

## **MARTA Branch Annual Report**

**2018 – 2019**

The Miramichi Area Retired Teachers' Association (MARTA) has seen another constructive and productive year added to its history. In addition to the branch's annual events: the End-of-Summer-breakfast, traditionally held the day after Labour Day, each year, the Fall General Meeting and Dinner, the Christmas Potluck Luncheon and Auction (monies raised from auction go toward Scholarship account and investments) and, most recently, The Spring Breakfast, held April 2<sup>nd</sup>, there have been two afternoon bowling events, organized by our Wellness Committee, and our pending Spring AGM and Dinner, Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> lies ahead.

The year began with the exciting news of MARTA's new website platform and its formal launch at the Fall AGM and Dinner, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. It is dynamic and versatile in its design, being accessible on any device from anywhere, at any time. The intent is to have a site which is inviting, highly utilized by the membership to keep informed of important issues, events and items of interest. Web traffic has increased substantially, throughout the past year, and the membership remains ever thankful for the efforts and ingenuity of Dale MacRae and Terry Matthews for the site's fine aesthetics, easy-to-utilize appeal and its world class design. It is definitely a remarkable advancement for the greater good of the entire MARTA Branch.

The current year saw a disappointing but necessary decision made by The Executive, at the recommendation of our Social Chairperson, Cil Hickey, to end the longstanding practice of monthly Games' Afternoons. After almost two decades of existence and enjoyment and having been initiated and organized by Cil, from its inception until its end, this is a notable change for our branch. However, at Cil's advisement that recent years have witnessed a substantial decrease in attendance each month, it no longer remains a viable activity for the branch to invest on a regular basis. I may state with confidence, that the entire membership of MARTA is indebted to Cil's continued commitment and generosity for so many years of organizing not only Games' Afternoons, but also all of our other annual gatherings, which she still continues to do. With much respect and admiration from all of us, thank you, Cil!

MARTA's Wellness Committee, under the direction of its Chairperson, Lois Gilliss, has arranged two successful bowling events for the enjoyment of the membership, during the past year, and recently conducted a survey at the Spring Breakfast, to determine the interests of members. The intent is to plan future events, for the coming year, which will meet a varied range of preferences by offering diverse options for consideration, including a larger bowling tournament, a day trip by tour bus, in September, to enjoy a theatrical performance at the Charlottetown Confederation Centre of The Arts, PEI. (This type of wellness activity was first initiated, during July of 2019, and was a great success and hugely popular among MARTA members; hence, it is back for another round of enjoyment, this year.) Also contained in the survey among numerous options, was one for exposure to an introductory session on exercise classes targeted toward the fifty-five-plus age

group. The survey was well planned and is definitely designed to reach out and tap into the wishes of an array of activities and events to meet the needs of a broad cross section of our membership. We look forward to the results to be shared by the Wellness Committee, at our Spring AGM, and to learn of the great events they have planned for our enjoyment, during the year ahead. The MARTA membership is aware that the Wellness Committee meets monthly, and that an open invitation stands to anyone who would like to join them and share in their ideas.

The MARTA Branch also has been pursuing constructive objectives to better meet the long-term needs of its membership, by reviewing and aligning the Branch Constitution and Bylaws with that of NBSRT. MARTA's Vice-President, Grant Hendry, has kindly chaired, spearheaded and orchestrated the endeavours of this essential committee, during the past two years, and the results will be brought before the membership for final ratification and approval, at the Spring AGM, May 28<sup>th</sup>. Since it is to be viewed as a living document, subject to more frequent updates and revisions, it will be recommended that, during the future, The MARTA Executive, review designated segments of the Constitution and Bylaws, after a several years period, rather than waiting until many years have elapsed before doing so. Essentially, this is the foundation document for all practices and procedures undertaken by the Branch, so its content must evolve and be relevant to changing times, as aligned with those established provincially.

Another crucial task undertaken by the MARTA Executive, during the 2018 – 2019 year, has been the revision and review of the Duties and Responsibilities of all Executive Positions and Committee Chairpersons. Again, looking into the future, this is a practice which should occur at regular intervals, since new responsibilities have arisen for Branch Executive Members, during recent years, and new, beneficial committees have developed, with Wellness being one of them. The revised documents will be included in the Administrative Binder given to each MARTA Executive member, and they will be posted for reference on the MARTA website, prior to June 30, 2019.

A new committee will be struck, effective for the 2019 – 2020 MARTA calendar year, with the intent of creating a repository and categorization of all historical documents pertinent to MARTA, since its inception in 1976. An assortment of materials has been housed by numerous members, throughout our branch, during the past four decades, and there is the sensible and common belief that the early history of our branch organization should not be lost. To this end, materials gathered to date will be sorted, categorized, organized and curated into a chronological, historical compendium, to be housed in a facility eventually to be determined and for posting as digital documents for access and reference, on the MARTA website. The current Executive and general membership are very appreciative of Marjorie Sinclair, for kindly having agreed to chair this important committee, with the understanding that a project of such magnitude will require considerable time, over at least a two-year period, to accurately compile and develop a historical profile of MARTA. Among the various documents to be included and noted is a historical account composed of content of an account of the first thirty years of MARTA, written by the late Mrs. Dorothy Creighton.

The one area of challenge which remains as an ongoing for MARTA, as with many other provincial branches, is how to expand our membership, by gaining new retirees to join NBSRT. This is an aspect which we must collectively continue to promote and to seek new ideas to have more retirees join our organization. The Executive of MARTA has and will continue to work toward the objective of increasing membership, during he coming years.

May 2019 will have a new slate of officers elected to The Executive of MARTA, at the Spring AGM and Dinner, May 28<sup>th</sup>, effective for the next two-year term, concluding during the late spring of 2021. Undoubtedly, it will be an exciting term-of-office for the new Executive and the branch, with many productive initiatives being brought forth, to serve in the best interests of the general membership. As my tenure and term as President of MARTA draws to its conclusion, I am grateful for a very rewarding and fulfilling experience, both locally and provincially, during the past two years. It is with much anticipation that I look forward to working with the new Executive of MARTA, in my role as Past-President. On behalf of MARTA, I extend best wishes to the nine, other provincial branches of NBSRT and to the Provincial Executive.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy

Andrew L. Clark

President of MARTA, 2017- 2109

(09/04/19)