

President's Report – September, 2023

It's been a good year for APTA as the Executive has worked together. We've been able to get back on track after the pandemic and we're so glad to be able to be together again this weekend at the conference.

Whenever I talk to APTA members about why APTA is so great, the main thing members mention is the community and acceptance they feel within the community. From the beginning 30 years ago, APTA's credo has been what we read at the beginning of each AGM – teaching is a lifelong profession in which we learn together and cooperate with teachers from all backgrounds and experiences. I really appreciate the wide diversity within APTA and learn from each of you every time we talk. That's why celebrating 30 years together is such an accomplishment!

This year, the founder of APTA, Hedy Klause, passed away as did several other older members. There was a lovely tribute to Hedy in our spring newsletter and I encourage you to go and read it if you haven't already. We owe a lot to Hedy's vision for what APTA could do for both rural and urban teachers in Alberta.

We also have several charter members of APTA with us at the conference this weekend. If you were a charter member of APTA, please stand.

One thing I'd like to highlight this year is the "Great Giveaway" event that started last year. One of our retiring members made her music library available for purchase by other APTA teachers. The proceeds went to our Student Bursary fund which was a great help for it. But not only did the music get distributed, several teachers were able to come together to look at the music and have a good time discussing all things teacher-related. This is a fantastic way to encourage other teachers, keep good materials from going to the landfill and to build friendships within APTA. If you are a retiring teacher or you just have more music than you know what to do with, consider hosting a "Great Giveaway" in your community. You can contact your local extended executive to help setting it up or you can just go

Another hallmark of APTA's mission is lifelong learning and to that end, we have had a policy of offering generous help to members for continuing education. However, in recent years, our continuing education budget has not been used to its full extent. We love giving money away. I encourage you to think about ways you could use it – there are lots of suggestions on the website but you can also come up with your own ideas. One of the easiest is setting up a masterclass for your students. APTA will help you bring in a clinician to work with your students and this is a really easy way to grow as a teacher and to help your students grow as musicians.

Our annual conference is also part of professional development opportunities. If you attend conference and come away with just a couple of ideas that you implement this year, imagine how your knowledge will accumulate over time! Those who attend the conference regularly know this. But if you are a member of APTA and haven't come to conference, I encourage you to give it a try.

As we've mentioned over the past few years, the demographic of APTA members is weighted to older teachers. That's slowly changing and we're really happy when new teachers join who are in a younger demographic. As members, can you help APTA grow? If you meet another teacher who isn't part of APTA, tell them about the benefits and encourage them to join. It's a pretty minimal investment per year and you really will reap a lot of benefits from being a member.

As an organization, we owe a lot to the Executive members who give their time and energy over the year to come up with creative ideas and thoughtful responses to the many challenges an organization like ours faces. Please join in thanking the Executive members with me.

Let's continue to learn and grow together as musicians and teachers!