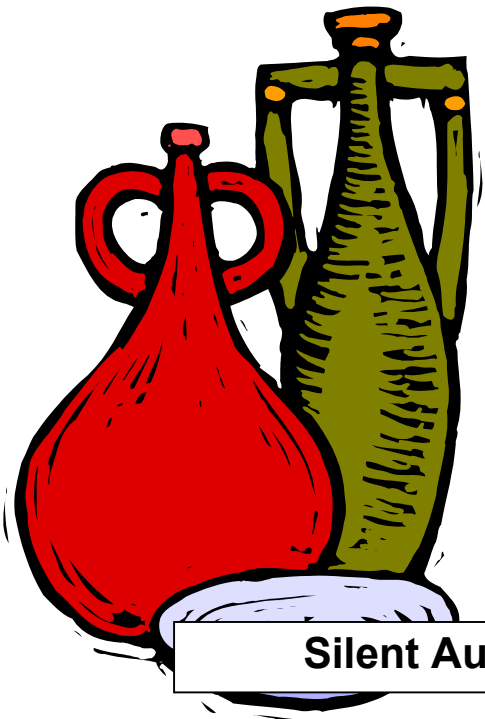
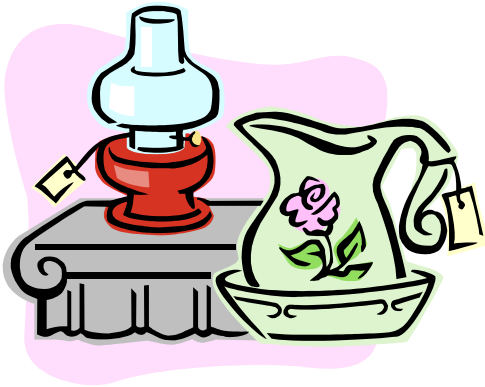

President: Rod Thronson

Editor: David Flower



Silent Auction To-day

Welcome to our March breakfast

The legend says that if March comes in like a lion it goes out like a lamb. This year it came in rather like a tired old horse and sounds as though it might well go out the same way. The cheery part is to listen to the “authority” from Enviro-Can on CBC who reports that 20 percent of our annual precipitation occurs in late March and early April. We have just returned from the tropics and all I can say is that I still prefer distinct seasons, however erratic they may seem.

February meeting

We had another good turn-out for our breakfast meeting with 118 members present. Our current paid membership stands at 182 and we have a phoning list which has just passed the 400 mark. Our guests, representatives from the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE), gave an excellent presentation with good handouts. The book fair held during the breakfast netted us \$154.30.

Nominations

The STARTA executive is elected every two years. This is the year for us to look for new members and to reaffirm those who are prepared to stay on for a further term. We have had an excellent group for the past two years, but several members would like to step down, so we are looking for interested volunteers. The executive meets once a month (on the second Tuesday) and each person carries out the duties of their particular role. There is plenty of support and willingness to help one another.

The executive consists of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications, Phoning Convener, Social Convener, Historian and Benefits Representative. The Past President is an automatic position. If you think you might

be interested in one of these positions, or have a suggestion of someone who might be, please contact Joan Trettler at 460-7454. The election will take place at the AGM in May.

Upcoming events

The April meeting will centre round a fitness theme.

The May meeting is our Annual General Meeting.

Jubilations Dinner Theatre

The next visit to the theatre (in West Edmonton Mall) is planned for May 14th. The production is entitled *A Buddy Holly Birthday Bash* and the cost is \$38.80 plus GST and optional gratuities. Brenda Kane will have tickets for sale at this meeting or can be contacted at 460-2414 or by e-mail at bgkane@telus.net.

The **annual golf event** will be held on June 17th at the Twin Willows Golf Course and is being organized this year by Wally Anderson and Gordon Miller. The game is a Texas-scramble and participants can choose to play 9 holes or 18 holes. The first foursome playing 18 holes will tee-off at 8:15 a.m. and the first foursome playing 9 holes will start at 9:15 a.m. The cost for 9 holes is \$22.35 (golf cart \$20) and for 18 holes is \$32.75 (golf cart \$30). Registration forms for the golf event will be in both the April and May newsletters.

Strange but true

A flight attendant was stationed at the departure gate to check tickets. As a man approached, she extended her hand for the ticket and he opened his trench coat and flashed her. Without blinking an eye

she said, “Sir, I need to see your ticket, not your stub.”

