents the connection — or union — between body, mind, and heart. The mindful practice of yoga offers the opportunity to cultivate a more positive relationship with all parts of ourselves as we navigate the aging process.

Research shows that a positive attitude toward aging can extend our life span up to 7.5 years.

Other studies indicate that older adults who follow a regular yoga practice can help stave off the signs of premature aging.

A yoga practice is just the ticket to address many of the predictors of longevity — from improved strength, balance, and flexibility to enhanced overall well-being and daily stress management.

The benefits of yoga are vast. One of the greatest benefits is the positive effect yoga has on stress and depression management. Stress is the number one factor in premature aging.

Chronic stress is when the “all clear” signal is unable to get through to the body. The system remains flooded with the stress hormone cortisol. Elevated levels of cortisol cause cellular inflammation, which is the primary cause of all degenerative diseases.

The slow, mindful quality of the movements of yoga and the deep breathing exercises allow the central nervous system to come into balance, and endorphins — or our feel-good hormones — are released. This provides the perfect combination for stress relief and depression management.

As we age, our body requires special care and attention. Yoga offers a safe, non-competitive environment to explore our physical strengths and limitations.

Yoga is invaluable for strengthening the big muscle groups, keeping joints supported and supple, and keeping bones strong. It provides the body

awareness and core strength to maintain an upright youthful posture.

There is a saying in yoga — “You’re only as old as your spine is supple.” A yoga practice provides the rare opportunity to mobilize the spine in five different directions: lengthening, forward bending, backward bending, side bending, and twisting.

An average day may only provide a couple of these spinal movements. A regular yoga practice guarantees that the spine will be sufficiently mobilized in all directions, thus strengthening muscles and creating much needed space between vertebrae.

When it comes to flexibility and strength, we are often quick to label ourselves as “not flexible” or “not very strong.” Functional flexibility, strength, and balance are what we are interested in when it comes to our daily activities. We want to continue to get up from the floor, our bed, or a chair. We want to be able to bend down and reach up, and have the stamina to do the activities we enjoy. The variety of yoga poses are endless to gently and safely build functional flexibility, strength, and balance.

An invaluable dimension of yoga is the practice of deeper breathing. Breathwork is the foundation of yoga. Deeper breathing slows down the heart rate and lowers blood pressure. Flexibility of the chest wall is improved through deeper breathing, and lung capacity is maintained. This increases oxygen intake at a cellular level, providing the much needed “get up and go” energy.

Mindful deeper breathing is the gateway to meditation, which is associated with improved mental clarity, concentration, focus, and memory.

Yoga postures coupled with mindful breathing become an effective and enjoyable moving meditation.



There are many styles of yoga to choose from for the older adult, depending on lifestyle and personal needs, from stronger yoga practices to gentler styles to chair yoga. The beauty of yoga is that it is never too late to get started and immediately reap the benefits of this tried-and-true healing art form. ●

Alison Irwin is a Certified Yoga Instructor and former Edmonton Public Schools teacher. Alison lives and teaches yoga on Gabriola Island as well as leads classes on Zoom.



Don't be too impressed — I think I'm stuck.



Gardening

Gerald Filipski

Cucumbers for All Occasions

Growing vegetables in containers is a great way to enjoy homegrown, organic produce. Growing in containers allows the gardener to control fertilizing, watering, and even pest control more easily than in a regular garden bed. A recent question I received might inspire gardeners with small yards or if gardening on a deck or balcony to try container vegetable gardening.

Q. I think you are my last hope for growing cucumbers — every year I try and every year I fail. I would like to grow cucumbers in a half barrel and I would appreciate it if you could tell me from start to finish what to do — type of soil; where to place my barrel; when or if to fertilize; how much to water, etc. I know the type of summer we have will also influence how successful I can be, but I want to at least do the best I can.

A. I have personally taken to growing many of my veggies in containers as I find it more convenient to control many growth factors. Let's begin the answer to your question with the container itself. Half barrels are excellent for growing cucumbers. The one stipulation is that they must have adequate drainage holes in the bottom of the barrel. I would recommend a minimum of three to five holes. Cucumbers will not tolerate sitting in wet soil so this is a must. Before adding the soil to the container, place a piece of broken clay pot or a piece of window screening over each hole to keep the soil from plugging the hole.





Regular potting soil is a good choice for the soil but it needs to be amended. Mix into the potting soil some good quality compost — equal parts potting soil and compost. The reason I suggest potting soil rather than regular garden soil is that the garden soil tends to get very heavy in the container, and I like to move my containers around. Also, potting soil is much lighter for applications on balconies. After mixing the soil and compost together, add the mix to the container, leaving about a 5 cm space from the top of the container to allow for watering. Wet the soil down well prior to planting.

Choosing the variety of cucumber seeds can be a bit of a challenge. Having said that, it's a nice problem to have because there are so many good choices. Plant breeders continue to develop varieties suited for growing in containers. If growing from seed, here are some good varieties to try:

- **Fanfare** — All America selections winner. Great quality, high yields, and compact plants well suited for container growth. 20–25 cm cukes. Early maturity at 63 days.
- **Salad Bush** — Very high yields in small spaces. 20–25 cm cucumbers on bush-type plants. Matures in 57 days.

