

BRANCH REPORT

MB91 | Eastern Manitoba Branch

President's message

It seems strange that I composed my previous letter early February of last year. A year ago, I wrote that “after a welcome, but dreary, second half of January, the sun is now shining brightly, the days are getting longer, and we can all look forward to the days when we can retire the snow shovel and the snowblower until later this year”. Little did we know that the arrival of the COVID-19 virus would throw most, if not all, of our best-laid plans into a cocked hat and that the pandemic would alter our life drastically.

So, you may ask, what has been happening and why did we not get a periodic newsletter? The simple answer is that there was so little activity to report that it was not worthwhile to issue a newsletter.

Our Branch Annual Meeting that had been scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2020, had to be postponed. The Association's regulations stipulate that we have to have an annual meeting prior to April 15 but that was simply not possible. We have received permission to postpone this meeting until such time that it can be held safely. Of course, the Fall General Meeting had to be postponed as well.

Your board did not have any Zoom meetings but we did have an “e-mail meeting” in March where we discussed a few items that could not be postponed. The board at that time consisted of the following:

President	Chuck Vandergraaf	Membership	Maureen Macdonald
Vice-President	Don Daymond	Newsletter and Communications	George Montgomery
Secretary	Vacant	Member-at-Large	Alf Wikjord
Treasurer	Wendy Berry	Member-at-Large	Mike Berry
Health Benefits	Donna Wuschke		

Because we could not hold our Branch Annual Meeting and elect or confirm new board members, the above slate will remain in office. Don Daymond has indicated his decision to retire, effective 2020 December 31 and we have accepted his decision. On behalf of the branch, I thank Don for his many years of service, as Treasurer, Member-at-Large and, recently, as Vice-President. He will be missed at our board meetings and we will miss his usual motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Berry has agreed to take on the important position of secretary. Under the new regulations, the board is allowed to appoint up to six members-at-large. As I mentioned in my previous newsletter, we would welcome short-term volunteers in the following areas:



- **Webmaster** to manage the branch website
- **Communications Director** to ensure that our message gets out to local and area media
- **Event Organizer** to organize the branch meetings (and hopefully the regional branch meetings)
- **Advocacy Volunteers** to contact elected officials and advocate on behalf of our members

The meeting planned for the Prairie District, comprised of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories, scheduled for May in Calgary, also fell victim to the pandemic, as did the Annual Meeting of Members, scheduled for June in Gatineau. The Prairie District meeting was replaced by a series of Zoom meetings during the summer and fall and an abbreviated Annual Meeting of Members was finally held as a Zoom meeting in early December. Zoom meetings, although no substitute for face-to-face meetings, can be quite successful and certainly provide substantial savings over face-to-face meetings. One drawback is a certain degree in loss of communication.

Through one of the Prairie District Zoom meetings, I learned that the incoming president of the Western Manitoba Branch, Wendy Jarvin, had prepared a brief message to welcome new members. I have followed her lead and prepared one for our branch.

After a very brief stint, the new Advocacy Program Officer for Manitoba resigned, and a search for his replacement is underway. In the meantime, and in addition, I invite you **contact our** federal MP, James Bezan, and our Provincial MLA, Wayne Ewasko, to advocate on behalf of our organization in the following areas:

- retirement security
- a national seniors' strategy
- support for veterans and their families, and
- Pharmacare.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will be well past the winter solstice and the situation with respect to COVID-19 will be clearer with, hopefully, access to one or more vaccines. On behalf of our board, I wish you all the best in 2021.

PARTNER BANNER



Benefits Corner

Donna Wuschke-Benefits Officer

After a Death in the Family

Sadly, many of our members have faced this situation in the past few months. Here is some guidance on what needs to be done immediately.

Registration with Vital Statistics

Following the death, the doctor or coroner will fill out a Medical Certificate of Death and give it to the funeral director, who then fills out a Statement of Death. He will then submit both these documents to the local municipality clerk's office so that the death can be registered with Vital Statistics. The deceased's next of kin will receive a notification letter when the death has been registered.

Obtaining a Death Certificate

A death certificate is required as legal proof of death. You will need several copies as it is needed for many things such as to settle an estate, apply for pension and survivor benefits, or make a life insurance claim. Your funeral director will likely provide you with as many copies as you need, or you may obtain them by phoning 204-945-3701 or 1-866-949-9296, or email vitalstats@gov.mb.ca.

Pensions and Benefits

If the deceased person is obtaining pension or benefits from an employer, you need to contact them to cancel his/her benefits and see if survivor benefits are available.

If the deceased is in receipt of federal benefits (such as the OAS or CPP), you should contact Service Canada (1-800-622-6232) immediately to avoid any potential overpayments and determine if you are eligible for survival benefits.

Notify the Canada Revenue Agency

Notify the **CRA** of the date of **death** as soon as possible, by calling them at 1-800-959-8281, or by filling out the form on the back of the CRA Information Sheet RC4111.

If you are an Estate Representative (Executor)

If you are the executor of the will, your responsibilities may also include the following:

- Making funeral and burial arrangements
- Locating the deceased's final will
- Applying to have the will validated by a court (probate)
- Paying estate fees
- Making a life insurance claim
- Closing bank accounts, investment accounts , credit card accounts, and utility accounts , etc.
- Cancelling or revising memberships in NAFR and MEDOC and the Public Service or other health care plan
- Opening an estate bank account



- Finding and evaluating all of the assets the person had when he/she died including cash; money in bank accounts, registered plans like RRSPs and TFSAs; investments, like stocks, bonds and mutual funds; real estate, and personal items and keepsakes
- Getting an appraisal for the value of the estate
- Completing a final tax return for the deceased, as well as any returns required for the estate
- Putting a notice out for creditors notifying them that the person has died
- Paying all debts owing by the deceased
- Locating and notifying all beneficiaries named in the will, or under the law if there is no will
- Dividing the estate as outlined in the will (or legislation, if there is no will)
- Providing financial information about the estate to the beneficiaries

The most urgent and important of these are to locate the will and apply for probate. Many of the other tasks cannot be completed until probate has been granted, and a financial institution such as a bank may require that the will to be probated before releasing the assets. Detailed instructions for applying for probate in Manitoba may be found at :

<https://www.communitylegal.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/For-Executors1.pdf>.

Membership Report

Maureen Macdonald

	2020/03	2021/01
Total Double Households	252	235
Total Single Households	163	158
Total Active Households	415	393
Total Non-DDS* Households	30	28
Total DDS* Households	382	365
Total Active Members	667	629

*Direct Deduction from Source, such as pension

Note: Some numbers may not add up. We get some data from our membership database, and other data from National Office summary reports and the timing of updates do not always coincide.

Members or spouses deceased since last Newsletter March 2020:

Shirley Bell, 18-Nov-20
 Pearl Fedoronchuk, 23-May-20
 Dale Lidfors, 29-Oct-20
 Pauline Miller, 28-Jun-20
 Jane Petkau, 12-Jul-20
 Leonard Simpson, 10-Nov-20
 Joseph Vadasz, 20-Aug-20

Edward Bueckert, 03-Nov-20
 Mildred Juhnke, 26-Oct-20
 Tom McDougall, 25-Nov-20
 Glenn L Morgan, 13-Aug-20
 Daisy Seymour, 30-Sep-20
 Marion Stewart, 28-Jun-20
 Aggie Walters, 25-Apr-20