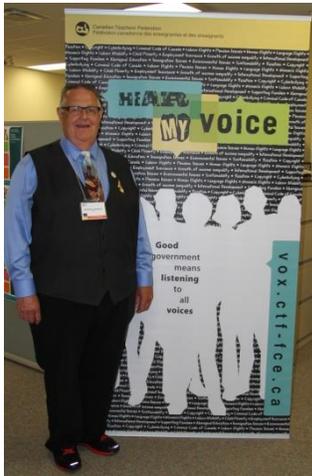




THE SPRING REPORT

April 2016

IN MEMORIAM



It is with the deepest sympathy and sadness that we received the news that **George Georget**, ACER-CART Director, first Political Advocacy Committee Chair and Representative for Region West (2011-2015) had passed away on March 8, 2016. He will be remembered for his dedication, his commitment to fairness and equality. His presence was always noted and welcomed where he passed. Before he retired George was an ardent defender of French language education in Saskatchewan. We are sure that your heaven must be filled with cats.

A. Representations and coalitions

Even though the Federal elections are over, the task is not finished. We must continue to be vigilant in order to make the new government accountable for its promises, and above that to continue to be aware of the needs of seniors. To that end we maintain our presence in the different coalitions that had been formed during the election period. Many of the coalitions have decided to continue, but have either refocused their objectives or changed their names. The issues will be described in the President's report.

Those coalitions are:

1. The National Association of Federal Retirees
2. Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC)
3. Seniors Voice Coalition
4. Canadian Medical Association

B. President's Report, JoAnn Lauber:

a. Lobby on the Hill:

JoAnn reported on the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) lobby for a new enhanced health accord, which occurred in Ottawa on January 25 and 26, 2016. One hundred twenty-three lobbyists met with 140 Members of Parliament. ACER-CART's role included visiting MPs and presenting a workshop to advocates on lobbying in

constituencies. The event was attended by JoAnn, Norbert, Roger, Regina Day and Patricia Clough of the BCRTA. It was deemed to be a valuable experience for ACER-CART members.

Adrienne Silnicki, National Director of the CHC, was invited and has accepted the invitation to speak to the ACER-CART AGM on Friday, June 3 2016. She will speak about the need to advocate for a new health accord.

b. Seniors Voice / Voix des aînés:

The meeting in Ottawa on January 27, 2016 was attended in person by three Member representatives (RTO/ERO, BCRTA, and ARTA) as well as by Executive members Norbert, Roger and JoAnn. Five Member representatives participated by phone: QPARSE, STS, RTANL, PEIRTA and NBSRT. It was decided that the Seniors Voice/ Voix des aînés collaboration would focus on cross-Canada activities to highlight seniors' issues on October 1, the UN International Day of Older Persons: raising a common flag, devising a declaration to encourage municipalities across Canada through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to recognize the day formally; and also to collaborate in the common matters of "housing, financial, health care and income inequality."

c. Memorandum of Agreement Concerning a National Health Care Strategy for Seniors:

It was noted that the tenets of this agreement align with ACER-CART stated principles. The ACER-CART Executive endorsed the Memorandum of Agreement and will recommend the endorsement by Members at the AGM in June, 2016.

d. Thousands of Canadian seniors having been short-changed on their GIS payments: Reported by CBC News February 29, 2016. As a collaborating member of the Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security, ACER-CART was asked by the Steering Committee for response. The executive voted to inform the Government of Canada and the Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security that ACER-CART believes that interest should be paid on funds owed to Canadian seniors.

e. Optimal Aging Portal: It was reported by Norbert that RTO/ERO is working to spread the good word regarding the usefulness of McMaster's rich Optimal Aging Portal resource. It was recommended by Norbert that a good strategy to get our peers to the Portal, as exemplified by ERO/ERO, is to take a topic from the Portal, personalize it, support it with the Portal's findings, and then publish it for the many members of our associations. Brian reported that he participated in a focus group for the Portal.

C. Regional Liaison Reports

Region East:

James MacAulay reported that RTO-NSTU had effectively and productively led the protest by Nova Scotia's older adults against unwanted proposed changes to the seniors' pharmacare program. A full report of the outstanding work done by RTO-NSTU

can be found in the latest edition of the RTO newsletter at <http://rto.nstu.ca> Jacques Albert has replaced Sonja Roy as SERFNB's President and ACER-CART director. The New Brunswick Society of Retired Teachers (NBSRT) is preparing to celebrate its 40th Anniversary on May 3, 2016. It is reviewing its by-laws, discussing the Seniors Voice conference call suggestions, and collaborating with other Atlantic Members to ascertain common issues. PEIRTA is concerned about 30 day vs 90 day prescription dispensing. The President is visiting retired teacher gatherings, advocating for members to join.

