A week ago, Roger’s request for reports shook me out of my hammock and spurred a quick communication to my Western colleagues. I am particularly appreciative that despite the fact that this initial ‘homework’ request must have hit like a hammer, most were able to get back to me in a timely manner. Considering that not all organizations have had recent meetings, and September is a time for AGM’s and Organizational renewal, many were unable to comment on all aspects. However, considering the time of year, I am most grateful for their responses.

Thanks then to the Western Directors for this initial sharing of activity within their organizations. I forwarded them a number of headings and have summarized the responses below.

 Gordon Cumming

**Western Directors:**

* **BCRTA.**

Steve Bailey’s term is up and expect a replacement from their AGM – end of September

* **STS** -

Marie LeBlanc Warick continues

* **RTAM.**

Peggy Prendergast is the new Director replacing Joanne Hoyack

* **YRTA**

at this writing I have not heard from Ken Nash, but assume he will continue in his role.

* **ARTA**

I have not been replaced as yet, so in the meantime continue to wear two hats. (There are somethings a big head is good for, if only I could say the same thing about the brain.)

1. ***Do you have any Organizational Highlights or Events that you want to share?***

**BCRTA** - Executive Director, Tim Anderson, is working to firm up renewed agreements with our Members’ Advantage Program. These agreements include commitment to the BCRTA’s newly established guidelines around advertising rates and arrangements. Several of our Advantage Partners will take part in the BCRTA Annual General Meeting in Richmond, BC, September 20-22.

AGM highlights will also include presentations around pensions, Branch finances and charitable giving guidelines mandated by Revenue Canada, current developments in our strategic planning and implementation.

Our implementation of a one-year complimentary membership for those new to the BCRTA is continuing. This initiative has been very successful in recruiting new members.

**STS** - Upcoming Events

Executive Planning Meeting – September 18, 2018

Executive Meeting – September 20, 2018

Presidents’ Meeting – October 25, 2018

At it’s Planning and Executive Meetings in September, 2018, STS will be setting its goals and agenda for 2018-2019. More information will be available at the next Western Report.

**RTAM** – Peggy chairs the Ad Hoc RTAM Student Awards Committee.  This year they have chosen four $700 award winners from 50 applications from graduating Grade 12 students who are proceeding to post secondary education and who are relatives of our RTAM members.  They are judged on scholarship, school involvement, community service, and a reference from a non relative.  Because we are a provincial organization we attempt to have the geographical areas of our province fairly represented.

Funding for the scholarships is available because five years ago RTAM placed $50,000 dollars in an endowment fund with the Winnipeg Foundation.  They administer the funding that grows exponentially from year to year for the RTAM Endowment Award Fund.  We began awarding four$500 awards.  This year is has grown to four $700 awards.

Peggy also chairs the **RTAM Wellness Advocacy Committee**.  This year they will be offering 4 Wellness Seminars on topics that will include: Health Directives, Wills and Power of Attorney - How to avoid elder abuse.  Other possible topics are: Ageism - how does it affect all of us and how to change the stereotypes, How creativity plays a part in retirement, Decluttering! and downsizing, Employment possibilities in retirement, and others to be determined.  We are at the beginning of the year so plans have not been finalized but all the topics will have an advocacy focus.  We have had a lot of changes in the Manitoba Health system and the objective of the government seems to be efficiency where I would hope the emphasis would be effectiveness.

**ARTA** – The last weeks of August marked the meetings of all Committees that will leading to the final Board Meeting in early September, and the AGM in early October. Our Governance Committee granted eleven Scholarships and two Bursaries at their August meetings, with criteria similar to those of RTAM.

1. ***Are there any changes in Personnel of which we should be aware?***

**BCRTA** - Thanks for all her hard work to out-going BCRTA president, Patricia Clough. Elections will be held at the AGM for the positions of president, 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents, Board directors, ACER-CART representative and delegates to the BC Teachers’ Federation AGM in the spring of 2019. Board bylaws dictate that after six years, I must ‘take a year off’ from the position of Board Director. It has been a privilege to serve both the BCRTA and the ACER-CART family.

