

MARTA BRANCH DIRECTOR REPORT

May 10, 2023

Covid continued to impact MARTA Branch activities and events, despite the province reducing sanctions and eliminating protocols.

MARTA passed a resolution at our Spring 2022 AGM that saw the addition of three bodies in Member-At-Large (MAL) positions. MAL Executive are people who will sit for a two-year, renewable term and are voting members of our Branch Executive. The feeling was that, while members are willing and interested in helping out, they didn't feel ready to take on a 'big role' like Secretary, Treasurer etc. The MAL position allows them to have a voice at the table and get to know the ropes of how the organization operates, before committing to a more involved role. The positions are typically for a two year term but can be renewed.

MARTA also has operated for the past year and a half without a Vice President. Typically, the VP has been groomed to step into the role as President at the end of that first two-year term. The person on our Executive who agreed to let their name stand for VP was also our Wellness Ctte Chair. Over the course of the first few months of her time at the Executive table, she decided that she wanted to step back from her role as VP to concentrate on working with the Wellness Ctte as Chair. I fully supported her in her decision to do so. While it has been wonderful to have her in the Wellness chair position, not having a VP is now becoming problematic. I agreed to stay on as President for an additional ONE year, to allow Covid to work its way through the system and to get us back to somewhat normal. The inadvertent benefit of this has been that the Executive now has built in continuity. Secretary and Treasure are positions that come due for election in the alternate years of President and Vice President. We have a candidate for VP and we are currently 'negotiating' with another member to take over as President.

Despite Covid, MARTA has had an active year socially. We held our annual "Welcome Back" Breakfast in the fall of 2022 on the first day of school. The breakfast was well attended by approximately 65 people and there was the usual 50/50, and free meal draws, along with some fellowship and camaraderie that was long overdue. In the fall, we went upriver to Renous for our fall dinner and meeting, followed by a tour of the *Tom Donovan* arena and gym, recently renovated with proceeds from the *Kraft Hockeyville* win!

We continued the social activity by having our first ever Wine and Cheese 'Christmas' event at *Three Dog Distilling* just before Christmas. Members were able to meet, enjoy some laughs and some homemade pizza, with drinks and hors d'oeuvres. February saw MARTA collecting as a group again for breakfast for Heart Health month at the *Portage* and again in March for our Annual Pot Luck and Auction. Auctioneers Donnie O'Neill and his lovely assistant Tony Van Dijk helped raise some funds from the donated items for our Scholarship Fund. We'll be hosting our AGM once again at the Chatham Legion at the end of May. MARTA Executive agreed to subsidize the Fall and Spring dinner ticket prices. Sometimes it's the simple gestures that people appreciate and remember most.

While numbers have not gotten back to pre-Covid strength, they are improving, and we hope that the 2023-2024 year will be better than ever. With fresh new faces around the Executive table and some further reduced comfort from the threat of Covid, it looks promising.

Respectfully submitted,
Grant Hendry