If you are going to buy the plants at the greenhouse and transplant them, ask the staff which varieties would be good for a container.

When planting either seeds or bedding plants, pay close attention to the spacing requirements of the plants. Avoid jamming too many plants into a single container. Cucumbers like to have their space and for some varieties this may mean only having one plant in a container, depending on the size of the pot, of course.

Cucumbers are very heavy feeders and will need

to be fertilized regularly. The easiest way to do this is to use slow-release fertilizer pellets designed for use in containers. One application can be enough to last two to three months. If seeding, apply after the plants have emerged and have their second set of leaves. If transplanting, apply the fertilizer at the time of planting.

Place the container in full sun and water regularly, never allowing the soil to completely dry out. Cucumbers will not grow in shade, and they will not tolerate dry conditions.

Pollinating the cucumbers may be a concern if your location is not frequented by bees. Locations like high rise balconies may have few bee visitors. There are varieties such as Sweet Success and Diva that are self-pollinating, but if you don't have a self-pollinating type, a small artist's brush can help. The procedure is to use the brush to transfer the pollen from the male to female flowers. There are far more female flowers on a vine than there are male so you will have to look for the male flowers. To help tell the difference, male flowers have a single stamen and appear first. Swirl the brush around the male flower and then carefully "paint" it on the female flower. It might help to make a buzzing sound as you do this. ●

Gerald Filipski happily shares his gardening expertise with us in each issue of news&views. When pollinating his cucumbers — and buzzing — Jerry says he stops short of wearing the yellow and black striped suit.



2023 Writing Contest

Laurie Semler | Chair, Communications Committee, ARTA

This year, sixty-three talented ARTA members entered the 2023 Writing Contest. For the first time, the Travel Vignette category had the highest number of submissions at thirty. Poetry and Flash Fiction entries were down slightly this year at twenty-one and twelve respectively. Despite the lower submission numbers, the quality of those submissions made the judges' task of choosing winners challenging.

As usual, many people contributed to the success of the 2023 contest. First, thank you to all the ARTA members who chose to enter their carefully crafted pieces of writing in the contest. Heartfelt thanks to the many ARTA staff members who provided invaluable assistance to make the tasks of running and judging the contest that much easier. The contributions of our judges also need to be acknowledged.

After careful consideration of last year's submission and judging processes, the Communications Committee elected to continue

using Reviewr to manage the contest for 2023. With several suggestions from this year's judges, the processes will be further streamlined for 2024.

On behalf of the Communications Committee, I would like to congratulate this year's winners. You can expect to see your writing featured in upcoming issues of *news&views*. For all those who are thinking ahead to next year's contest, watch for information later this year in the magazine, ARTAfacts, and on the ARTA website. Good luck to all and Happy Writing! ●

TRAVEL VIGNETTE

1st Place	<i>A Place of Quiet</i>	Darlene Eisner
2nd Place	<i>Courseulles-sur-Mer, France, June 5, 2018</i>	William Hart
Honourable Mention	<i>A Moment in England</i>	Margaret Feist

FLASH FICTION

1st Place	<i>Musings of an Antique</i>	Joan Calvert
2nd Place	<i>Granny Mitchell's Quilt</i>	Sharon Gladman

POETRY

1st Place	<i>Her First Day</i>	Fran Porter
2nd Place (Tie)	<i>This Space for Rent</i>	David Routledge
	<i>Jeff</i>	Laurie Dolph
Honourable Mention	<i>Ties that Bind</i>	Brian Rurka

A Place of Quiet

Darlene Eisner

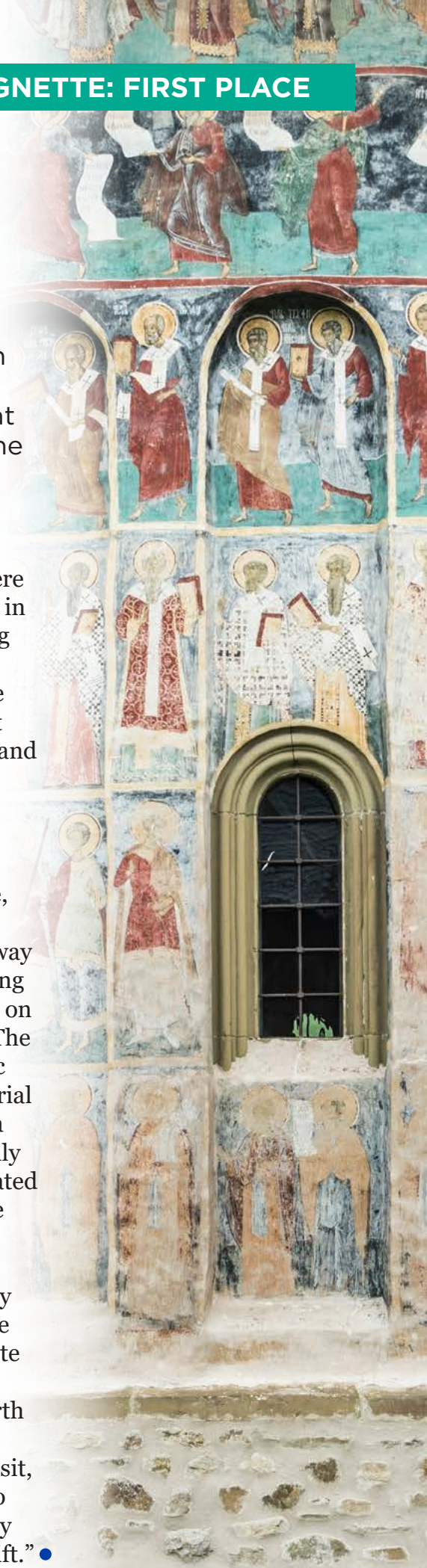
In the north of Romania, near the borders of Ukraine and Moldova, lies an area of outstanding beauty, both natural and human made. Clustered within a few kilometres of each other are the Painted Churches of Bucovina whose art and architecture reflect not only the beauty and harmony of that region but are steeped in history, having been founded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Maybe it was the long row of lilac bushes, maybe it was the silence interrupted only by birdsong, maybe it was the sense of peace and holiness that pervaded the grounds, but the Moldivita Monastery holds a special place in my heart. Why the lilacs? The various purple shadings and the pungent sweet fragrance were particularly reminiscent of my childhood home, surrounded as our house was by profusely blooming hedges of common lilacs. Not only my home in Manitoba, but here in Romania the old-fashioned, uncultivated strongly scented lilac was everywhere.