Region Ontario:

Norbert Boudreau reported that over 40 RTO/ERO retirement planning workshops have been presented. Disgruntled members of a competing individual health plan are being given a limited time window to transfer to the RTO/ERO group health plan. An *ad hoc* committee has been established to study legality risks and non-compliance issues presented by RTO/ERO's current governance structures with respect to the current and recently revised Canadian Not for Profit Corporations Act. It is believed that it is the Executive which assumes risks, and not Senate or the Committees. Rich Prophet, Provincial RTO/ERO Executive Liaison-East, is promoting McMaster's Optimal Aging Portal as a means of addressing the Organization's latest objective: "to promote the interest of seniors."

Region West:

Wayne Hughes reported from Region West noting these common concerns and pursuits, which are the preparation for upcoming provincial elections in BC, SK, and MB, the creation of pre-election materials based on the models ACER-CART used for the federal election, the increased networking with other seniors organizations, the updating and review of governance models and policies/procedures and /or realignment

Although the Yukon retired teachers continue to report through their newsletter, informative conference call reports to supplement their print publications were received from all of the other Members in Region West. Several highlights were pointed out by the Representative: BC's first ever pension fund surplus which means more COLA certainty for retired teachers; Alberta's concern for the economy and its impact on employment, funding and everything else in that province; ARTA's main areas of focus in the past months – affordable care and housing, promoting wellness in among their members, advocating for provincial responsibility as first payer of pharmaceuticals, provision of adequate facilities and personnel in senior Housing and health care; the preparation and distribution of pre-election materials in Saskatchewan, BC and Manitoba; and the appointment by RTAM of a part time Executive Director.

D. Committee report

Legislation Committee

Tom Gaskell noted that the obligation to review the Policies in accordance with Protocol 4, had not been completed at the 2015 AGM. The Committee proposed that all policies be reviewed for the purpose of being amended, deleted or reaffirmed. The task was undertaken and the proposed amendments will be submitted to the June AGM.

Communications,

Norbert Boudreau reported that the planning of the 25th anniversary was going well. Projects undertaken will be done on time. So as not to spoil the surprise of the day, no further information will be revealed.

The regular updating of the Website proved to be a harder task than what was expected. Solutions were proposed and a follow-up will permit a more active website. All presidents and Directors have now been assigned their login and password. If you have difficulty login in, send an email to Roger and he will help you.

Health Services and Insurance, Brian Kenny

In studying other organizations, there are obvious similarities to what ACER-CART aims for in terms of seniors' health, including a pharmacare plan, a national formulary, affordable drugs, a new Health Accord, improved seniors' health care, innovative thinking and better management of chronic care and home care. The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal is seeking advice on how to deliver their messages, which have been aimed at other researchers and health professionals. They have been told that the messages to the public should be simple, short, and understandable. They could be in the form of video, slide shows, and short essays. The Longitudinal Study on Aging, which McMaster is conducting, is based somewhat on people's diet, exercise, mental and physical state and attitudes and habits.

Pension and Retirement Income, James MacAulay

James reported that the pension and retirement income issue is quiet across the country. Ideally, a document comparing retired teacher pension and benefit plans could be created, but it is a huge undertaking with hundreds of variations. Not feasible at this time.

Political Advocacy, Wayne Hughes:

Some provinces will be holding elections in the very near future and ACER-CART Members may be, or have been, researching advocacy issues related to seniors' concerns. Political advocacy energies have been focused on provincial issues.

Nominations and Elections, Tom Gaskell:

It was reported that three nominations have been received to date.

E. Strategic Plan

A summary of responses by Members to the strategic plan questionnaire was presented by Brian. Discussion arose regarding the need to accord ample time to the strategic planning exercise, the restriction of time available, Brian and JoAnn, with help from others, would work to facilitate the pre-AGM strategic planning exercise.

F. Annual General meeting AGM

Two notices have gone out to delegates concerning the upcoming AGM June 3 and June 4, 2016, with Pre-AGM Thursday, June 2. A call for nominations was sent out in January.

If you have not done so yet, please register as soon as possible as the bloc of rooms will have to be released if we cannot secure them.

Member reports, Executive and Committee reports are due at the latest April 30th.

Further information regarding the AGM will be sent in April. It will contain the agenda, the draft budget, activity timetable, agenda, and proposed changes to the Policies.

All AGM documents will be posted on the Member section of the website after April 30th, when they are produced and formatted.