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**Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités**

**Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

Date:   March 17, 2022

To: ACER-CART Executive

From: Marilyn Bossert, ACER-CART West Representative

Re: ACER-CART West Members Update

*Hello to all ACER-CART folks in Western Canada,*

*The ACER-CART executive will meet via Zoom next week, so please forward anything you have to share.  You could include:  (1) the current COVID status in your area, and its impact on your organization, (2) any recent advocacy from your organization, and (3) any good news stories from your area.*

**RTAM - Retired Teachers’ Association of Manitoba**

– submitted by JoAnne Hoyak, RTAM Vice President and ACER-CART Director

1. Well, the current provincial government seems to have thrown their hands up in defeat as mandates, testing, tracking, and reporting are – for all intents and purposes – being abandoned. Many businesses and organizations are choosing to maintain some restrictions including school divisions. Every person for themselves, I guess. We are planning an in-person AGM in May. For the future, RTAM is considering 2 face-to-face Board  meetings in 2022/2023 with the rest and all committee meetings to continue in ZOOM format.
2. There has been much work achieved in terms of advocacy activity. We are pleased to have our quest for a seat on the TRAF [pension] Board supported by the introduction of a private member’s bill brought forward to the floor of the Legislature. It will be debated soon. To that end we have utilized the ACER CART NEW MODE platform to disseminate support letters to our membership—over 7000 at the push of a button. These letters may be edited or forwarded “as is” to local MLA’s to encourage their vote for this Bill, as well as to provide information regarding our 5 main objectives.

RTAM has hired Prairie Sky Strategy-a lobby firm—to foster meaningful communication primarily with politicians, government, stakeholders, and the public. Their advice has been extremely valuable in terms of having our organization recognized and valued.

1. OK, Good News—In our search for an Executive Director, RTAM has hired Pinnacle—a recruitment firm and we are pleased to see several qualified and promising candidates on the list. We will assess these next week and hope to be in the interview stage soon.

The President and the Vice President continue to meet regularly with our MTS counterparts and are currently discussing issues such as retired teachers who substitute after holding an amazing ZOOM experience where those folks- who still stand and deliver- spoke of today’s concerns. We also broach the subject of our inadequate COLA, TRAF representation and formal legislated recognition and more.

In terms of our succession worries for next year, it is with extreme relief we applaud the recruitment work of our president so all chairs that will become vacant are ready to be filled by new and exciting Board members to carry on our work going forward.

**STS – Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan**

* + Submitted by Murray Wall, STS Executive Secretary

**Organizational Update:**

* Membership continues to hold steady at slightly below 12,000 members.
* Membership in the Extended Health Plan also continues to hold steady, currently at 8,566.
* The Provincial Executive has made a decision that the 2022 STS Annual General Meeting will be in a virtual format in May.
* A new Ageism policy will be brought to the AGM for approval.
* The STS Financial Affairs Bylaw and associated Guidelines are being reviewed and renewed.
* $100,000 has been provided to Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) in support of a Home Supports advocacy initiative advocacy regarding “ageing in place” for older adults.
* The Provincial Executive is engaged in a book study of Happily Ever Older by Moira Welsh.

**Implications of COVID:**

* Provincial Executive meetings are continuing via Zoom for the time being.
* Provincial recreational have not restarted although it is anticipated that Golf will occur in early summer and Curling in the late fall.
* A Chapter Presidents meeting typically held in October was postponed until March 2022 and subsequently cancelled until fall of 2022.
* Both the STS Operating Fund and the Extended Health Fund are in a healthy financial position, largely due to impacts of COVID.
* Provincially the various health related mandates have largely been dropped although there is continued apprehension from many regarding gatherings and public interactions.
* The polarization of public opinion regarding many COVID items related is concerning. This polarization extends to some degree into our membership and has had impacts on social relationships, including interactions among members, as well as family dynamics.