And then, standing on the edge of the garden ... ahhh ... the silence, broken only by the breeze moving the leaves of the trees surrounding the ancient stone-walled garden of the monastery. The trip through northern Romania was fast-paced as my travelling companions and I were trying to take in as many of the famous and ancient wooden, painted monasteries as possible in three days. This brief moment to breathe in the silence was very much life-giving and nourishing to my soul. The black-robed Romanian Orthodox nun strolling along the path towards me likewise exuded the peace that only a slower pace of life can give. Hovering over it all was the strong

sense that this garden had known much prayer and meditation, where busy activities had been put aside in favour of peace and calm. A strong sense of the holiness of the place enveloped me and I welcomed the chance to stop and quiet my heart and mind. My heart worshipped, and my spirit calmed down.

The rough wooden benches and rustic seats carved from logs scattered around the edge of the garden seemed to call me to come, sit, ponder. I did not have time to accept the invitation. That is the way of the world and those of us rushing through it. We are always moving on to the next thing, the next place. The pathway into the monastery's lilac garden led through an ancient burial ground. Perhaps the wording on a tombstone in the cemetery, roughly translated into English, encapsulated it all: "Traveller, if you step on the ground that is made of my dead body, do not be proud. We have gone to our home and you are only a visitor." Taking liberties with the thoughtful inscription, I later wrote in my journal: "Traveller, you are stepping on the ground of this earth but briefly. You are only a visitor. Calm down and take time. Come, sit, and enjoy the moments you are so briefly given. Sit, visitor, and enjoy the life you have this day. It is a gift." ●



Musings of an Antique

Joan Calvert

Rain dripped through the decayed roof. I sensed invading squatters, and loomed over them with fearsome creaks, in vain. My mouse-sized apartments filled with squeaking, smelly tenants whose gnawing and unsanitary habits ruined floors and walls. I squeezed my sides together until the floors cracked across, then executed guerrilla tactics, rendering my interior uninhabitable. Temblors rivalling seismic convulsions broke the floors open, ejecting mice and filth into the cold, scattering them abroad; a pyrrhic victory, for nobody would want me now.

Could I will myself out of such misery? I clenched my teeth, focussed my considerable brain-power... Nothing...

I descended into a dark, hopeless fugue.

I remember little of my youth, for my intellect lacked specific nurture. I had a good home with a family of eleven, including grandparents. On feast days, my sideboard groaned under serving dishes of steaming, savoury food.

I awakened to the older children's increasingly protracted absences, as they stepped into adulthood. One of the sons emigrated to homestead in Alberta. The mother foresaw the pleasure I, as a wedding gift, would give his bride-to-be. Thus began my arduous journey through seasickness, train-induced heat-stroke, bone-jolting wagon-trek from Belfast to Drumheller's badlands — and the isolated homestead.

I decided I wasn't at home with Lottie's Depression pieces for, in keeping with the splintery plank floor, most were disappointingly handmade. Furthermore, I disapproved of the Canadian accent. Their daughter, Sibyl, became my cherished friend and servant; from childhood on, her Saturday chore was dusting and polishing my exterior. For Sibyl's wedding, Lottie chose a valuable gift — me, for she recognized my importance.

We lived in the two-roomed "honeymoon house" nine years, until their little Sandra started school. We all thought a four-mile walk to school excessive; therefore, we moved to a spacious old Edwardian house in the village. I stood in a central position, showing creative acumen, inviting admiration of my beautifully displayed china, silverware and linens. Sibyl's childhood piano lived in the next room; I daily heard his resonant voice. Sibyl, respectful of elegance, kept me shining — I'd never been so happy.

