

NEWSLETTER

September 30, 2011

President: Lou Duigou

Editor: David Flower



Amaryllis in the court yard of the Landscape Hotel, Dali, South East China

To-day's Speaker

from the Alberta Motorists' Association

“Senior driving”

Welcome to the 2011/12 STARTA breakfast meetings

Although starting these meetings in September heralds the beginning of fall or autumn, it is always fun to begin a new academic year. I heard Stuart McLean on CBC recently say that in his mind the year should start in September and end in August because that was his childhood perception of the year and meant more than January to December. So it remains with those of us who taught especially when you think that examinations were held in late January or early February making December the end of the year seeming meaningless.

Welcome to those of you have been members in many cases for years and a particular welcome to those who retired in June and are joining us for the first time. Our meetings are held on the last Friday mornings in September and October and then from January through to May inclusive. The only variation is the Christmas breakfast which is held, usually, in early December.

The major change for the Association is that we have moved locations for our breakfasts. Our meetings for this year are going to be in the renovated Curling Club.

The membership fee for the year is \$5.00 and is due in September. If you cannot attend the September meeting then the fee will be collected when you attend a subsequent meeting.

The Association is always seeking volunteers to help in a number of capacities. If you would like to get more involved please contact anyone of the executive listed below.

The executive of STARTA is elected for two year terms and this is the second year. The executive is:

President: Lou Duigou 458-6640
Vice-Presidents: Brenda Kane 460-2414
Larry Wyatt 459-6761
Past President: Jack Flaherty 459-9217
Secretary: To be named
Treasurer: Helen Kieran 458-2420

The appointed representatives are:

Webmaster: Larry Wyatt 459-6761
Phoning Convener: Gail Kosinski 458-9124
Program Convener: Emil Guzik 973-5175
Historian: Joyce Keltie 935-6084
Benefits: Leo Bruseker 459-8595
Communications: David Flower 458-3245

Summer Activities

As is customary for STARTA we had activities planned for the summer months.

The **golf tournament** was scheduled for June 14 but unfortunately it was rained out. Brenda Kane reported that 35 golfers were waiting to take part in the tournament which was being held in memory of Rod Thronson. They had a great luncheon and all enjoyed the draws for prizes and Lowell Thronson and Barrie Findlater gave a great tribute to Rod and his golfing escapades. There are pictures of the golfers throughout this newsletter as well as a page listing the various donations that were received for the tournament. The photographs were taken by Joyce Keltie, STARTA historian.



Rod Thronson

The **STARTA picnic** was held on Wednesday, July 13 at 5 pm at St. Albert Lions Park. The picnic was organized by Eryl Jones, Helen Kieran and Susan Supruniuk and was a great success. This year the weather was in our favour and the food and drink was of the usual high quality. Many thanks go to the organisers and to those who attended.

The annual visit to Northlands for lunch and an afternoon of **horse racing** was held on Sunday August 14 and was a great success although the editor lost money and nobody in his party came home having made a profit the afternoon was very pleasant and a

little gambling is permitted, after all. Special thanks to Joan Trettler for organizing this outing.



Pat Trudeau at the races—Mmm! To bet or the basis for my next murder mystery?

ARTA Golf Tournament

The STARTA Executive Committee at its August 2 meeting decided to host the ARTA Memorial Golf Tournament on June 18 2012 at the Sandpiper Golf and Country Club. The tournament will be held in memory of the late Rod Thronson, a highly respected member of STARTA and of his community. The Golf Committee will be chaired by Lou Duigou. Several members have already volunteered to serve on the committee including Brenda Kane, Dawn Curran, Helen Kieran and Leo Bruseker. Others will be added as needed. Several volunteers will be required on the actual day of the tournament in order to assure that everything runs smoothly. More about this in the future.

My Living Will

Last night my kids and I were sitting in the living room and I said to them, “I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug”.

They got up, unplugged the computer and threw out my wine!!

The little bastards



Robin Carson is the new editor of *ARTA News and Views* magazine to succeed David Flower. Robin has been a retired teacher after working for Edmonton Public Schools for “thirty-seven happy years in the classroom”. Robin taught Drama, Stagecraft and Art but mostly English and Latin at three of Edmonton’s high schools. He thinks that changes to *ARTA News and Views* will be very minor but over the next five years he wants to look at a variety of ways to deliver the magazine in a greater variety of electronic forms. Lou Duigou is certain that all STARTA members join him in wishing Robin Carson great success in his new job.

ARTA also has a new Executive Director

On September 6 ARTA announced the appointment of Daniel Mulloy as its new Executive Director. Mr. Mulloy will begin his duties in mid-September.

