

Patricia's February Message

From the desk of NSGREA President, Patricia Murray

The snow and winds of February are inevitable, and as Nova Scotians we have all developed strategies to make our way through. This year, February has proven to be one of the worst months!! Yet we also celebrated Valentine's Day! For some there will be roses, wine, chocolate, and romance. For others it may have been a quieter time but still a good excuse for chocolate! We also celebrated Heritage Day. And deep down, we all know that after we get through the depths of February, spring is all the closer. We were waiting anxiously to see if Shubenacadie Sam, who should be a member of NSGREA(!!), saw his shadow, forecasting the continuation of winter misery. However, Shubenacadie Sam couldn't even get out of his burrow because of the snow – so no shadow – early Spring!!

As we come to the end of February, my wish is that you can sit warm and cozy at home or take delight in outdoor adventures. Be sure to attend your Region Meetings, renew your membership and share with me any ideas you may have to make our Association thrive.

Now, I am pleased to be able to update you on some of our activities.

- ✚ First, Valerie has come up with several great ideas for helping us stay in touch. One such idea is this monthly message from me. This will be a wonderful way to keep you up to date on what is new and what is ongoing with NSGREA.
- ✚ I must begin by explaining why your email may not have been answered. Without an admin assistant, it is too easy to fall behind. I will continue to make my way through them. However, if you are only asking about your cards and receipts, those emails will not be answered as you should have already or will soon receive them.
- ✚ However, what many of you are inquiring about both by email and by phone is whether and when you will be receiving your 2026 Membership Card and your 2025 Receipt. It was not possible to get these out for those of you who received your renewal package via email in mid to late December. So, we are getting them in the mail as I write this message. We remind those who haven't paid their 2026 membership fee to do so ASAP. Your membership fees

represent about 95% of the budget we use to operate the Association so receiving them would be greatly appreciated. You will all receive your cards and receipts within the next 2 weeks. We have also enclosed information from Belairdirect – our car and home insurance partner.

- ✚ As those with email addresses would have noticed, we were able to get your renewal packages out to you in December. The hard copy mailout followed in January and now we are working on the membership cards and receipts. Linda McCormick, our Membership Secretary, has been working double duty overseeing the renewal process and doing much of the work herself.
- ✚ You will also have noticed our Membership Fee increased to \$35.00 this year. As there hadn't been an increase for over 15 years, the previous fee of \$25.00 was no longer able to cover the costs of running the Association.
- ✚ Again, this year we can accept e-transfers. However, now we have them directly deposited so there is no need for a security question/response. This payment option has proven very popular!!
- ✚ We are anticipating a refreshed website soon. We will let you know when so you can take a look. We will be using it more frequently to keep members updated and better informed on any benefits, programs or services, through NSGREA or through other senior serving organizations, that you might find helpful or enjoyable. We are also hoping to include information from our Provincial Executive meetings and from your Regional Meetings. Shannon Kelly, our tireless Provincial Secretary, is meticulous in documenting our meetings and keeping us on track to do what we have agreed to do
- ✚ Did I mention our need for an Administrative Assistant?? The job description is at the end of this message. It is nine hours a week with some overtime. We would be happy to discuss it further with anyone who might be interested. Our current office is located on Cobequid Rd. in Lower Sackville.
- ✚ Alan Otto, the other paid staff person in the office, is doing yeoman's service, answering phone calls setting up and assisting with the mailouts, registering or renewing members in the office, answering our endless questions, explaining how things work and finding what we are looking for!!! He may be happier than any of us when the Admin Assistant position is filled.
- ✚ We are also looking for a Treasurer to sit on the Provincial Executive until the Convention. Don Goss, our Vice-President has stepped up to fill in. He also

answers your phone calls, assists with the mailouts and troubleshoots issues that arise.

- ✚ Fred Morley, our Pensions and Benefits Rep is Chairing the Pensions and Benefits Committee. It is hard at work looking at how best to improve the PSSP pension and benefit landscape for us.
- ✚ The Strategic Planning Committee had its first meeting this month. Since you will all be a critical part of that work you will be hearing more in the coming weeks.
- ✚ As we receive the 2026 membership fees, and along with new registrations, we hope to be able to secure new, much needed accessible office space.
- ✚ Ian Johnson has agreed to take the lead in overseeing some of our broader advocacy efforts as outlined in four of the Resolutions from the 2025 Convention.
- ✚ Speaking of Resolutions, as you can see from some of our activities, we have been working toward their completion. A more fulsome update will be placed on the Website and emailed to you shortly.
- ✚ We continue our involvement on the Seniors Advisory Council (SAC). Valerie Bobyk and I sit on the Council Representing NSGREA. Valerie will be updating the website with meeting summaries and any information we are asked to pass on to you.
- ✚ In the winter months, many rural Regions don't meet due to the ongoing possibility of treacherous weather. Region#3 can meet more regularly. I, or a member of the Provincial Executive, would be happy to attend any of your meetings to bring you an update, answer your questions and hear your ideas for the Association. Connecting folks in the Regions is very important to maintain social opportunities and to work to identify how NSGREA may better serve you and how we can have a positive impact in advocating for our needs.

OK! That is enough for this message!! There is more but you will need to wait for my March Message. Stay warm and safe!!

Patricia

Patricia Murray

President, NSGREA