One day, I heard Sandra diffidently ask, "Mom, could I have the old buffet when you're through with it?" It exhilarated me. No foreboding of future imprisonment and torture entered my thoughts.

One fateful day, Sibyl unwillingly packed my valuables into boxes. Two men pushed me into a strange truck-box, saying, "No dining-room in the new house; it'll go in the old windmill-shack." Dear Sibyl and Sandra protested, to no avail.

During exile, years pass slowly; never a friendly voice, only resignation to filth and dissolution. I've relinquished the present, dreaming only of past glories... ceremoniously presenting sumptuous dishes for a clan banquet...

A figure moves through the daylight-striped gloom. In my near-unconsciousness, I still find the voice and movements familiar. "Oh, you *poor* old dear! You're going to Sandra and Doug's. You'll be like new again, you'll see!"

Sibyl! This must be Heaven. Yours is the voice of an angel... Why didn't you rescue me before? Oh, the lonely years...

Laid on my back, travelling in an open vehicle, carried downstairs, set upright on my wobbly legs, back against a log wall... Pictures from my former life: The Reapers, an old castle, a beady-eyed red fox, sepia-toned photographs, braided rugs, old wooden table.

A massive carved piano—my old friend? No, bigger. Great stone fireplace, antique rocker, pioneer implements! A museum? If so, I belong here; I'm an antique, too.

Here are children — Kenny, Laura and Candace — reading, doing homework... A large calico cat is sitting inappropriately on my sideboard, majestic but hospitable.

I face the truth; I'm the ugliest, smelliest antique of them all. The others are strong, clean, redolent of furniture oil, but aloof. The children call me "the mouse cabinet"; only the cat likes me. I've lost my confidence, my self-respect. How I desire the loving attention my Sibyl promised! More years creep by while my hopes crawl away.

Roused from another contemplative trance, I'm once more strapped into the trailer; hours of noise and jolting later, I inspect a cottage deck. Courtesy of Sandra and her Doug, my release from fumes and filth commences. New shelves, drawer floors, green felt lining! Legs braced, firm! Days of sanding and several coats of oil bring back my satin skin. Though I remain an antique, I'm reborn.

An incomprehensible reversal of time and place—I've been moved back among my antique colleagues, for whom my lonely, humbled heart has longed. I thank my Maker my next transition will take me to Laura, fifth generation of the same human line, my fifth lady of the house.

I owe all to my dearest Sibyl! I'm a link between Past and Future, not merely an antique, but a Continuity. ●

Her First Day

Fran Porter



The phrase “assisted living” spawned their strife.
She’d never needed help in all her life!
How dare her daughter Claire, without permission,
Make such a final, horrible decision!

Though outwardly still always poised and stately,
She knows she’s been a tad forgetful lately.
So what? The sin is one of mere omission,
Not meriting life sentence to this prison!

A radiant-featured girl shows her her room.
It is quite pretty — bright, devoid of gloom.
A fellow resident smiles while passing by,
Lessening a bit her latent urge to cry...

‘Don’t make me turn a cartwheel or rejoice,’
Growls a begrudging, surly inner voice,
‘But I might be okay here.’ Her wry laughter
At turning cartwheels rings through roof and rafter.

“D’you play Canasta?” beams the fellow resident.
“We’ve got a club here, of which I’m the president.”
Canasta? Yes, she used to love the game.
But who, these days, even recalls its name?

“You’d like our club,” the resident then states,
“We laugh and reminisce as our mandates,
Embracing mutual memories and jokes
Whose punch lines would be lost on younger folks.”

‘Don’t make me turn a cartwheel or rejoice,’
Again growls that reluctant inner voice,
‘But I might be okay here. Back off, though.
Turn down the pressure pitch from high to low.’

She’s damned if she’ll give in without a fight.
Yielding too soon would simply not be right.
Might she just be okay here? Hmph. Could be.
Do they meet her high standards? Well, she’ll see.

And someday — if the gods decide it’s fair —
Perhaps she’ll even speak again to Claire. ●



Take Charge of Your Health with the **MyARTA** HEALTH HUB

Amanda Shaw | Chief Marketing Officer, ARTA

Picture this: You wake up in the morning, achy and unwell, and a sudden urge in your bladder rushes you to the washroom. You pick up your cell phone and log on to the new MyARTA Health Hub app. You connect with a Canadian-licensed doctor who assesses your symptoms and prescribes an antibiotic to combat your urinary tract infection. The app sends your prescription directly to the pharmacy, and the prescription cost is automatically processed. You didn't even have to get dressed and leave the house; instead you could stay close to home and rest.

ARTA and our partners at GreenShield have been working hard on a new claims system and we're excited to unveil it to ARTA Benefit Plans members soon — a target launch is set for later this year. (Watch your email for the official announcement!)