**RTAM** - has extended our office hours to be from 8:30am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday with one full time staff member and our Executive Director who is 3/5 time.  The RTAM President, Joan Dawson lives in Thompson MB., Peggy lives in Winnipeg and Rosalie Bornn, the Past President lives in Dauphin.  I believe our Board of Directors number 19.

**ARTA** – With elections tied to the AGM, we will not be able to report changes until mid-October. Our staff component continues to grow, and we are able to grant increased support to committees and initiatives. Our Foundation and Trust elections come later during the year.

1. ***ACER-CART is hoping to pull together with like-minded organizations as we move forward to the next Federal Election.  Has your association initiated or intend to initiate any strategies in this direction?***

**RTAM** has two members of the Board who are members of the Manitoba Seniors Coalition.  This is an organization that includes seven other provincial not-for-profit organizations that are involved with senior's issues and concerns.  We, the RTAM members, are looking at the whole area of Income Security for seniors and thus the pension issues for all of us are of deep concern.  We are meeting as a Coalition early in October to strategize for the coming year.  Most issues have a federal government component as well as a provincial and municipal component.  By collaborating we hope to bring a stronger voice to bare on the common issues we face.

**ARTA** –Advocacy is one of the primary focusses of our Strategic Planning Committee. Currently they have liaison with the Active Teachers, and the Seniors Task Force of Political Involvement Alberta. (PIA). The organization is also anticipating involvement in initiatives educating members on the what we perceive to be critical issues in next spring’s Provincial Elections, followed by the Federal Election in the Fall.

1. ***Pharmacare is anticipated to be a major topic moving forward.  Again, does your organization have any plans or positions heading into the new year.***

**BCRTA** - Dale and Jo-Ann Lauber continue to spearhead a campaign focusing on BCRTA branch involvement with communicating with BC Members of Parliament around the establishment of a national Pharmacare program. Their most recent report indicates that Branches continue to meet with MPs who are willing to read petitions in the House. We are keeping this issue front and centre before our MPs.

**RTAM** -One of the MLA's from the Winnipeg area, Doug Eyolfson, is advocating for: a National Pharmacare Program, enhancing the Canada Child Benefit, and addressing violence against health care workers.  He has also been involved in the publication: IT'S A FACT: Better Income can Lead to Better Health published by The Manitoba College of Family Physicians which is A Chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada.  Visit [www.getyourbenefits.ca](http://www.getyourbenefits.ca)., also available at <https://edu.gov,mb.ca/benefits>.  The booklet covers such topics as filing your income tax and tips on what you might have missed, financial counselling & literacy, employment & income assistance (EIA),finding work food & housing, seniors & 55 plus, and useful websites & phone numbers.  Although it is a provincial publication the concept may assist other provinces.

**ARTA** – This is an area of particular interest to us because of the potential impacts on our Benefits Plan. This is an ongoing topic of research for our Committee, and we are pleased to have the expertise and background knowledge in the areas of COO Gary Sawatzky. Of particular concern is what the impacts of any revisions would be on Retiree Plans.

1. ***Our third major initiative was to advocate for a Federal Seniors Ministry.  We are so good, that this has already been done.  Next step is to initiate input.  Any thoughts as to other Seniors issues that ACER-CART should be forwarding to that Ministry?***

**STS** is pleased the Federal Government has appointed a Senior’s Minister and will be interested in supporting any efforts towards a National Pharmacare Program and other Seniors’ initiatives. The 2019 election will be an opportunity to add the STS’s voice to these efforts by ACER-CART and member organizations.

**RTAM** - I read the letter from Justin Trudeau about his expectations for the Honorable Minister for Seniors and was very pleased with its scope and promise for change.  I personally would like to underline the areas of elder abuse, dementia, and add the whole area of ageism which affects every aspect of healthy aging.

**ARTA** – We too are looking forward to seeing how this Ministry evolves and are grateful that ACER CART will be strongly monitoring this Federal Initiative. Organizationally we have a strong emphasis on Wellness, Finances in Retirement, and Benefits. While ensuring Seniors receive the supports they need in retirement, we need to emphasize that they are major contributors in so many ways, and are an asset and not a liability to the national identity.