

MARTA Branch of NBSRT

Annual Report

Presented at the 2022 NBSRT AGM, Wednesday, May 11th

For a year-and-a half, the seemingly incessant pandemic created a void in the regular dynamics of the MARTA Branch, as it did across all segments of society with its mandated but essential restrictive measures. Hence, whereas the 2020 – 2021 year had the MARTA executive and general membership attend any meetings or forums virtually, via Zoom, it was decided in August of 2021, when provincial restrictions were lifted, to hold an in-person executive meeting and plan, at least tentatively, for an in-person social event. The MARTA Executive met on Tuesday, August 24th and planned to host the branch's annual Welcome Back Breakfast, Tuesday September 7th, at The Portage restaurant. The event unfolded as scheduled, and it had 57 members in attendance and those who were present, definitely enjoyed the opportunity to be together again, after such a long absence, as evidenced by their smiles and lively conversations.

It was also decided at the August 24th meeting to host an outdoor event, whereby members may feel more comfortable meeting and mingling in an outdoor setting, so a social outing was planned to be held on beautiful Middle Island, Wednesday, September 15th. This was a late morning event, hosted between 10:00 AM and 12:00 Noon, whereby members (and guests) could arrive and depart at their leisure, partaking in conversation, nature trail walks, if they wished and, especially, to enjoy the delectable buffet of savoury and sweet finger foods, which were created from scratch, catered and served by renowned Miramichi professional chef, Brian Matheson. The pleasant sunshine and temperature had 24 members in attendance, some of whom had not been present at the breakfast, held on September 7th. Certainly, the notion of presenting two, social event occasions, diverse in setting and characteristics, was a wise and warm means of providing opportunities and choices to the general membership of the branch.

Alas, due to the rising case numbers of COVID, during the early fall, once again, like all branches and the Executive of NBSRT, all future events and meetings would once again have to be suspended until further notice. To this end, no further events or meetings were hosted, until provincial restrictions were once again lifted and the MARTA Executive was able to hold another in-person meeting on Tuesday, March 29, 2022. The meeting was very well attended, and in alignment with NBSRT and its plans to host the 2022 AGM in Woodstock, it was decided that MARTA would also do likewise: the 2022 MARTA Spring AGM and Dinner will be held on Tuesday, May 31st, at the Chatham Legion, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM. This will be an election year for the branch executive, which will result in some new people in positions, followed by some new insights and ideas. Details of final results will be submitted to NBSRT at a later date.

One new aspect being considered for implementation, if approved by the general membership of the branch is the addition of the position of member-at-large, being added to the branch executive, on a go-forward basis. This would be an addition of a maximum three individuals

added to the branch executive, to serve in this capacity. Such an implementation would allow new individuals to bring a fresh perspective and insightful ideas to the table for discussion and potential, meaningful change. It may also bode well, in terms of succession planning for future elections, as such individuals would gain a first hand understanding of executive operations and may run for a position during future elections.

The conditions of the 2021 -2022 calendar year also presented an opportunity to update the MARTA website homepage layout and components, with a complete rebuild. Such a process is not a simple task and requires an extensive period of time for completion, due to its complexities and unforeseen complications. Once again, the MARTA Branch is indebted to Terry Matthews, IT specialist and former teacher at NBCC, and Dale MacRae. The entire process was completed over a several-week-period, during a portion of February and early March. The new site went live on March 10th, and like its most recent predecessor, it is exceptionally easy to navigate, with regard to all of its facets and categories, and it is accessible on a pc, laptop, cell phone or tablet, from anywhere in the world, at any time. It definitely is a tremendous means of keeping the membership updated and informed, on a regular basis.

Regarding the acquisition of new members and loss of former members, between the dates of October 19th, 2019, the date of the last branch AGM and May 31st, 2022, the MARTA branch gained 20 new members, some of whom are new retirees, while others who joined have been retired for a number of years. Sadly, during this same time span, the MARTA Branch lost 22 of its members. Current total branch membership stands at 254. Like all branches of NBSRT, MARTA consistently continues to seek and entice new members.

As a means of demonstrating thanks to the general membership of the MARTA Branch, in appreciation of their continued support during the past two years of the pandemic, a motion was put forth and approved by the MARTA Executive, during the March 29th meeting to subsidize the cost of the meal of the scheduled 2022 MARTA Spring AGM, May 31st. Current branch finances readily allow for such a gesture of respect.

Looking ahead, it is with a sense of optimism that the MARTA Branch views the pending year of 2022 – 2023 will present itself with more opportunities and fewer restrictive public health measures, thereby allowing all members of NBSRT to partake in meetings social events and activities on a more regular basis than what the past two years have permitted.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Clark, Past President of MARTA

for:

Mr. K. Grant Hendry, President of MARTA

19 April 2022