

January 28, 2011

President: Lou Duigou

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The Roman god Janus

His two heads face in opposite directions—one looks back at the past year while the other looks forward to the new year—simultaneously into the past and the future.

**Today's presentation: Income Tax Deductions for Seniors
By Norma Laccost
of H&R Block**

Welcome to our January breakfast meeting

I started writing this newsletter on January 8 having cleared 25 centimetres of snow from my deck so the dogs could go outside and it was still snowing some six hours later. The weather world-wide continues to be “different.” My cousin, who lives in Milnethorpe on the edge of the English Lake District told me on the phone that temperatures were around minus 13°C for a whole week just before Christmas and they were having snow. My wife’s cousin living on the Gold Coast of Australia is involved with the flooding that has hit that part of the country this month, and there are stories from all over the place of unusual weather. We sturdy Albertans are used to such things, of course, and, if we are not, we would whip off to Hawaii for a couple of weeks or down to Arizona for a couple of months, claiming that a mid-winter break is good for us.

Your thoughts

We send our thoughts and prayers for a full recovery to Eryl Jones. Eryl fell as she left the stage at the Arden Theatre in December and broke her ankle. She had to have surgery twice on the ankle but is now recuperating. We all wish her a speediest of recoveries.

Obituary

Shayne Page passed away on December 31, 2010. Shayne started teaching in 1967 at Westglen School, then at Steele Heights School, in Edmonton. He spent twenty years of his career teaching science at Lorne Akins School in St. Albert. He retired in 2000 and was an active member of STARTA. Our condolences go out to his mother, sisters and other members of his family.

Gary E. Pansegrau passed away on January 9, 2011. Gary taught for the Edmonton Public School District at Ross Sheppard Senior High School. On his retirement Gary’s special

pleasure was bowling with friends at the St. Albert Bowling Centre. Gary was a member of STARTA. Our condolences go out to his wife, Morag and his all members of his family.

Useless information!

Figures out in 2010 show that only one percent of 16 to 24 year-olds in Britain have never used the internet. What proportion of over 65 year-olds have never logged in?

Answer: 60 percent,

Smile!

Airport Security in the United States under the auspices of the Department of Homeland Security has detected the following information since its implementation in 2010:

Terrorist plots discovered	0
Transvestites	133
Hernias	1,485
Hemorrhoid cases	3,172
Enlarged prostates	8,249
Breast implants	59,350
Natural blondes	3



Politics

For those of you who are interested in light opera and politics here are some interesting observations from the later part of the 19th century. I imagine many of you are familiar with

at least the occasional operetta by W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Gilbert wrote the libretti and Sullivan the music. I have political quotations from three of the thirteen operettas. The comments, I believe, might be as pertinent today as they were when they were written.

The first is from *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) and is The Right Honourable Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. (First Lord of the Admiralty) explaining how he rose to such a prestigious post:

*I grew so rich that I was sent
By a pocket borough into Parliament.
I always voted at my party's call,
And never thought of thinking for myself at all.
I thought so little, they rewarded me
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!*

The second is from *Iolanthe* (1882) and is sung by Private Willis of the Grenadier Guards who is standing on sentry duty outside Westminster Hall:

*When in that House M.P.'s divide,
If they've a brain and cerebellum, too,
They've got to leave that brain outside,
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to.
But then the prospect of a lot
Of dull M.P.'s in close proximity,
All thinking for themselves, is what
No man can face with equanimity.*

*Then let's rejoice with loud Fal la—Fal lal la!
That Nature always does contrive—Fal lal la!
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative! Fall lal la!*

The third is from *Ruddigore* (1887) and is sung by Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, disguised as Robin Oakapple, a young farmer:

*Ye supple M.P.'s, who go down on your knees,
Your precious identity sinking,
And vote black or white as your leaders indite*

*(Which saves you the trouble of thinking),
For your country's good fame, her repute, or
her shame,
You don't care the snuff of a candle—
But you're paid for your game when you're told
that your name
Will be graced by a baronet's handle.*

Nothing much has changed apparently in 130 years—not a very progressive system this democracy of ours!!



Technological smile!

Installing a Husband
Dear Tech support:

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and noticed a distinct slow down in overall system performance, particularly in the flower and jewelry applications, which operated flawlessly under Boyfriend 5.0.

In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs, such as Romance 9.5 and Personal Attention 6.5, and then installed undesirable programs such as NBA 5.0, NFL 3.0 and Golf Clubs 4.1.

Conversation 8.0 no longer runs, and Housecleaning 2.6 simply crashes the system.

Please note that I have tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems but to no avail.

What can I do?

Signed,
Desperate

Dear Desperate,

First, keep in mind that Boyfriend 5.0 is an entertainment package, while Husband 1.0 is an operating system. Please enter command: `ithoughtyoulovedme.html` and try to download Tears 6.2 and do not forget to install the Guilt 3.0 update. If that application works as designed, Husband 1.0 should then automatically run the applications Jewelry 2.0 and Flowers 3.5.

However, remember, overuse of the above application can cause Husband 1.0 to default to Grumpy Silence 2.5, Happy Hour 7.0 or Beer 6.1, Please note that Beer 6.1 is a very bad program that will download the Farting and Snoring Loudly Beta.

Whatever you do, DO NOT under any circumstances install Mother-In-Law 1.0 (it runs a virus in the background that will eventually seize control of all your system resources).

In addition, please do not attempt to reinstall the Boyfriend 5.0 program. These are unsupported applications and will crash Husband 1.0.

In summary, Husband 1.0 is a great program, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory and performance. We recommend Cooking 3.0 and Hot Lingerie 7.7

Good luck!

