ACER-CART Report Western Area, March 14, 2019

Greetings everybody. I trust you are coming out of hibernation, and those political juices are starting to flow again. In the west, the groundhog only saw his shadow in BC, but I have some highlights from A couple other provinces as well.

I have had contact with everyone except Ken Nash in the Yukon. I don’t know what direction he’s migrated, but E-mail and phone messages have not elicited a response.

**BCRTA** has nominated Gerry for another term as VP, and are as enthralled with his abilities and insights as the rest of us. (I’d be happy to second that nomination if needed.) They are most pleased with his leadership in the Pension area and are actively promoting the ARTA E-Petition that Gerry initiated.

They also moved into a Strategic planning process last year, and March Board Meetings will see time spent working on the resulting actions. Organizationally they also:

* Establishing criteria for Life Membership Award for Exceptional Service
* Examining Liquor Liability Insurance issues that currently are not part of coverage.
* Updated Website and Facebook

They will also be an integral part of the BC Teachers’ Federation AGM in Victoria. They are entitled to send 28 voting members. Resolutions coming forward include:

* Request for BC Teachers Pension Board to re-establish subsidized Health Care Plans for Retirees.
* Looking at how to maintain full indexing as the number of Retired Members start to excel the active ones.

They will be part of the planning and organization of the Cosco AGM. With focus on “A Seniors Strategy for the 21st Century.

The organization has also expressed support for:

* Objections to using donated blood to create Blood Plasma for sale.
* Support for a review or solvency requirements in Provincial Pension Legislation and Regulations.
* Signed First Call Letter about lack of legislation protecting Chldren. BC has the lowest Child Employment Standards in North America.

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**Saskatchewan Superannuated Teachers** – will be having their Board meeting on Monday and Tuesday March 11 and 12. Marie will pass along highlights at that time which I would hope to have by the Conference Call.

Organizationally I am aware that they are looking at Data Storage and use of the Cloud. I told Fred Herron that I have had my head in the clouds for years, but that didn’t seem to relate to his issue.

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**RTAM – Retired Teachers’ Association of Manitoba** – I had a good conversation with Peggy. They are having some organizational anxieties at present with Executive Director leaving in May, and their other office employee having to be absent. Needless to say the office is quite hectic.

She is very involved in making pre-Retirement Presentations. Pension is a major issue for the Association and the Province as they currently have 16000 Retired Teachers vs. 1500 Active Teachers. COLA is inadequate, and there is little hope to get that addressed. However, there is indications that the Province has no plans to make any changes to the Defined Benefit Plan. They are trying to get representation on the Retirement Board. They are very supportive of the Pension Petition, and it will be featured in their upcoming magazine.

She also commented on their interest in Wellness. As well she is part of their granting of four scholarships a year that are funded by a trust they established a number of years ago.

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**ARTA** – has finally seen the light and selected a new ACER CART Director. Lawrence Hrycan is a past Chair and Continuing Member of the Strategic Planning Committee, which has allowed him a great overview of the organizations. He also has an interest in Political Involvement at Provincial and Federal Levels, and I know he will make an excellent contribution.

ARTA had its Board Meeting the last Tuesday/Wednesday of February. Among items of interest:

* Political Involvement – preparing for the upcoming Provincial Election, and looking forward to participating with ACER-CART on the preparation of materials for the Federal campaign.
* Pension – hoping to get a greater voice on the Teacher’s Plan, but not holding our breath. Board is supportive of the ACER-CART E-Petition and is sending a mail-out to all members next week.
* Received correspondence from Minister Tassi thanking us for letter of concerns re: Pension Security. Letter was based on the ACER-CART Draft.
* The Board passed a motion to put a link to Options on the Web-site
* Charitable Foundation has a budget of $70,000 this year to partner with Non-for-Profits that focus on Seniors in regards to Health, Housing and ESL. Current partnerships are with Alberta Parkinsons, Alzheimers’ Calgary and CNIB. Money is project specific.
* Wellness Committee has created and distributed, to all members, a publication on Diabetes.

Next meeting will be held in Canmore, preceded by a Retreat focussing on “Organizational Excellence. Representation not only includes the Board, but all Committee members, and members at large invited by the Branches. This annual event is focussed on leadership development and encouraging branch members to take on leadership roles in the Provincial Association. Presenters will include:

* Paul Huschilt – Climb your Mountain
* Todd Hirsch – Overview of Alberta’s Economy
* Dr. David Posen – Taking Care of the Caregiver
* Gregor Jeffrey – The Science of Influence
* Peter Legge – Make your Life a Masterpiece

**FINAL NOTE**: After eight years as ARTA Director, and this year as Western Rep. I have decided to hang up my spurs. I anticipate knee replacement surgery in June, with a second one to follow in a few months. After this call I will let the other Provinces know, and work on a successor. (Currently I’ve been trying to convince Marilyn Bossert of ARTA that she was born for the role . . . we’ll see.)

Cheers,

Gordon