The new platform, named the MyARTA Health Hub, offers better:

- **Accessibility** — complying with legislation mandated by select provinces, the new platform will be easier to navigate and read, with greater contrast and font sizes.
- **Convenience** — MyARTA Health Hub continues to be available by logging into your myarta.net account on a computer. It also has a complementary app for both Apple and Android users that offers full parity of claims submissions, unlike the old app which was more limited in the claims that could be submitted through it.
- **Integration** — the new platform integrates the virtual health resources available through your Extended Health Care plan, including Greenshield Telemedicine (formerly Maple), and Greenshield Mental Health Counselling (formerly Inkblot). For our primary plan members, you can now log into one

place to access all these services. And the services sync with one another, easily transferring you through the process. For those that are eligible, you can also send your prescription directly to the ARTARx pharmacy! And if you are not eligible for ARTARx, the Hub will recommend an appropriate digital pharmacy with delivery services.

- **Health Outcomes** — the easier it is to manage your health and submit claims, the better you can feel.

As this article goes to print, our member services and marketing teams, as well as a committee made up of ARTA members, are testing the new platform to make sure that claims are processed in accordance with the ARTA Benefit Booklets. We are also creating new tutorial videos that will be posted to our YouTube channel to ease your transition to our new system. We hope you welcome these improvements with as much excitement as we feel — and we hope that it makes it easier for you to navigate all that ARTA has to offer for you to live an active and engaged lifestyle in retirement. •





Retirement Dreams and Aspirations

Jane Thrall

In my previous life, I was an optometrist, but I no longer identify as one. Now I consider myself a writer, an amateur historian, and an avid reader. I'm a golfer, a traveller, and a lover of science and technology.

When a person retires, it is often difficult to dissociate from their previous occupation, particularly if it was one that required professional registration or certification. Learning to say "I was" instead of "I am" can be a challenge, as often our profession is an integral part of our identity.

When we retire and leave the workforce, who do we become? You may have asked yourself, "Who am I now?" How you shape your retirement is entirely up to you, but some people will have more difficulty separating their past from their future.

For me, the joyous part of retirement is determining exactly how I want those around me to view me. My friends know me as the quirky silver-haired woman who likes to spend time in her garage reviving mid-century furniture, or the one who's always ready to help with their home repairs.

Retirement provides an opportunity to focus on our own goals after many years of providing for the needs of others. This is the time to pursue your dreams, whether it's starting a new career, travelling, learning a new skill, or making a difference in your community. Retired people have a wealth of knowledge and experience and the ability to pass it to others.

Mentoring others can be a rewarding way to share one's expertise, make a positive impact on the lives of others, and leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Retirees can volunteer to teach classes

or workshops or even create online tutorials to reach a wider audience.

A common goal after leaving the workforce is to spend more time exploring new places and cultures, travelling to exotic and far-flung destinations; even those on a limited budget can travel affordably if they plan their trips with care. North America is full of amazing and awe-inspiring natural wonders, unique heritage, and diverse cultures.

Learning a new language can make international travel all the more rewarding. There is a plethora of online resources designed to improve language skills, many of which are free or minimally priced.

If your retirement goal is a physical one, it won't be without challenges. Whether you hope to participate in your first triathlon or learn to stand-up paddle board, you'll need persistence and patience. Remember that there is joy in the process as well as the outcome. There's a group for everything, and don't succumb to the voice in your head telling you that you can't do it. Set a goal, outline the steps, and get moving.

If the goal is to improve your general fitness, consider running, cycling, swimming, or hiking. Establish an exercise program that builds and maintains muscle strength and choose activities that improve your balance and dexterity.

Participating in group activities also holds important social benefits, especially as we transition from the workforce, as social isolation has been linked to deteriorating mental health.



We shouldn't underestimate another crucial aspect of retirement: **mental and emotional well-being**. Although it's vital to keep up with physical health, preserving robust mental health is essential. Lacking this, we can't fully appreciate the fruits of our hard-earned years of retirement. Thus, dedicate time to activities that foster a sense of equilibrium and connection.

Don't forget that once your income is limited by the size of your savings and pension, managing your finances becomes an important responsibility. Beware the temptation to seek out opportunities to "get rich fast," as many seniors fall victim to scams and schemes that leave them stripped of their savings.

Age should never be a barrier to learning, growth, or pursuing new experiences. Some retired people find they have lost a sense of personal

fulfilment, but embracing new challenges can promote mental stimulation and provide a sense of purpose. Whether it's learning a musical instrument, taking up painting, exploring technology, or even starting a new business venture, seniors can absolutely continue on the path of learning. ●

Jane Thrall is retired and works as an animal care volunteer at a farm sanctuary that connects neglected farm animals with at-risk youth. She ventures to Mexico in the winter months where she spends her time divided between writing and travelling.



2024 PHOTO CONTEST

ARTA is proud to sponsor its **twelfth annual photo contest**. All ARTA members — regular or affiliate — are eligible to enter. As in the past, we have two entry categories: if you have won in the past, please submit to the Masters category; if you have not been a past winner, enter the Novice category. Winners will be announced in the autumn 2024 issue of *news&views* and posted on ARTA electronic media sites.

Contest Categories

- **Nature**
- **Colour**
- **Travel**
- **Detail**

All entries must be received by ARTA no later than 4:00 p.m., May 31, 2024.

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



Visit arta.net/photo-contest for contest rules and entry form.

SHE SAVED MY LIFE!

