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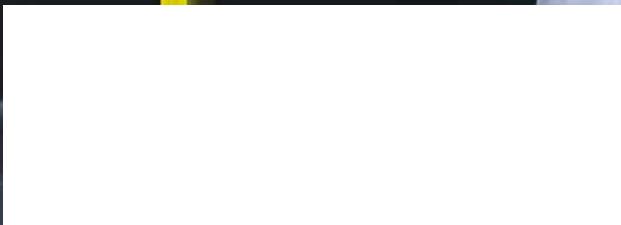
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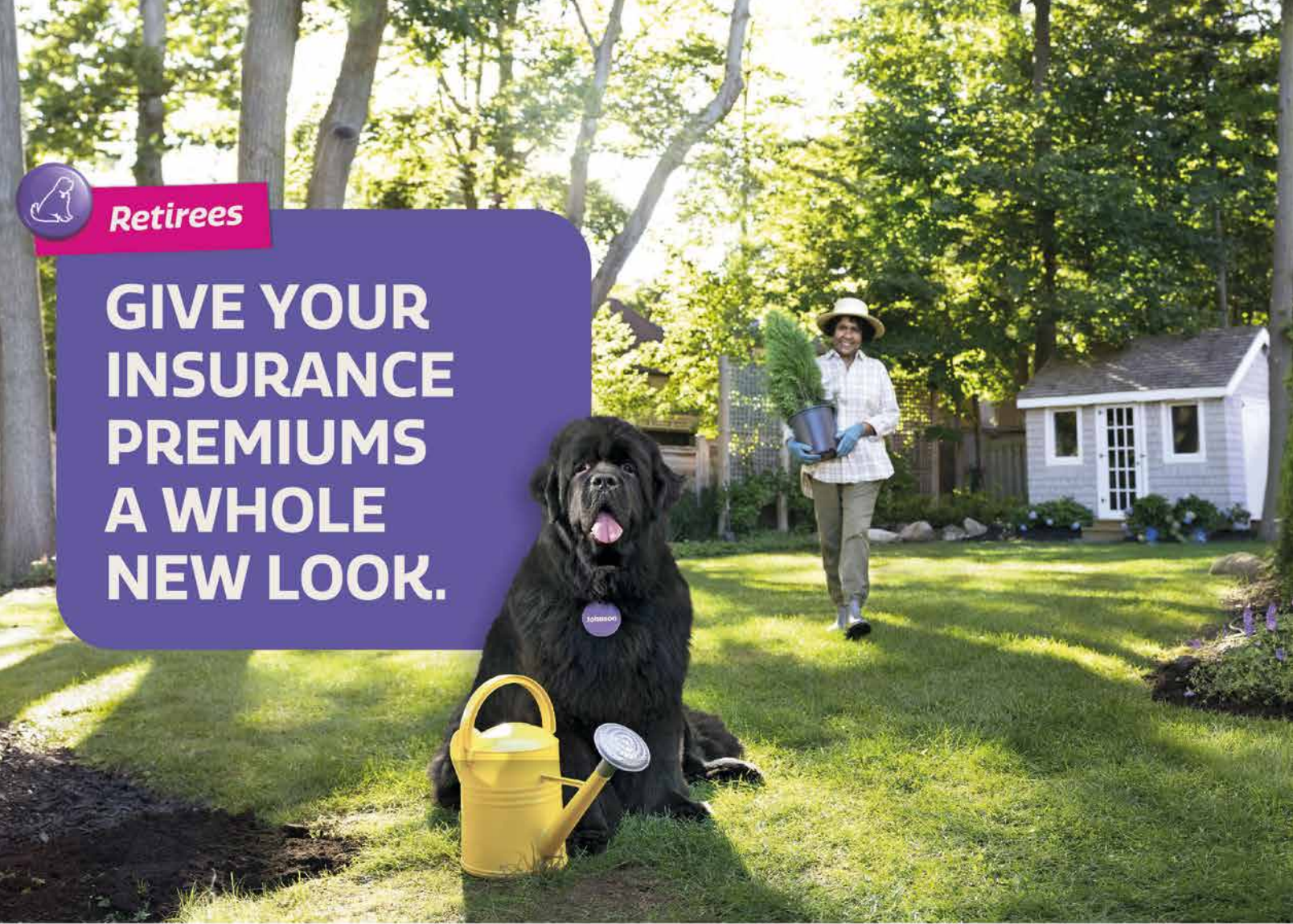