An Interesting Conference

The Parkland Institute’s 15th annual conference will be held on the University of Alberta Campus on November 18-20. The conference will take a look at the current attack on workers and unions as evident in places like the United States and Britain and will also look at the warning signs that this anti-public-sector-worker wave is already on its way to Canada and Alberta. In addition the conference will explore the accompanying attack on democracy and how capital is working to hinder real action to protect our common environment. More information on the conference is available at www.parklandinstitute.ca and click on Fall Conference.

New Editor for *ARTA News and Views*

Condolences

Members of STARTA pass on their condolences to the family of Maureen Glen who died on July 28, 2011. Maureen was STARTA secretary and a member of the STARTA choir.

Condolences also go to the family of Minnie Cournoyer who died on September 9, 2011. Minnie was a long-time teacher and STARTA member.

Some figures you might enjoy—or not!

I remember being told when I was in the process of retiring that the longer I stayed alive the poorer I would become. It was made very clear to me that my annual cost-of-living increase just would not keep up with inflation. Well indeed it has not done. My purchasing power is currently around 10 percent lower than when I first retired. Doing some other calculations this summer I have found that I am being hit in a number of other areas by significantly increased prices. Here are three examples:

1. My EPCOR bill for August 2010 was \$109.91, for August 2011 it was \$133.91 – an increase, without any additions in the house, of 22 percent.

2. My vehicle registration for 2012 went from \$70.45 last September to 84.45 this September – an increase of 19.87 percent.

3. The price of gasoline went from 84.18 cents on August 31, 2010 to 112.70 cents on August 31, 2011 – an increase of approximately 34 percent.

The first example is the result of provincial government deregulation. It is a form of self-flagellation – suffering pain simply to understand how the greedy marketplace works!

The second is an example of how government can manipulate taxes without increasing personal income taxes – the registration is, after all, a road tax!

The third is an ongoing market place problem – first of all there is next to no competition in the price of gasoline between the various companies, when one goes up they all go up and when one comes down they all come down. Secondly the price at the pump does not seem to reflect the price of crude oil any more – after all no one complains about the price of gasoline, we just pay it!

A turkey was chatting to a bull. “I would love to be able to get to the top of that tree,” sighed the turkey, “but I haven’t got the energy.” “Well, why don’t you nibble on some of my droppings?” replied the bull, “they’re packed with nutrients.”

The turkey pecked at a lump of dung and found it actually gave him enough strength to reach the lowest branch of the tree. The next day, after eating some more dung, he reached the second branch. Finally after a fourth night, the turkey was proudly perched at the top of the tree. He was promptly spotted by a farmer, who shot him dead.

Moral of the story:

Bullshit might get you to the top, but it won’t keep you there.

More Golf Photographs



Smile—or not!

“Second Wind” One-Day Conference Planned

A special conference called “Second Wind” is being planned for April 12, 2012. As the planning committee explains, it is an inaugural event for retirees in the Greater Edmonton community. The event is being spearheaded by ERTA, the Edmonton Retired Teachers’ Association.

The event will provide an excellent opportunity for retired teachers to reunite with former colleagues and to explore new connections with people of similar interests, passions and needs. Following an inspirational keynote presentation, a variety of interactive sessions to nourish the mind, body and soul will be provided for delegates’ selection.

To reduce participant costs, the event will be supported by ARTA and some affiliate chapters including ERTA, SCARTA (Strathcona County and Area Retired Teachers’ Association), STARTA and PARTA (Parkland and Area Retired Teachers’ Association). The early bird registration fee will be only \$50 and includes lunch. The event will be held at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre.

Your STARTA executive gives this venture its full support and has “invested” \$250 in financial support. The executive feel that this will be an interesting, fun and useful event to help enrich the lives of retirees.

Please mark your calendars for April 12, 2012. More information will be available as we get closer to the date.



This one is for dog lovers!

A sign was hung in an office window. It read “Help wanted. Must type 70 words a minute. Must be computer literate. Must be bilingual. An equal opportunity employer”.

A dog walking by saw the sign. He looked at it for a moment, pulled it down with his mouth and walked into the manager’s office, making it clear he wished to apply for the job.

The office manager laughed and said, “I can’t hire a dog for this job.”

The dog pointed to the line “An equal opportunity employer”.

So the manager said, “Okay, take this letter and type it”.

The dog went to the word processor and returned a minute later with the perfectly formatted letter.

The manager said, “Okay, here’s a problem. Write a computer program for it and run it”.

Fifteen minutes later the dog came back with the correct answer.

The manager still was not convinced. “I still can’t hire you for this position,” he said, “You’ve got to be bilingual”.

