**EAST COAST REPORT – ACER-CART, JANUARY 2019**

**Addendum from RTANL**

**Items that RTANL is especially pleased about over the past few months:**

Participating in ECRTO, best outcome participating in round table discussions

Pleased with results of BGM 2018 and thanks to new faces around our RTANL executive table and, of course, the old ones too along with executive of Retired Teachers Foundation. Set up our new committees and made some preliminary plans to take some new approaches to improve our membership numbers and member relations through improved communications.

Confident that the next two years will be exceptionally productive for our Association and its members

Pleased with the leadership and guidance provided by ACER-CART as it works diligently with other affiliated groups across Canada on behalf of all retired teachers. The role played by the executive members on our behalf - to create the awareness, and hold to attention, our government representatives and make them aware of the needs and aspirations of our collective members - is commendable.

Changes to our constitution related to the make-up of our Executive. We now elect Four At-Large Members and the Fifth nominee on the ballot is elected as the Alternate Member. The Alternate Member will take his/her place when the term for the immediate Past President expires. This change was made to maintain the executive at 9 members as stated in our constitution and by-laws. The Past President now serves a one-year term.

RTANL is excited about taking our executive meetings “on the road” to more rural locations, those in some remote and rural areas. This will afford the executive members the opportunity to meet face-to-face with members who would not otherwise get to meet their provincial executive members. The plan is to hold a social gathering with the rural members as a meet-and-greet session. The hope is to encourage new members and continued loyalty within the association. It will also help with our renewed focus on communication and fellowship.

RTANL embarked upon a new approach to attracting new members and improving contact with members who are isolated from the larger centres. Last year we set up a new Division Parameters Committee to look at regions of the province where there was a significant number of members but under represented on the provincial membership list. The plan was to obtain a list of current and potential members within the local area and hold meetings to gauge the level of interest in getting a group, or regional, organized enough to eventually apply for division status. A meeting was held on November 20th and a group of members set out to obtain the required 25 signatures required for a group to form a regional. The signatures were obtained and a subsequent meeting was held on January 7th during which an executive was formed. This represents a very positive step in RTANL's effort to reach out to our members and get them organized and involved!

Our twice-yearly Newsletter will now be distributed electronically to members connected by email (December 2018). Hard copies are available to members who request one. In addition to being environmentally friendly this has been a significant cost-saving initiative by our Association.

We are expanding on the use of our email networks to communicate regularly with our members through our divisions and province-wide. Items of concern from ACER-CART and other affiliated groups as well as our own association issues are relayed in prompt fashion to our members.

To make active teachers aware of our Association, Executive members attend and deliver information packages at NLTA pre-retirement seminars throughout our province. Presentations illustrate the benefits of joining RTANL. Each retiring teacher is given a membership application.

Our Retired Teachers' Foundation (RTF), which raises money for children who are incapacitated, has raised and given out a total of $371,000.00 since its inception in 1982.

RTNAL has affiliated with a number of local seniors/pensioners groups in dealing with Health Care issues, Affordable Housing, Affordable Prescription Drugs, Auditory Testing and Coverage, Dental Coverage for Seniors, Care of Seniors in Long-Term Care and a very recent issue, Renewal of Driver's Licences and Vehicle Registrations. Our greatest involvement is with the NL Coalition of Pensioners. Two executive members act as liaison persons and report directly back to our association on a regular basis and our members are updated on the activities of the Coalition. Doreen Noseworthy reported Executive members of the Coalition met with Dr. Hagee, Minister of Health for NL, and members of his department on January 8, 2019 in regards to the Provincial Home Support Program with which we’ve been involved since its inception. We had a very productive meeting and some good things are happening with respect to Health Care for Seniors. Nothing happens overnight, but the groundwork has been laid and a Plan is about to be implemented. A follow-up meeting next week will get into the details, things are looking up!

RTANL Vice-President, Sharon Penney, serves on our Group Insurance Trustee Board and brings back to the executive regular updates on developments. One important issue attracting a lot of attention is possible imposition of a cap on soft tissue injury claims and its implication for retirees. We are also kept abreast of all other developments involving changes to premiums and coverages as well as deletions or additions to coverages.

Special recognition is given to member retirees that are 90+.

This past year our Retired Teachers Foundation, in an effort to streamline the executive board and save money on travel, introduced a new policy whereby all of their future executive members would be elected from the division which would be hosting the BGM. As it stands now Western Division will host the 2020 BGM and for the next two years the entire RTF executive is composed of members from Western Division. For the next BGM the executive will be composed of members from the designated host, Central Division. This policy was adopted at the 2018 RTF BGM which runs in tandem with the RTANL BGM. This was a very bold and courageous move on the part of the Retired Teachers Foundation and their executive members are to be commended for it.

RTANL, in an effort to encourage new membership and involvement, are currently looking at ways to attract and retain applicants for membership. We are encouraging members to contact other retired teachers through direct discussion at social gatherings and through other face-to-face encounters. We are also pondering the possibility of offering some kind of incentive, such as free trial memberships for one year or free passes to our BGM. If any other groups have ideas that may be used to increase membership, RTANL would very much like to share that information.

**Issues for the upcoming Federal Election**

The issues that we are concerned about for the upcoming Federal Election are the same as those outlined by all of our retired members across this nation:

* National Pharmacare Program,
* National Health Care Strategy
* Pension/Retirement Security

**Issues for the upcoming NL Provincial Election (We have our election in NL this fall, too.)**

Unique to Newfoundland & Labrador, one of the major concerns of our members, as pensioners, is the impending escalation in the cost of electricity brought about by the ballooning costs of the Muskrat Falls Hydroelectric Power Project. There is speculation the rates may even double over the next few years. Besides being a concern of practically all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, our pensioners are especially vulnerable due to the fixed nature of their income sources. Combined with the increasing costs for food and shelter this electricity cost increase will cause a great deal of hardship to many of our members.

The cap being sought by insurance companies on soft-tissue injury claims.

Issues surrounding Long Term Home Care, Dental Coverage and other health related services that are difficult to access by seniors.

**Some concerns we have for the coming months (and years) are:**

One of the negative developments we have discovered over the past few years is that at both the provincial and division levels, there are fewer and fewer volunteers for election to executive positions. Many posts are either filled by acclamation or remain vacant for a period of time until a willing volunteer comes forward to fill the position. We are not sure if this is happening in other provinces but we would certainly welcome some kind of solution to this problem.

Finding some creative methods of attracting the attention of retired teachers who have neglected to join our association and convincing them that they should feel obligated to join our membership is a goal. A list of incentives and some social attractions may help.