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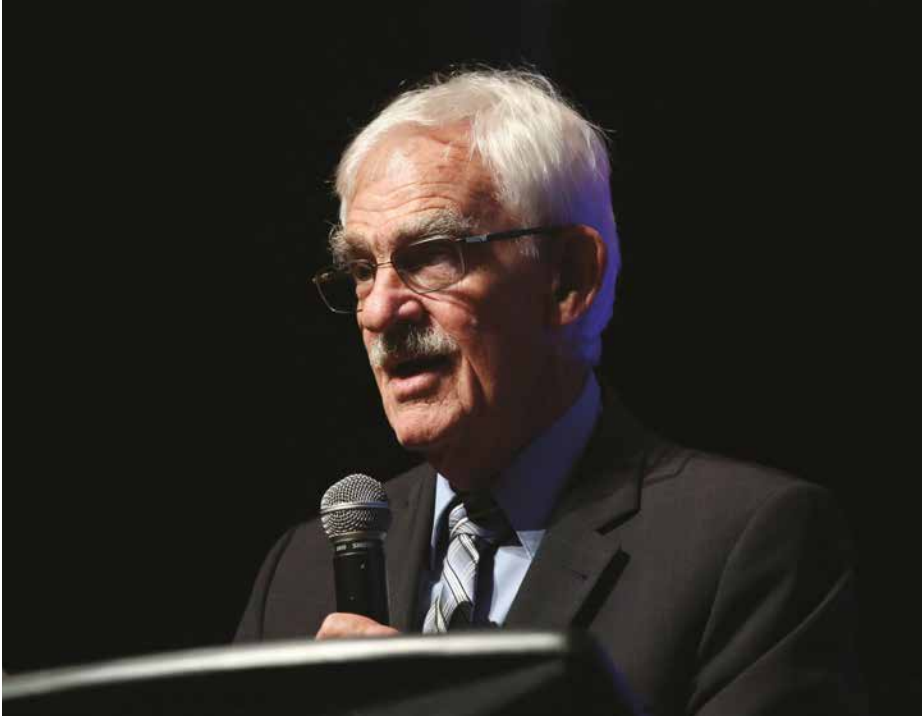


SCAN



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A productive AMM

Collegial, fulsome and respectful discussions took place at the AMM, where we also honoured volunteers and welcomed new board members. **BY ROY GOODALL**

This is my first opportunity to communicate with all members of our Association since our productive and collegial annual meeting of members (AMM) in late June. I was heartened by the fulsome level of respectful discussion by all as well as the resulting decisions.

In addition to Association business, the AMM is also a time to thank volunteers, and single out some exceptional ones at the annual awards ceremony. The members who were recognized came from various parts of the country, but all had one thing in common — their dedication to our organization and our core goals, namely to protect members' pensions and ensure a safe, healthy and secure retirement for our members and all Canadians.

Also at the AMM, we elected four new board members and said goodbye to four long-serving members. Our new board members — Brenda Teed (Atlantic), Pierre Bilodeau (Quebec), Dan Butler (Ottawa & Nunavut) and Scott Hodge

(B.C. & Yukon) — have hit the ground running and I look forward to working with them. (Read more about each of them in Association News on page 34.) I also want to thank our outgoing members for their hard work over many years. Thank you to Megan Williams (Atlantic), Jacques Lambert (Quebec), Daniel Brunet (Ottawa & Nunavut) and Brian Strongman (B.C. & Yukon).

The advent of summer also brought our transition of the Public Service Health Care plan (PSHCP) from Sun Life to Canada Life, which has been a significant undertaking. A full 78 per cent of the PSHCP members who must complete the positive enrolment process did so by July 1. We have shared information digitally and on paper, but there have been challenges with the positive enrolment experience. Federal Retirees has received an average of 300 emails and phone calls per week and has taken more than 5,000 inquiries, including more than 3,500 calls and 1,500 emails.

As some of you will know, I am the

PSHCP pensioner representative and I've escalated these concerns to the PSHCP partners committee. We expect Treasury Board and Canada Life to resolve these issues promptly. Rest assured we will continue to advocate for all of our members' needs on this file.