The dog looked up at the manager and said “Meow”.

On privatization of health care

In the early 1980s one of the supposedly clever comments centred around the name of the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. He led the Iranian Republic after the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979. Imam Khomeini died in 1989. The line was “Ayatollah you once! Ayatollah you twice! Khomeini times I have to tell you?”

The message came to my mind the other day when I was reflecting on the comments of the various Alberta Progressive Conservative candidates seeking the leadership of the party.

Since 1993, how many times have the people of Alberta, through surveys and studies, told the government of the province that they do not want privatization of health care? In fact, it comes in the top two or three in every survey I have seen. For that matter, how many times have the people of Canada told their federal government that public health care is a priority for the majority of the population?

And how many times do the politicians keep repeating that they must ask the people and then ignore the advice that they receive from the people because it is not the answer they want to hear? What the politicians hope will happen is that with the gradual erosion of funding for public health care the population will be worn down by attrition to realise that the only way to handle the problem is to permit more privatization. There is an ideology at play here and it is that the private sector can do a better job than the public sector. In addition private is cheaper for the government.

We, the ordinary taxpayers, were not the cause of the economic problems that are plaguing the western world at the moment. Those who deregulated the banks and unleashed the corporations caused the problem. We, the people, have to pay for inept governments and equally inept bureaucracies that toady to bankers, investment dealers and greedy corporations driven only by the need to make as large a profit as possible. They toy with us and our money and care nothing about what devastation they cause.

We “atollah” you once! We “atollah” you twice! Khomeini times we have to tell you?

October breakfast meeting

Our featured guest for the October 28 meeting will be Debra Anzinger whose topic will be “Cooking Karma.” Debra teaches cooking to all ages and is doing cooking presentations on television.



STARTA Choir

May 2011 seems so long ago now but STARTA choir clearly remembers presenting their Spring concert to seniors' lodges in St. Albert, Morinville and Villeneuve in the first few weeks of June.

We sang songs from the musical *The King and I*. The audiences enjoyed our presentations as much as we enjoyed performing to them. There was a great deal of toe-tapping and singing along with us. The choir needs to be commended for their dedication, enthusiasm and talent.

We started rehearsals for our Christmas programme on September 23 and we will share the programme with you at our Christmas breakfast meeting. We **really** need more members so if you would like to try us out, please contact any choir member or Eryl Jones at 780-459-8407. We practice every Friday at 10:30 a.m. at the Visionary College in St. Albert.

List of prizes and sponsors for STARTA Golf Event, 2011

Items Donated 2011	Sponsor
One week-ender bag with logo	Sandtrap, Tudor Glen
3 gift certificates @15.00 each	Joey's Only Restaurant, St. Albert
1 9 hole golf pass @29.00	Twin Willows Golf Club
4 coffee mugs	Starbucks in Chapters
2 gift baskets	Second Cup Coffee Co., Inglewood
2 - \$25 gift certificates	Swiss Chalet, St. Albert
4 Toyota Touch Detailing Kits (includes glass cleaner, multipurpose cleaner, wash and shine soap)	Sun Toyota
1 toiletry gift bag for a woman; 1 toiletry gift bag for a man	Shirley Brown, Avon Products
4 @ \$200 gift certificates for home renovations	E Squared Renovations
Black hooded Fox sweater jacket, L; White & black youth hoody; Green Fox t-shirt XL	Riverside Honda
Silver Suzuki Women's golf bag	Riverside Yamaha
4 Ball caps, 4 toques	Thurber Engineering, Robert Mills
Navy golf shirt, L Arranged \$10 000 Hole-in-One sponsorship	ATB Financial, north branch, Scott McCully
3 sleeves of golf balls	Larry & Donna Wyatt
Three 150 th ball caps & Three 150 th t-shirts	City of St. Albert 150 th , Margaret Plain
\$150 gift certificate for pet boarding or daycare	Ranch Kennel
4 - \$25 gift certificates for Apex Casino restaurant	Apex Casino, R. Lalecheur Courtney Dyck,
2 gift certificates of Quick service lube, oil & filter change	Ron Hodgson's Buick, GMC
Gift certificate - One night in a Jacuzzi/Air Tub Room	St. Albert Inn Michael Mazepa
2 - Gift certificates	Boston Pizza North, St. Albert
3- Gift certificates	Boston Pizza South, St. Albert
2 dozen travel mugs	Tim Horton's, St. Albert Trail
Three travel mugs and 3 hats	Servus Credit Union
6ft. Auto Return Putting Mat & Lap Office	Dale Thronson, RE/MAX Realtor