Edmonton resident Dawn had been experiencing the painful side effects of peripheral neuropathy, "My feet and legs were extremely painful and my doctor told me there was nothing they could do. That I would have to take gabapentin for the rest of my life." Then she met Edmonton's very own acupuncturist, Dr. Melanie Morrill Ac.

Peripheral neuropathy is the pain, discomfort and numbness caused by nerve damage to the peripheral nervous system. Dawn explained that daily tasks like opening doors and using the washroom were overwhelmingly painful.

"How can you live for the next 30 years when you don't even want to get out of bed to do the simple things?"

She was experiencing the burning, numbness, tingling, and sharp pains that those suffering from peripheral neuropathy often describe. "The way that I would describe it, it's the equivalent to walking on glass." Dawn hadn't worn socks in five years and was wearing shoes two sizes too big so that nothing would "touch" her feet.

Unfortunately, Dawn's story is all too familiar for the over one million people in Canada suffering from peripheral neuropathy.

If you're unfortunate enough to be facing the same disheartening prognosis, you're not sleeping at night because of the burning in your feet. You have difficulty walking, shopping, or doing any activity for more than 30 minutes because of the pain. You're struggling with balance and living in fear that you might fall. Your doctor told you to **"just live with the pain"** and you are taking medications that just aren't working or have uncomfortable side effects.

Fortunately, four months ago Dawn read an article about Dr. Melanie Morrill Ac. and the work she was doing to treat those suffering from peripheral neuropathy without invasive surgery or medication.

Doctor of Acupuncture, Dr. Melanie Morrill Ac., founder of Accessible Acupuncture in Edmonton, AB, is using the time-tested science of acupuncture and technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease.

"Now when I go to bed at night I don't have those shooting pains. I don't have the burning sensation. I don't have pain coming up my legs,"

Dawn enthusiastically describes life after receiving Melanie's treatments.

"I can wear socks and shoes!"

Dawn and her sister now operate a successful dog-walking business, sometimes covering 5 kilometres a day.

"It's life altering. As far as I'm concerned Melanie saved my life!"

Dr. Melanie Morrill Ac. has been helping the senior community for over five years using the most cutting-edge and innovative integrative medicine, with a special interest in chronic pain and helping people who have been deemed "hopeless" or "untreatable," she consistently generates unparalleled results.

What was once a missing link in senior health care is now easily accessible to the residents of the Edmonton area, including St. Albert and Sherwood Park.

If you have been missing too many tee times because of your pain or you've passed on dancing because you're afraid of calling, it's time to call Dr. Melanie Morrill Ac. and the staff at Accessible Acupuncture.

It's time you let your golden years BE GOLDEN!

Accessible Acupuncture is now accepting new patients but only 10 new neuropathy patients will be accepted per month.

Call 587-879-7122 to schedule today.



Peripheral Neuropathy?

SCHEDULE a consultation TODAY

CALL 587-879-7122

HYS Centre

600, 11010 101 st NW Edmonton, AB

AccessibleAcupuncture.ca

From Our Partners

Laurie Bauer, CAIB | Business Development Manager, Orbit Insurance Services



Are Your Identity and Cyber Security At Risk?

As cybercrime continues to grow, how can you — as a Canadian consumer — protect yourself and your digital assets? Consider adding identity theft coverage and cyber protection to your home insurance.

The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) reported that Canadians lost \$531 million in 2022 through fraud and cybercrime. As for 2023, by June 30, 2023, the CAFC had received 32,458 reports of fraud and 21,299 victims of fraud, totalling \$283.5 million in losses.

What Is Identity Theft?

According to the Canada Revenue Agency, identity theft involves stealing or misusing someone else's personal information such as their name, address, birthdate, account information, and social insurance number (SIN) for criminal purposes.

How Can I Protect Myself from Identity Theft?

- Keep your usernames, passwords, access codes, and PINs secret. If you choose to write your passwords down, use a password-protected spreadsheet or a notebook stored in a secure location.
- Carry only the identification you need.
- Immediately report lost or stolen credit or debit cards.
- Be careful who you share images and videos with.

What Is Cybercrime?

According to Statistics Canada, Canadian law enforcement agencies define cybercrime in two categories. The first category is where a computer is the tool of the crime. These crimes include harassment, fraud, intellectual property violations, and selling illegal substances and goods. The second category is where a computer is the object of the

crime. These crimes include hacking, defacing websites, and creating and distributing malicious computer viruses.

How Can I Protect Myself from Cybercrime?

Protecting yourself from all types of cybercrime requires taking the necessary preventative measures. Both the Government of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police provide resources that anyone can access.

Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre
antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca

Canadian Revenue Agency
bit.ly/CRA_identity_fraud

Statistics Canada
bit.ly/statscan_cybercrime

Some insurance carriers offer coverage that expands on their identity theft endorsement to cover online fraud, computer attacks, identity recovery, data breaches, cyberbullying, and cyber extortion. Others offer coverage for expenses related to a cyber-attack or cyber extortion.

If you're a victim of a cybercrime, report it to the CAFC, your local police, and both credit bureaus: Equifax and TransUnion. If you suspect your personal information has been compromised and your tax information is at risk, contact the Canada Revenue Agency.

