

MARTA DIRECTOR REPORT

May 14, 2024

We began the summer of 2023 with tremendous excitement and celebration of two of our long-standing MARTA members, Carmel Gallant, and Mary Fletcher, who were celebrating their respective 100th birthdays. These momentous opportunities were cause for much, respectful acknowledgment, and celebration, so gifts and greetings from NBSRT and MARTA were presented to both ladies, as well as wonderful written acknowledgments of their lives, in *Reflections* and on the MARTA website, following interviews and submissions by MARTA Wellness Chair, Lois Gilliss. It is not often that the occasion for celebration of centenarians arises among members, which definitely are rare gems of joy to be commemorated.

Signaling the end of summer, on Tuesday, September 5th, MARTA kicked off the first day of school (not for them of course!) with the annual Welcome Back Breakfast, hosted at the *Portage Restaurant*. New members were welcomed at this event, in recognition of their respective retirements and as acknowledgment of the beginning of new adventures in life and more well-earned personal time. This was a full-house event, with many lively conversations and much laughter, as evidenced by the constant, animated din throughout the large dining room. As president, I did struggle with being heard as, alas, my teacher voice retired many years ago! This brought up a discussion at the first MARTA Executive meeting of the need for a portable speaker and mic sound system for our gatherings, whether they be general meetings or social occasions. As we searched for regional venues to host our large events, we did discover that some, but not all, venues could provide in-house sound systems. Subsequently, Irving Keyboard generously allowed MARTA to borrow a quality portable speaker system for our Fall AGM, held on Wednesday November 15th, with possibility of purchase, pending approval by the General Membership, at the event.

The MARTA 2023 Fall AGM and Dinner was held on Wednesday, November 15th, in Blackville, at the Anglican Trinity Church Hall and, again, with an exceptionally large number of members in attendance. The first item addressed was, most certainly, the potential acquisition of a speaker/mic sound system. After unanimous approval for purchase by the general membership, the system was acquired, and it has been used regularly, throughout the year. It has made it much easier for members to hear and for presenters to be heard, at all events. In addition to the presentation of various committee reports, at the Fall AGM, Dale MacRae brought Greetings from NBSRT, and he updated members on the changes to Group Insurance. Rick Hayward and Barb Hondas reported on Highlights of the NBSRT Board of Directors meeting, which was held in Fredericton, on Tuesday, October 17th. Members were encouraged to register for the pending webinar: Later Life as an Adventure, presented by Dr. Bill Randall, on Tuesday, November 17th, just as they had been for the VESTCOR Annual Pension Information Webinar held on Wednesday, October 11th. After our general business meeting concluded, members were served a delicious, piping-hot, roast turkey dinner and dessert, catered by the Holy Trinity Anglican Women Church Group, some of whom were MARTA members. A very warm thank you was delivered to the ladies at the conclusion of the event, with much applause of appreciation from the members who were in attendance.

The calendar seemed to advance so quickly, and suddenly it was Christmas party season, so the MARTA Wellness Committee planned and executed a lively Christmas wine, cheese, and pizza social, at *The Dirty Dog Bar*. This was the second year for this event, hosted at this venue, and Lois Gilliss and her committee provided an abundance of food and fun for members to gather and enjoy the spirit of the holiday season.

Given the fact that a motion had been passed unanimously, with much enthusiasm., at the 2023 MARTA Spring AGM and Dinner, to host the NBSRT 50th Anniversary AGM, in May of 2025, Dale MacRae, Chair of the Planning Committee, enthusiastically began organizational meetings. The Planning Committee began to take shape, and it expanded until all committees had chairs. We expect

the numbers to keep growing as those Committee Chairs establish their worker MARTA bees! The members of all 10 branches of NBSRT may anticipate that they will see and hear plenty of news and updates from Dale and his committee, as the year advances. We certainly hope that the numbers of MARTA members who get involved in this event will even exceed the last time we hosted, which was in May of 2017. The Miramichi is well known for its hospitality and welcoming nature, and this event promises to be both exciting and memorable for all who will attend.

On Wednesday, February 7th, the Wellness Committee organized and hosted a Winter Wellness Breakfast, at the *Portage Restaurant*. Again, we had a packed house and welcomed new members. The portable sound system was used, and there was a noticeable difference in the ability to hear announcements, as well as who won what prizes! However, we did have to be aware not to plug in near the coffee machines, so that no electrical breakers were tripped! As MARTA president, I really appreciated the assistance of set up and take down of the equipment that I received from members present, when using the system at this event and at the Fall AGM.

The Spring Pot Luck and Auction, a favorite social event of mine and many members, was held at the historic Seamen's Hospital, on Thursday, March 21st. I could not be present on that date, but I understand there was lots of fun and some great bargains to be had, along with some delicious food and plenty of laughter. The number of members in attendance was fewer than usual this year, but the inclement weather was a contributing factor that hampered travel of any distance on that day. Thank you to all who attended and contributed, as this is a fund raiser for the MARTA scholarship and bursaries given to our local high school grads.

On Thursday, April 25th, MARTA members enjoyed another great wellness activity, a bowling afternoon at the Golden Hawk Recreation Center. In addition to this enjoyable and healthy outing opportunity, and to ensure that branch members continue to have opportunities and varied wellness options, a day bus trip with *J & T Tours* has been confirmed for Thursday, July 25th, to the *Confederation Centre of the Arts*, in Charlottetown, PEI, for a performance of the theatrical production of *Jersey Boys*. It is the perfect way for members and their guests to add to their summer fun.

The Executive of MARTA held meetings on September 25, November 1, and March 14, and another meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 22, following the NBSRT AGM, and in preparation of final details for the MARTA 2024 Spring AGM and Dinner, to be held on Wednesday, May 29th. The Executive Committee Chairs consistently work diligently on behalf of our members, and they can be counted on to take on the numerous tasks required to assist the ongoing, smooth operation of the MARTA Branch of NBSRT. I would like to thank all the members of the Executive of MARTA for their fine work this year, and I would like to acknowledge the time that they and, in some cases, sub-committees put into their jobs. I and, most certainly, the general membership appreciates your efforts and ingenuity.

Respectfully submitted:
Charlotte Casey
Miramichi Director