



RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

MEMBER REPORT 2023

This past year was a BGM year. We were quite excited to actually have a face-to-face BGM. Our numbers were not quite as robust as they have been in previous years but we did have a province-wide representation. At this BGM two new executive members were elected.

As of December 2022, we have 5483 members. Our list of nonagenarians (teachers to whom our Secretary mails birthday cards) has diminished to 11. Last year we lost 121 members, almost exclusively to death. We gained 30 new members for a overall decline of 91 members. This is an area of great concern for us. We do not have the leverage that other organizations have because our members' health insurance is retained in conjunction with the active teachers and therefore membership in the RTANL does not impact retired teachers in regards to maintaining insurances. Furthermore, those with an association to the field of education but who are not teachers are covered under the NAPE (Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public Employees) union and the NLPSPA (Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners Association). We continue to seek ways to increase our enrolment.

The RTANL undertook a major reorganization of the committee structure within the association. In the past, it was the practice that the Table Officers took on the role of liaising with like-minded and external organizations. At our first Executive meeting after the BGM all executive members were assigned to at least two committees. Committee membership was decided upon after consultation with the executive members. In most cases executive members were assigned to committees that they had an interest in or ones that would complement the work that they were carrying out on other committees. Our reasoning for this restructuring of the committees was four folds:

- 1) To share the workload, so that most of the work of the association would not be tied to four people,
- 2) it gave us the opportunity to have a more diverse and more visible presence on committees with other associations,
- 3) we saw it as a skill development exercise. This scenario is allowing all of our executive members to develop a skill set that they can use as they offer themselves for other executive positions within the RTANL.
- 4) It permitted us to streamline some of our committees and in some cases remove tasks that had been tacked onto committees over time for efficiency reasons, but not really associated with the role of the specified committee.

Our Western Division celebrated its 50th anniversary in November 2022 but because of weather and scheduling issues they did not officially celebrate until February 2023. The RTANL Table Officers were invited to the celebration and some of us did travel across the island to share in their excitement as they honoured their members who have dedicated years

of volunteer service to make Western Division a success. The dinner was attended by 102 including retired teachers and guests from the Western Division. We hope this translates into a more active Division with greater numbers attending meetings and social events.

As we look forward to our next BGM we are acutely aware that we are in the midst of monumental changes at our executive level. Our Secretary and our treasurer, both of whom have been in their respective positions for over twenty-five years have indicated that they will not be seeking re-election beyond BGM 2024. Coupled with this our President will complete her second two-year term and according to our constitution is ineligible to offer herself for re-election at the next BGM. The reality of this is that three of our four Table Officers will need to be replaced at our next BGM. Our current Vice-President will be the only returning Table Officer.

As a result of resolutions presented at BGM 2023, a revision to our Constitution and By-Laws was necessary. Our **Handbook for New Members of the Retired Teachers' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador** which was initially compiled in 2008 was recently revised. This handbook is distributed to all new members. Our Secretary, Don White, updates regularly our Provincial Executive Handbook, which was developed in 2008. Each member of the Provincial Executive, upon election, receives a binder containing a hard copy of this Handbook. Our Secretary has recently spent countless hours revising this Handbook into a digitized format. This will make updating an easier process. Our Secretary is now at the point where he is collating all the sections to reflect our Table of Contents.

We have a member of the RTANL who fills a position as Manager on the Group Insurance Committee. That position is a seven-year term and it too becomes vacant in August 2024. Traditionally the manager comes from within the RTANL Executive, but it is filled at the invitation of the President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA). We have not been approached by the NLTA as to who might be appointed to the role. Robert Dowden, who has been our long time Johnson's Insurance contact person retired and has been replaced by Tracy Jenson and Fred Hann.

We have resumed our in person attendance at the NLTA Pre-retirement Seminars. It is our one chance to introduce the RTANL to potential members. We suggest having pre-retirees fill in their membership forms at these seminars. We could collect them and submit them to the Pensions Division. A second option would be to have potential retirees complete and submit the form electronically to Pensions Division. It is hoped that this will garner new members, since the paper work will have already been done, and it will be one less thing, with which, retirees will have to trouble themselves.

At the invitation of the NLTA, we have had a representative at the last three NLTA Induction Ceremonies. This ceremony, which takes place after the Convocation of the Faculty of Education Students, is when newly graduated Bachelor of Education students officially become members of the NLTA. The RTANL is honoured to be viewed as an important partner in the course of a teacher's full career.

In September 2022 the RTANL presented a commissioned, original artscape piece by Don Short to the Faculty of Education in celebration and recognition of 100 years of Teacher Education in Newfoundland and Labrador. The piece “Education is a Continuum ‘is a triptych that engages the viewer with a colourful montage of images taking the viewer on a visual path from past to future displaying the impactful influence that the Faculty of Education at Memorial University has had on the province’s educational reach.’ This work pays homage to the Faculty’s ability to adapt to the complexities of this province, its land, its cultures, and its realities. The Faculty of Education has been able to use technology to reach beyond our province and to be an influence on the world stage - a feat we, as retired teachers, are proud to have played a role. The RTANL participated in a panel discussion concerning the role of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University at it prepares teachers for the classrooms of the future.

I as, President of the RTANL, was invited to the NLTA BGM. I wrote a greeting for their booklet, attended the general session on the afternoon of April 12 and was present at the banquet on the evening of April 12.

It is planned that our Fall Executive meeting will be held in St. John’s and will overlap with the first Executive meeting of the newly elected NLTA Executive. At that time we will have an informal meeting with both the executive of the RTANL and the executive of the NLTA. We will use this opportunity to discuss items of mutual interest and offer our assistance with any efforts they wish our voice. We are in a unique position to bring forward educational issues without fear of reprisals.

We recognize that we have a busy, and exciting year ahead of us. We are preparing to meet the challenge with enthusiasm.

Sharon Penney, RTANL