Call your insurance broker to discuss your security coverage. ●

From Our Partners

Kayleigh-Ann Clegg, PhD | Clinical Content Specialist and Psychologist, HumanaCare



Better Nights, Brighter Days:

How to Improve Your Sleep

We all struggle with sleep from time to time. Maybe you've experienced utterly sleepless nights and days survived solely on caffeine. Maybe you're on a first-name basis with your sheep and are intimately familiar with every irregularity in your ceiling. You're not alone — and there are ways to help.

How Much Is Enough?

Sleep is an essential human need for physical and mental well-being and plays a critical role in cardiovascular health, immune system functioning, mood and emotion regulation, learning, attention, and memory. When we don't get enough sleep, it can affect how we function — but how much is enough?

While most adults need an average of six to nine hours of sleep per night, there's no magic number. Different people need different amounts of sleep, which can fluctuate depending on our current life circumstances. For example, we need less sleep as we age — infants require a whopping twelve to sixteen hours and teens require eight to ten hours — and sleep tends to get *less efficient* as we age.

We may also need more or less sleep depending on how active or stressful (physically and mentally) our days are and whether we are managing other, longer term physical or mental health stresses. What really matters is sleep quality and whether we wake up feeling rested. So, how can we improve the quality of our sleep?



Practical Strategies for Better-Quality Sleep

1. Identify Barriers

First, reflect on what might be getting in the way.

- Are there stressful things going on in your life? Are there problem-solving or stress-management techniques that you could use to manage your stress?
- Are you revenge-procrastinating? That is, delaying bedtime because you don't get enough time to yourself during the day. Build more time into your schedule for relaxing, hobbies, and decompressing without cutting into sleep.
- Have you experienced any big life events? Any change takes time to adapt to and can affect your sleep quality. Try to be easier on yourself and give yourself time to adjust.

2. Work On Your Sleep Hygiene

Take concrete steps to improve your sleep hygiene, which involves building habits and an environment for good-quality sleep.

Good sleep habits involve **consistency**, **association**, and **repetition**. Our minds and bodies are like computers that we can program to associate bed and bedtime with a calm, relaxed, “go-to-sleep” state.

- Try to go to bed around the same time every day, and get up around the same time even if you go to bed later than usual.
- Build a consistent evening routine to wind down (e.g., take a shower, brush your teeth, read). Getting out of a warm shower can help your core temperature drop, which mimics what happens during sleep and can kick-start the process.
- Avoid big meals, exercise, or any substances before bed. Caffeine and alcohol have long half-lives, which means they take several hours to break down. Caffeine more obviously disrupts your sleep, but alcohol can be deceiving —

it's a sedative and may help you fall asleep, but it disrupts the quality of that sleep (e.g., by keeping your heart rate up and your system engaged in breaking the alcohol down).

- Keep the bed for sex and sleep! Don't work on your laptop in bed or do any other activities that get your mind whirring. If you can't sleep because your brain is racing, and it feels like it's been more than twenty minutes, get out of bed and do a low-stimulation activity (e.g., read in low light) before trying again. And finally, don't check the clock! That can trigger thoughts that can activate your brain instead of winding it down.

In general, a good sleep environment involves **low temperature**, **light**, and **noise**. For example:

- Keep your bedroom on the cooler side.
- Keep your bedroom as dark as possible, and stay off devices that emit light close to bedtime that can trigger the ‘wake-up’ chemical process in our bodies.
- Keep your bedroom as quiet as possible, or with consistent and low-level background noise (e.g., white noise, a fan).

3. Keep Calm and Dream On

Finally, don't panic! It's normal to experience sleep disruption from time to time, and our bodies are very capable of ‘resetting’ themselves. Take action when it becomes a chronic concern — this may require a bit of trial and error.

If you find yourself grappling with sleep, don't hesitate to reach out! A wide range of well-established, effective supports are available, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, help from your family doctor, or an appointment with a specialized sleep clinic. ●



ARTACares is included at no additional cost with all ARTA Extended Health Care Benefit Plans and is provided by HumanaCare, an Alberta-based health and wellness provider with more than thirty-five years of Canadian health-care experience. For more information, visit wellness.mylifeexpert.com/login/artacares.

IN MEMORIAM

*If there ever comes a day when we can't be together,
keep me in your heart. I'll stay there forever.*