Congratulations, Commiserations

So the provincial election is over. The provincial turn-out was the lowest ever, around 41 percent, meaning that the provincial government was elected by just 22 percent of those eligible to vote. Nonetheless congratulations are in order for the Premier and for Ken Allred, our new MLA, and commiserations to Jack Flaherty our former MLA who did an excellent job representing his constituents. Thanks for participating should also go to Katy Campbell (NDP) and Ross Vincent (Green Party). It is no easy task running for election any time but even more so in a one-party province like Alberta – quite a record, the same political party since 1971!!!

Travel Insurance

The following item appears in Westjet’s *Up* magazine for March 2008:

“\$17,348. The average cost incurred after suffering a heart attack during a trip to the U.S. without having purchased travel medical insurance, as determined by Travel Underwriters – a third party travel insurance administrator – and BCAA Insurance in a study released last November (travelunderwriters.com). Food poisoning, bone fractures and pneumonia were also identified in the Top 10 most commonly claimed travel medical emergencies, each of which comes with a hefty price tag when leaving home uninsured.”

Thank heaven that ARTA’s extended healthcare insurance can include travel insurance.

Strange but true

A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at a branch of Safeway but she

couldn’t find one big enough for her family. She asked a passing assistant, “Do these turkeys get any bigger?” The assistant replied. “I’m afraid not, they’re dead.”

Public Sector Pensions

For many years I have heard arguments from teachers that rather than pay into the Teachers’ Retirement Fund, they should be able to take their money and create their own pension plan. They are sure they would do a great deal better. I have argued that most people would not put money aside every year in a pension fund and have been chided for not appreciating how disciplined people can be. In the British newspaper *The Telegraph*, March 21, 2008, appeared the following headline “350,000 may have to delay retirement.” In part the article reads:

“Up to 350,000 people who had been due to retire in the next 12 months may have to carry on working or alter their pension arrangements because of the financial crisis, experts have warned. Plunging share prices have cut the value of some personal pension pots by up to 20 percent since last summer A combination of falling share values and poorer yields from annuities means that someone whose fund was worth \$200,000 last June, giving a pension of \$14,940, is likely to have no more than \$160,000 to invest now, leaving them with a pension of just over \$12,000. . . . **The problem does not affect anyone belonging to a final salary scheme or public sector workers, who have guaranteed pension payouts.**” So perhaps not being greedy and believing that we could do better than investment specialists may well have resulted in our not feeling the dramatic effects of the recession (or is that a depression?).

10th Anniversary Website

We are getting closer to making our Website a reality. Our Web Master, Larry Wyatt, is in the process of setting up the site and more details should be available soon including details of past and future activities. Welcome to the computer age!!!

Direct pay

Another benefit to look forward to is that effective May 1, 2008, we will not need to accumulate our prescription receipts for submission to Johnson Inc.. The pharmacies will be able to bill Johnson direct thus saving one more extra step. Details of the plan will appear in the next *ARTA News and Views*.

One not to believe!

This incident occurred at the Ford dealership in Canton, Mississippi and was reported by a customer.

“When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver’s side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. “Hey,” I announced to the technician, “it’s open!” His reply, “I know. I already got that side.”

Friends of Six

For those of you who worked for the St. Albert Protestant Schools, we are looking for volunteers to support the establishment of a district museum, or at least an historical presence. Most of you are very busy but your assistance would be very helpful. This help might range from filing, to preparing displays, finding information, applying for grants, and

other types of help. We are planning a meeting on **Monday, April 28th at 2.00 p.m. at the District Office**. We will probably meet in the board room. Any support would be most welcome, including moral support. Plans are already underway to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. Albert Protestant Schools next year, but we would like to see the museum as an ongoing project. Please consider providing some assistance, and attending the meeting.

Read this one carefully!!

The policeman got out of his car and approached the boy racer he had stopped for speeding. “I’ve been waiting for you all day,” said the policeman. The kid replied, “Yes, well I got here as fast as I could.”

When the policeman finally stopped laughing, he sent the kid on his way without a ticket.

Have you ever wondered . . . ?

Have you ever wondered how others see us as Canadians? *The Telegraph* recently ran a series of national cultural profiles. What follows is some of what they had to say about Canadians.

Self-image: Canadians see themselves as fair, laid back and tolerant. Few nationals are as content with their passport as are Canadians.

Listening habits: Canadians like modest, unpretentious speakers who provide facts without trimmings and inject gentle humour in the process. Unlike Americans, they do not want the hard sell. They enjoy early debate with you, but listen politely to all you have to say first.

Cultural black holes: Canadians have fewer black holes than most nationalities on account of the high degree of tolerance observable in society. This is

largely due to the widespread multiculturalism across the country. There is a certain amount of mild anti-Americanism generated by the hugeness and competitiveness of their southern neighbour, but the U.S.-Canada frontier is one of the friendliest on earth.