**Good News:**

* There is optimism among many that a greater normalization of relationships and interactions is ahead.
* Indications are that many of our members have re-engaged in travel opportunities, including travel abroad.
* Interest in the affairs of the provincial organization continues with many resolutions being put forward for debate to the Annual General Meeting.
* 2023 will be the 50th anniversary of the STS and we look forward to planning celebrations in honor of this milestone.

**ARTA** – **ALBERTA RETIRED TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION**

* + submitted by Lawrence Hrycan, ARTA ACER-CART Director

**COVID update**

The daily tasks of the ARTA office are being done at the present time by the staff working from home. There are two reasons for this: Even though the Alberta Government have taken away most of the Covid restrictions, because of the age of our clientele, we feel we still need to be careful. As well, we suffered a setback in the office due to some flooding, which should be taken care of by mid-April.

We do not know how many COVID cases there are or whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing because people have been unable to be tested. Home tests that people do, are not reported to the government, so the numbers reported are probably not too accurate.

**Advocacy**

ARTA continues to work with Public Interest Alberta, Seniors Task Force, for the betterment of all seniors. Currently, there is a campaign entitled “Seniors Deserve Better”. The Seniors Task Force is working hard to try to get a Seniors Advocate position set up, similar to the one that is in British Columbia. Representatives of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP), and Friends of Medicare (FOM) are on the Seniors Task Force Committee and, together with another 15 organizations, are working hard to have the provincial government pay attention to the needs of all seniors in the province. The hope is that if this position gains ground, then there is an avenue to promote aging in place, home care, long-term care, etc.

**Some good news items are:**

The ARTA Board of Directors passed a motion at the last meeting to open up travel through the travel plan, pending removal of the Level 3 advisory by the Government of Canada.

There will be a Wellness Challenge this spring. It will be a hybrid version of activities which will be managed through a program that converts time into steps.

After two years, the Alberta Retired Teachers Charitable Foundation, (ARTCF) Golf Tournament will once again be held. It is on June 16 at the Ponoka Community Golf Club. All ARTA members are invited, and it is usually quite a party!

**BCRTA – British Columbia Retired Teachers’ Association**

* + Submitted by Steve Bailey, BC ACER-CART Representative

The BCRTA had a “Valentine’s” celebration on February 14 via zoom that featured information on getting a good night’s sleep, and how to access a sleep clinic. BCRTA members were invited to enter a contest for a gift basket for themselves and for a friend. Winners were drawn during the event. Updates on BCRTA activities and initiative were also included in the presentation.

On March 7, also via zoom, the BCRTA Board and Executive Director hosted a “Super-Zone” meeting that included representatives from each of the BCRTA branches around the province. President Grace Wilson greeted participants with a BCRTA update; Pensions Chair, Arnie Lambert, presented an update on pensions and the efforts of the B.C. Investment Corporation to divest itself of Russian assets (not a hugely significant part of the over-all portfolio); and Executive Director, Tim Anderson, outlined a major initiative to revamp all BCRTA communications and administrative software and technology to prepare us for necessary future development and change in this area. The aim is to integrate all aspects of BCRTA work and service to members through a sustainable and efficient platform. We also had an update on BCRTA insurance programmes and future initiatives in that area.

During a “Zone Break-Out” session, branch representatives were asked to share their plans for moving forward ‘post-pandemic’, suggestions for areas the Board should be addressing during its Strategic Planning day, and whether there was a consensus that the BCRTA Annual General Meeting in the Fall should include meeting in person. There was a general consensus that meeting in person would be preferable – if pandemic conditions allowed for it – but that attendance by zoom (ie. A hybrid model) should also be possible for delegates who do not yet wish to attend an in-person AGM. For an in-person gathering, precautions such as fewer people seated at each table, and a large meeting space where tables can be distanced more readily were suggested.

On April 12, The Board of Directors will gather for a Strategic Planning day prior to our regular Board meeting on April 13. All BCRTA committee meetings prior to the April 13 Board meeting will be conducted through zoom.

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Once again, it is enlightening to hear what is happening in the Member organizations – some similarities/some differences, but always the opportunity to learn from one another.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Bossert