— attributed to A. A. Milne

Clark Beatty
Calgary

**Homer Melvin “Mel”
Bergman**
Lethbridge

**Katherine “Kathy” Jean (née
Jackson) Bowtell**
Vermilion

Sandra Sharon Braun
Calgary

Valerie Ann Brower
Medicine Hat

**Helen Margaret (née Clarke)
Buss**
White Rock, BC

Terry Cooke
Edmonton

Teresa Craig-Morgan
Qualicum Beach, BC

Andrea Eleanor DeLeeuw
Lacombe

Harvey Dale Driedger
Calgary

David “Dave” Lloyd Dyck
Calgary

**Bessie May (née Vroom,
formerly Annand) Ellis**
Pincher Creek

**Donald “Don” Wayne
Erickson**
Edmonton

Gail (née Powers) Green
Lloydminster

Robert “Bob” Keith Haney
Calgary

**Robin Alleen (née Reich)
Haney**
Lethbridge

**Marion Sylvia (née Johnson)
Hanna**
Picture Butte

Dale Grant Holt
Medicine Hat

Neal Constantine Johnson
Lethbridge

**Virginia (née Smith)
Johnson**
Ogden, Utah

**Linda Marie (née Redekop)
Kenney**
Lethbridge

**Emily Josephine (née
Chomay) Korz**
Edmonton

**Mary (née Woychenko)
Lanuke**
Edmonton

**Harold “Hal” Edward
Liebrecht**
Leduc

Arthur “Art” Loewen
Lethbridge

**Imelda “Mel” (née Ferguson)
Luciana**
Calgary

**Margaret “Maggie” (née
Pfohl, formerly Harper)
McClelland**
Calgary

Lawrence E. Miller
Calgary

Hugh H. Mitchell
Qualicum Beach, BC

**James “Jim” Kristian
Nielsen**
Calgary

Jack Hardy Olson
Magrath

**Evelyn “Ev” Yvonne (née
Stewart) Parsons**
Lethbridge

**Sandra “Sandi” Gayle
Parsons**
Calgary

**Burna B. (formerly Olson)
Purkin**
Saskatoon, SK

Angelina de Leon Rivera
Edmonton

Murray Chester Sapieha
Calgary

Oliver Charles Seward
Claresholm

**Myrna Christine Patricia
(formerly Rude) Sharek**
Edmonton

Rodney “Rod” Edwin Soholt
Cold Lake

**Walter Laverne “Vern”
Spence**
Calgary

Daryl Masaki Sugiyama
Calgary

Karen A. Thomas
Lethbridge

Bruce Harry Treichel
Edmonton

William “Bill” Morris Wahl
Medicine Hat

Robert “Bob” Wasilenko
Lethbridge

**Valerie “Val” Lynne (née
Rose) Wooders**
Edmonton

John George Zapach
Edmonton

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

ARTA Bookshelf

Books by ARTA members for your reading pleasure.



My Love Affair with Fear by Bradley Kilb. FriesenPress, 2022. Memoir. Master storyteller Brad Kilb reveals tactics empowering us to value fear as a gift, dancing with fear as our partner — the greatest tool for growth.



Coal Town Kids by Duane S. Radford. Friesen Press, 2022. Memoir. Duane Radford and his childhood friends reminisce about growing up in the Crowsnest Pass (lovingly called “the Pass”), when the area’s coal mines were active.



An Azorean Granddaughter by Maria Smyth. Page Master Publishing, 2023. Memoir. At a young age, Maria immigrates to Canada and soon faces the death of her mother. She copes with issues of abandonment, forgiveness, and repentance.



Across England with a Project Manager: A Journey into Retirement by Peter Teasdale. Friesen Press, 2023. Travel/Memoir. Take the 190-mile Wainwright Trail across England with the Teasdales in transition to retirement, using project management principles to plan, execute, and evaluate the journey.

ARTA Bookshelf: Anyone interested in reading further is welcome to search out these books through the publishers or other book sellers. While we proudly celebrate our authors, displaying them on the Bookshelf is not an endorsement of any of these books.

With a photo of the book cover, a few publication details, and a 25-word description of the book, ARTA members who are recently published have a chance to share their success with our readers. Send details to neditor@arta.net. The ARTA Bookshelf is available at no cost; paid advertising opportunities continue to be available through marketing@arta.net. ●

FREE 30-day *hearing aid trial*

As a new year begins, we feel inspired to set new goals and reflect on the things most important to us. Whether you have hobbies you want to keep doing, friendships you want to keep growing or places you want to keep exploring, healthy hearing plays a key part in all of them.

At HearingLife we want to help you keep hearing and keep being you.

Book your FREE hearing aid trial* today and discover how personalized hearing care can help you.



Trusted
Partner of



ARTA Members & Family receive **an EXTRA 10% off** the final purchase price of hearing aids!**

Keep
being
you

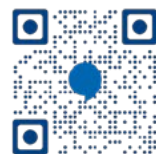


**Book your FREE
hearing aid trial!***

HearingLife.ca/ARTA-TRY
1-888-660-4730

Mention code

MAG-TBYB-ARTA



*A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. If you request a copy of the Audiological Report, an administrative fee will apply. Child hearing tests are conducted at select locations for a fee, please contact us for more information. This promotion is valid for select hearing aid models and cannot be combined with more than 1 promotion or discount unless stated otherwise. Offer applies to private sales of select hearing aids and discount is applied after government funding has been deducted. **The extra 10% will be applied to the remaining balance on hearing aids and accessories after all other discounts (if applicable). Offer not applicable for industrial hearing tests. Offers not valid in Quebec. Offer expires 05/31/2024.

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO
ALBERTA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOC.
15505 137 AVENUE NW
EDMONTON, AB T5V 1R9



CURO Claims Services.
Advocating for ARTA
members for 10 years
and counting.



Jeff Cronk MBA, FCIP
Manager - National Claims



ARTA
ALBERTA RETIRED
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Get a quote today:

 orbitinsuranceservices.ca/arta-ambassador
 855-894-2782