Leadership style: In business, Canadian managers behave in a subdued manner in comparison with their American counterparts and are expected by their staff to be truthful, trusting and egalitarian. Though results-oriented, their route to success is governed by common sense rather than aggressive methods.

Negotiating characteristics: Canadians are among the most reasonable people in the world to negotiate with and meetings are normally conducted in a pleasant, open manner aiming at a win-win result.

Manners and taboos: Canadians possess easy social graces – they are the world’s best cocktail partygoers. They invite people readily for supper in their homes where an old-fashioned hospitality knows no bounds.

How to empathize with them: Though Canadians are not very nationalistic, they like you to appreciate the uniqueness of their identity and to distinguish them clearly from Americans. They are easy to deal with, as they are genuinely interested in other countries and are keen on being internationally popular (which they are).

The question that remains is simply do you recognize yourself in this profile?

Obvious?

It was meal time during a flight on a British Airways plane. “Would you like dinner?” the flight attendant asked the man seated in the front row. “What are my choices?,” the man asked. “Yes or no,” the flight attendant replied.

Education Week

St. Albert Protestant Schools are looking for community members to come into classrooms to read to students during education week, April 28 to May 2. If you are interested, please contact Lois Gluck, District Coordinator, Circular Services, at 460-3712. Teachers provide the reading materials, if you wish, and most sessions last 30-45 minutes. You can also sign up with Joan Trettler at the meeting today.

Public Health Care an economic asset.

In 1999 The Conference Board of Canada published a brief entitled “Corporate Health Care Costs in Canada and the U.S.: Does Canada’s Medicare System Make a Difference?”

The study compares similar U.S. and Canadian companies in four different industrial sectors: business services, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, automobile, and information technology. It confirms the existence of a competitive advantage in Canada’s publicly funded health care system, demonstrating that employers’ total health care expenditures for private and public health benefits are substantially lower in Canada than in the United States.

Even though taxes and contributions to legislated health care benefits are higher in Canada, these costs do not offset the significantly higher cost of employer-sponsored benefits. (Source: *Canadian Perspectives*, Spring 2008).

Hmmm!!

A truck driver was driving along a country road. A sign came up that read “Low Bridge Ahead.” Before he realized it, the bridge was directly ahead and he got stuck under it.

Cars were backed up for miles. Finally a police car arrived. The policeman got out of his car, walked to the truck's cab and said to the driver "Got stuck, eh?"

The truck driver responded, "No, I was delivering this bridge and ran out of gas!"

So what went wrong with the economy?

Many years ago when we lived in Medicine Hat our neighbour across the street was a smalltime rancher. He and I used to have some interesting discussions particularly related to the price of beef. There was one particular period when beef prices rose substantially and I suggested to him that perhaps there should be a ceiling above which beef prices could not rise. He went ballistic suggesting that such a suggestion was only worthy of a communist or socialist. He maintained vigorously that the market should determine the price. I asked whether that should always be the case. His answer was that it should. Some months later when the price of beef dropped, the topic was raised again when he told me that there had to be a floor price below which beef prices could not go to protect the beef producer from losing money. So I said – no ceiling but definitely a floor for beef prices. Absolutely, he maintained. What he wanted, I suggested, was to have his cake and eat it too. My comments provoked another outburst claiming I did not understand economics and the market place.

With this story in my mind I was amused therefore to read in *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* on Wednesday, March 19 that two separate columnists were commenting on a similar problem

with the banks. Apparently the banks do not want any government interference when the economy is booming but when there is an emergency like the current one related to sub-prime mortgages, and the fear of a wholesale collapse of the financial system, they assume the government will bail them out with loans. "Hosannas for laissez-faire policies echo throughout the editorial pages of the *Journal* [*The Wall Street Journal*] . . . until a crisis hits large investment firms. Then they hem and haw a little, muttering under their breath about the need for the federal government to step in to underwrite loans and finance a needed bailout" or put more crudely "socialism for the rich, the 'discipline of the market' for the poor." (Source: *The National Post*, March 19, 2008, "What's good for the Wall Street goose . . ." by Jeet Heer, page A21).

Advice for golfers

1. A good drive on the 18th hole has stopped many a golfer from giving up the game.
2. Golf is the perfect game to play on a Sunday because you always end up praying a lot.
3. If there is a storm rolling in, you will be having the game of your life.
4. Golf balls are like eggs. They are white. They are sold by the dozen. You need to buy fresh ones each week.
5. A pro-shop gets its name from the fact that you have to have the income of a professional golfer to buy anything in there.
6. It is amazing how a golfer who never helps around the house will replace his divots, repair his ball marks and rake his sand traps.