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

**Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

Date:   April 11, 2023

To: ACER-CART Executive

From: Marilyn Bossert, ACER-CART West Representative

Re: ACER-CART West Members Update

Unfortunately, we were unable to have a Zoom meeting with those of us in ACER-CART West, but we are still planning an in-person session in Edmonton the end of August.

Please find below reports from each of the Western Organizations.

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

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

On March 20, the BCRTA Board of Directors met to update members in some areas of active development.

1. Assistant PostScript editor, Karen Cooper met with us to outline how she and Executive Director, Tim Anderson, use Microsoft Teams to edit article submissions to PostScript. The process is efficient and results in quality articles from BCRTA members. One of our BCRTA initiatives this year is equipping members to ‘tell their personal and professional stories of excellence. We are pleased that increasing number of our members are submitting articles to PostScript. Last October, at our AGM, one of our guest presenters was Noel Bentley who specializes in story development and telling. Our Excellence in Public Education Committee has made grant money available to branches who wish to have an additional workshop experience with Noel.
2. The BCRTA is preparing a submission to the British Columbia Standing Committee on Finance focussing on needed areas of budget support in B.C. public education. Branches and members have been invited to present specific suggestions. The B.C. Budget does not highlight any specific areas in public education other than a vague reference to “money to build new schools”.
3. Re-design and implementation of an improved office management and member communication system is well underway under the direction of Tim Anderson. Part of that initiative is Boar member training in using Microsoft Teams as a tool for committee work.
4. The board is preparing for its annual series of in-person “Zone Meetings” where executive members meet with our zone leaders around the province. The common agenda has been developed, and locations chosen. The zone meetings are an opportunity for the Board to receive important feedback from our branches. Information will be compiled, and follow-up strategies developed. Membership Committee Chair, Dave Scott, asked each committee chair to identity ‘hot button’ issues that each BCRTA committee is working on. These focal points will be discussed at the zone meetings and will become points in our annual BCRTA Report to the ACER-CART AGM.
5. On Tuesday, March 21, representatives from the BCRTA will attend, with voting privileges, the annual meeting of the BC Teachers’ Federation to represent BCRTA members during important pension discussions. It should be noted that our 6.9% COLA increase this year is due in large part to our BCRTA Pensions and Benefits Committee on-going work with the trustees of the B.C. Teachers’ Pension Plan as part of the   
   B.C. Pensions Corporation. We celebrate! The BCRTA has also made our submission to the ACER-CART pension survey.

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

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

**Teacher Conventions**

ARTA staff and volunteers manned booths and ran 1-hour sessions (including a PowerPoint) at all nine Teacher Conventions in the province. There was a very positive response to these. Many active teachers are hearing what ARTA can do for them and plan on using the ARTA plan upon retirement. These venues help ARTA continue to increase their numbers.

**ARTARx Pharmacy**

The ARTARx pharmacy is in full swing for Edmonton and the surrounding towns. Numbers continue to climb as both retired teachers and other retirees, such as provincial and federal government workers, choose ARTA as their primary private plan health provider.

**Public Interest Alberta – Seniors’ Task Force**

ARTA has representation on the Seniors’ Task Force which represents 17 organizations in Alberta – most of them retired groups. The last meeting of the Seniors Task Force was held via Zoom on Thursday, March 2, 2023. There were 20 people in attendance.

Lisa Lintott, a guest speaker from Calgary, spoke about “Experiences of LGBTQ+ Seniors in Palliative Care and Long-Term Care”. Lisa spoke for almost an hour on how LGBTQ+ individuals are discriminated against in these facilities – so much so, that individuals hide who they are when they move to these facilities because they don’t trust the health care workers. It was felt that AHS workers needed guidelines and needed to be educated in dealings with LGBTQ+ individuals. There did not seem to be any recommendations or guidelines on the AHS website.

In discussion regarding the provincial budget, it was pointed out that there is a deferral of continuing care rates until after the election in May. They will then go up by 2.3%.

Chris Galloway, from Friends of Medicare (FOM), expressed dismay that the federal funding for health care coming to the provinces did not have any strings attached.

A petition is circulating from the Federation of Labour (AFL) stating that Alberta should stay with CPP and not pull out.

The Alberta Pharmacare group reported that there continues to be a strong lobby by the pharmaceutical companies against the proposed National Pharmacare Program.

**Pension Webinars**

ARTA, through its Pension and Financial Wellness Team, is sponsoring a webinar on April 5. The topic will be life insurance and critical illness insurance and is offered by Capital Estates Planning. The webinar that was sponsored by the Pension and Financial Wellness Team on January 11, and presented by the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund, was attended by 144 individuals.

**Retreat**

ARTA is once again hosting their annual retreat. This year, the retreat is being held at the Jasper Place Lodge and will take place May 23-25, 2023. The theme is “Celebrating Milestones.” All committee chairs and committee members are invited to attend. It is expected that about 90 individuals will be attending. It is ARTA’s sixtieth birthday this year and we will be celebrating all kinds of milestones!

**Casino**

ARTA applied for a casino several years ago and we have received word that this is our year. ARTA is hosting on August 19-20, 2023, at the Casino Yellowhead in Edmonton, Alberta. ARTA has to supply volunteers for General Manager, Alternate General Manger, Banker, Count Room Supervisor and Cashier. We are looking forward to a fun time!

**STS – Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan**

* Submitted byHelen  Sukovieff, STS ACER-CART Director

Because of a surplus in our Group Benefits plans, approximately two years ago our plan members were provided with a Health Spending Account of $250 to be used by June 30, 2023. This amount can even be used for premiums. Unfortunately, there hasn’t been a 100% uptake of this money but hopefully, more will be used prior to the deadline.

Recently, the STS has provided the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (an umbrella group for many senior groups in our province) a second grant of $100,000 for their Home Supports Initiative.

The McDowell Foundation (foundation developed for teacher action research) has put out a special directed call for research proposals. The special call will focus on research in two areas, transitions to retirement and continued contributions of superannuates to the teaching profession.

We are currently celebrating the 50th Anniversary year of the STS. Permanent recognition of the 50th Anniversary has been approved in principle by the STF and design options have been requested from Keystone Outdoor Living. Since the recognition will be on STF property, the STF has reserved final approval for the recognition.

The office is now sharing with Chapters the notifications of death that we  
receive for members in their Chapter on a monthly basis. Questions have  
arisen whether Chapters have to stop sending condolence cards to spouses  
/ families as this might create a privacy concern. The answer is No, Chapters  
do not have to change any of their current processes. The only thing the  
STF Privacy Officer is asking is that notifications of death from the STS are  
only used to update Chapter Membership Lists. Chapters that learn of a  
death through a newspaper, post office notice, funeral home notice, word  
of mouth etc. and send a card can continue to do so. All that is being asked  
is that the STS notification of death does not trigger the condolence card.

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

* Submitted by Joan Zaretsky, RTAM ACER-CART Director

Thanks for the updates.  I will not be the Vice President for RTAM next year and as such, will not be the ACER-CART director.  We will let you know who our next Vice President is after our May 3 AGM and I will forward your message below to the new VP.  Thanks, Marilyn.

 I certainly enjoyed ACER-CART last June and all the information shared with us over the course of the year.  I was most impressed with Sue Lantz last June and have been writing articles in our KIT magazine.  She is coming to speak at our AGM on Tuesday, May 2 in the evening.  I am also doing a workshop about her work in Tucson, Arizona for my church group on March 22nd.  I am very passionate about helping our older adults in all walks of life be prepared for upcoming events in their years to come. Take care and I wish you and all the ACER-CART directors all the best in 2023-24!