



**BRANDON AND AREA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**  
A Chapter of Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba (RTAM)

Brandon and Area Retired Teachers' Association's AGM was held at Seniors for Seniors on April 4, 2023. The following members were elected to the Executive Board:

President	Catherine McLaren	Treasurer	Mavis Johnston
Vice-President	Darlene Wilkinson	Director	Pat Bowslaugh
Immediate Past President	Rick Oakden	Director	Ida Hallatt
Secretary	Heather Shelton	Director	Doug Adams

A revised Constitution and Bylaws were adopted at the AGM, and a new Policies and Procedures document was presented to the members. Board members were elected to complete the second term in their respective roles.

The President attended the Brandon Teachers' Association Retirement Reception, informally welcoming the new retirees and inviting them to become a "BARTAn". Again this year, BARTA held some of its Executive Board meetings at the BTA office and assisted Brandon Teachers' Association at its annual LIFT Conference.

BARTA was pleased to host the RTAM Annual General Meeting on May 2-3, 2023. On May 2, local artist Weiming Zhao shared his education journey, which led him to paint his now world-renowned artworks *en plein air*. RTAM presented a speaker as well. Following the presentations, a dessert reception was held, with costs absorbed by RTAM using funds that had been budgeted for table centrepieces for the next day's meeting. Afterwards, BARTA hosted a social hour with AGM attendees enjoying a relaxing visit after a long hiatus due to COVID. Our AGM Host Committee Co-chairs, Doug Adams and Heather Shelton, organized a committee of energetic volunteers who created a welcoming atmosphere at the social hour and the next day, with gift bags for each attendee and room and table decorations evoking memories of schooldays gone by. Costs for the Tuesday event social and Wednesday's decorations were borne by BARTA.

During the year, Executive Board members developed a general timeline for the work of the Association and the Board. Each committee and the Executive Board provided estimated revenue and disbursements, and a draft budget was created. The timelines and budget will be used on a trial basis in the coming year, with a plan to reconcile the Actual figures with the budget, thereby allowing greater accuracy for 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Longtime BARTA member Rick Oakden received an RTAM Chapter Member Distinguished Service Award, in recognition for his work as a past president – especially through COVID – and with internal communications. Members were well informed about Chapter and RTAM news and events, as well as communiqués from all levels of government.

In April, BARTA hosted a funeral pre-planning seminar titled "Ducks in a Row", presented by Joy Bowman. Lunch was served to 53 attendees. Joy helped all in attendance to understand the importance of organizing necessary paperwork and information for our executor(s) following our death.

BARTA members and guests visited Fort la Reine Museum in Portage la Prairie on a beautiful day in July. After lunch at a local restaurant, we window-shopped at a garden centre before heading for home.

As is our custom, BARTA hosted four luncheons this year. A new format was introduced by the Events and Excursions Committee, with local restaurants as venues for the meal and program. Members ordered the meal of their choice and were responsible for paying their own tab and gratuity. This format was enthusiastically adopted by the membership. Speakers included Chad Wallin, the co-founder of the local inclusive hockey program called VOLT; Susie McPherson, a knowledge keeper from Brandon Friendship Centre’s Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Centre; and Cst. Reni DuFault of Brandon Police Service, who educated us on the latest scams and phishing strategies. The fourth luncheon preceded our AGM, with Weiming Zhao as our guest speaker. Weiming was presented with an Honourary Membership in BARTA, in recognition of his contributions to education in Brandon and area. Each luncheon opened with a land acknowledgment and giving of thanks. The monthly Breakfast Club, held at a local restaurant, included members and guests. Meetings of the Executive Board took place in the Conference Room at the BTA Office and at the home of Doug Adams.

The BARTA News, distributed at each luncheon, became immensely popular. Printed copies were available at the socials, with digital copies sent to all retired teachers on our membership and contact lists. The March edition included a feature article about Mavis Johnston, a 24-year veteran as Treasurer for Westman Retired Educators’ Association (WREA) and then BARTA.

The Caring Connections Committee sent cards to members who experienced illness, loss, or special celebrations, and phoned those who do not receive email to keep them up to date on BARTA matters. In February, our Association honoured member Hazel Skuce with a corsage on her 112<sup>th</sup> birthday. We also honoured member Meryl Orth for her advocacy about health and wellness for older adults. She is committee co-chair of Health Checks, which was recognized by the UN’s Decade of Healthy Aging in December, 2023, for its innovation, inclusivity, and promotion of healthy aging.

BARTA’s member recruitment campaign included a congratulatory message to retiring teachers in the June edition of the BTA BUZZ newsletter and a monthly advertisement in that publication – another example of the positive relationship between our associations. The Membership Committee set a goal of doubling our membership from last year’s 44. We almost made it, finishing with a total of 81 Full, Life, Honourary, and Associate Members. Members received a membership card showing that they were eligible for discounts at a local greenhouse centre and a restaurant and shop.

The BARTA Readers’ Group met three times during the year, sharing their current reading material as well as books read and to be read. Although the numbers were small, those who attended enjoyed the recommendations and left the Western Manitoba Regional Library with a list of titles for their next selection.

The 2024 Annual General Meeting took place April 2 at the Victoria Inn. The members approved the Executive recommendation of remaining a chapter of RTAM as new rules and practices are set. The following were elected to the Executive Board:

President	Catherine McLaren	Treasurer	Kathie Gordon
Vice-President	Doug Adams	Director	Anne McGregor
Immediate Past President	Pat Bowslaugh	Director	Ida Hallatt
Secretary	Arlene Ash	Director	Louise Lamont

Outgoing Executive Officers and Directors were presented with a BARTA mug, with thanks for their service to the Association.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Catherine McLaren  
 President