Tech Support



STARTA Choir

In the last newsletter we mentioned the ten venues at which the choir would perform.

As some of you know, Eryl broke her leg/ankle badly and was hospitalized for 45 days. This caused three choir performances to be cancelled. The choir, on an errand of mercy and compassion, visited Cres Estioko (a choir member who fell off a ladder and injured her back) at her home and sang for her. They then thought they could manage the concerts a cappella in Villeneuve and Morinville. All reports indicate that they sang beautifully, as Eryl knew they would. Then they did an amazing and wonderful thing. They arranged with the University Hospital to come on Sunday, December 19, to Eryl's ward and present their concert to her and anyone else within earshot. They are confident, enthusiastic and very capable, and have brought joy wherever they have been. They have every right to be very proud of their accomplishments.

Very soon the choir will begin practice for their spring concert in May. If you would like to join the choir, please contact any choir member or Eryl at 780-459-8407 as soon as possible.

Many thanks

Thanks to everyone who donated to the St. Albert Kinettes' Christmas Hamper program. The Kinettes were delighted with our collective contribution to their cause.

Videos

For those of you who might be interested in viewing at your leisure the presentations at the September and October breakfast meetings of STARTA copies can be borrowed from Joyce Keltie at 780-935-6084.

September's presentation was by RCMP Constable Laurel Keating on Home and Travel Security.

October's presentation was by Petty Officer Carla Penney on Aghanistan.

Money and Pensions

I must admit to being a little puzzled by the opposition of Alberta's Provincial Treasurer to support the majority of the other provinces in reforming the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). It appears that Ted Morton is happy supporting Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's proposal for promoting a private pension plan to improve Canadians' retirement options rather than making reforms to the state-run plan. The explanation so far for adopting this direction is not very forthcoming and I suspect is ideological in nature. The current government believes that the responsibility for an adequate pension is an individual one and so private plans are the way to go. The difficulty with private plans is that unless they are carefully regulated another economic collapse like the one in fall 2008 could be disastrous for owners of private plans through banks or other financial institutions. The only reason financial institutions believe that Canadians should be forced to save more for their retirement is because then they would have more of the public's money to invest to make profits for themselves.

It is interesting to note that both the major proponents of the private retirement savings plans are well cared for. Mr. Flaherty will have an Ontario MLA's pension since he served in that province's government and opposition from 1995 to 2005. He will also have a Federal MP's pension since he has served in the Conservative government from 2006 to the present day. Both of these pensions will come out of public funds, of course. Equally Dr. Ted Morton has access to two public pensions. The first pension is as a member of staff at the University of Calgary since 1981 and the second as an MLA elected in 2004.

Silent Auction

As planned, our annual SILENT AUCTION will take place on Friday, March 25. With the usual team of experienced volunteers, especially the packers, we should be able to manage.

Please deliver any items, new or like new, to Eryl Jones 780-459-8407 at 56 Salisbury Avenue or to the shed in the back yard. Cut off for delivery of items will be March 21.

There will also be a "free table" for items unsuitable for sale but wonderful for someone to take home. Please indicate on delivery whether any of your items are for the "free table."



Alberta Health Care

As most of you were aware the Friends of Medicare called for a demonstration at the Legislature on Saturday, December 4, 2010. The demonstration was to show our concern for Bill 17, The Alberta Health Act. Among the speakers was Dr. Raj Sherman who continued to speak out against the direction of the Progressive Conservative government with regard to health care.

Bill 17 was passed at the end of the Fall session and it will enable the government to make whatever changes it wishes to the public health care system without any more consultation with the public. Many of us cynics believe that the process will involve much more privatization than we already have. The excuse being that the provincial government cannot sustain the level of public health care that is currently in place.



This excellent photograph of Dr. Sherman at the rally was taken by STARTA Web Master Larry Wyatt.

A recent strip cartoon made fun of the current situation

“I’ve been looking over the Health Care Bill. It’s really going to cover everybody.”

“If you can’t afford to see a doctor, you get referred to the airport for a free X-ray and complete ‘enhanced pat down.’”

“There’s even a coupon included for a no-wait security check-up.”

“Mention Al-Qaeda and get a free colonoscopy.”

Pension adjustment for 2011

I am sure that you have all checked your teachers’ pension increase for January 2011. If you have not then here are the details. The Alberta Consumer Price Index (ACPI) for 2010 was 1.00 percent. For me with 75 percent of my service prior to 1992, it works out at an increase of 0.62 percent—a \$30 a month increase. I have no idea how the ACPI is calculated but I am

sure that most of what I purchase has increased by more than one percent over the last year. Here are the latest figures:

Year	ACLI	My increase
2011	1.00%	0.62%
2010	0.10%	0.06%
2009	3.60%	2.25%
2008	4.90%	3.06%
2007	3.60%	2.25%
2006	2.00%	1.25%
2005	1.30%	0.81%
2004	5.70%	3.56%
2003	1.70%	1.06%

What these figures show is that in the last nine years my purchasing power from my teachers’ pension has declined by just a little under 9 percent. Official government figures show that between 2003 and 2011 the Alberta’s cost of living has risen by 23.9 percent and my pension has increased 14.92 percent.

A big thank you



At our last breakfast, held on December 3, we enjoyed a variety of sweet treats provided by the Decorating Committee. A big THANK YOU to the following who volunteered their culinary efforts for us to enjoy: Helen Kieran, Alison Weingardt, Marian Oberg, Anna Nord Maureen Glen Susan Supruniuk.

Intriguing thoughts

The hardness of the butter is proportional to the softness of the bread.

When everything is coming your way, you are in the wrong lane.