It's worth noting that the Pensioners Dental Service Plan will likewise be transitioning from Sun Life to Canada Life on July 1, 2024, and we will push to ensure a much better member experience.

Meanwhile, work is progressing on the Association's next strategic plan. The board engaged a consulting firm to guide it and staff members through the evolution of the plan. Two meetings have been held and a third is scheduled. Soon, branches will be asked for their views on Association goals and priorities. A question branches and the board will consider is: "How do we want to deliver services to our members?" The September board meeting will consider terms of reference, process and the composition of a special committee on the Association's organizational structure. The committee will include six branch presidents and three board members who are able to commit to serving for 18 months.

Finally, the Government of Canada Charitable Workplace campaign kicks off in September. We are working with Public Services and Procurement Canada on this.

I'm proud to say that federal retirees account for a significant proportion of the overall campaign and many charities and Canadians are hurting as inflation is still eroding living standards. We are fortunate to have pension indexation protection and I'm not surprised that many of you are sharing that good fortune with the charities of your choice.

Finally, I'd like to salute our 60th anniversary as an association. We've been celebrating all year, but the official day is Oct. 14. ■

Roy Goodall is president of the National Association of Federal Retirees.

Dear Sage

Note that letters have been edited for grammar and length.



Dear Sage,

I am writing to object to the Summer 2023 article "1963 revisited" and a former prime minister's wife's birth being worthy of inclusion. Was that the sum total of her fame in Canada — marrying a career politician? I find it hard to believe in all of Canada in 1963 there was no other birth that should be recognized. If you could explain the process by which she was included and why her picture was larger than the others in the group, it would be appreciated. Some might construe this as currying favour with a former politician and/or political party.

Regards,
Frances Duke

Hi Frances: To us, she was a notable person among those born in 1963. It's a subjective thing — no political favour intended. The photo size was a design choice based on the size and shape of all four photos.

Dear Sage,

As an active international traveller, I was prompted to write when I read the current article "Canada Life is coming." Being cautious and questioning, point three with respect to MSH raised

the question: When I register (I have) with Canada Life, am I automatically registered with MSH? Or do I register with MSH separately?

On a more positive note, I look forward to every issue of Sage and the emails I receive.

G. Boyce, Dartmouth, N.S.

Thanks for your letter. MSH is included as the emergency travel insurance administrator under the PSHCP with no requirement for a separate enrolment. Members with MEDOC® travel insurance should continue to reach out to MEDOC® first for co-ordination of benefits by Global Excel Management (GEM), its claims administrator.

Dear Sage,

I appreciated the article on ageism in the Spring 2023 issue and have actually experienced a bit of that myself, at age 68. However, there is another side of the coin. One example is the positive enrolment to convert from Sun Life to Canada Life. Some who retired years ago have fallen behind in technology. For those who don't have someone who can help them, there is a risk of them falling through the cracks. There could have been a better way of handling this. It may be necessary to think more strategically about how to send out information. At 65, a person may elect to have electronic mailouts, but at 85, this may be a problem.

I realize there is a wide spectrum when speaking about the state of retirees and their capabilities. It's a touchy subject, but one worthy of thought in my opinion.

Ann Knutson, Regina, Sask.

Thanks, Ann, for your thoughtful letter. Please refer to Roy Goodall's message on page 5 for more information on our approach to this.

Dear Sage,

Re "Fire can add a lot of ambiance, but there's a dark side to it" (Spring 2023): Although wood smoke conjures up fond memories of sitting by a cosy fire, "the lifetime cancer risk from wood smoke is estimated to be 12 times more carcinogenic and toxic than from a similar amount of cigarette smoke" according to Families for Clean Air. It is an environmental and public health issue, especially in an urban setting.

Furthermore, homeowners have an undeniable and legal right to enjoy their property without being disturbed or annoyed by neighbours creating a nuisance for "recreational" activities. Propane and butane do not cause embers, and food cooked over a wood fire contains the same toxic elements as the smoke.

When the weather turns balmy, there is nothing like the cosiness of a backyard fire. At least that is how some people see it. But if your neighbour disagrees, the law is on their side. Precedents exist, and can be costly.

S. Massicotte, Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Sage,

In the article about 1963, with regard to Prime Minister Pearson, I think his greatest accomplishment was the Canadian flag, and it wasn't even mentioned.

You don't know what that man went through to get the Maple Leaf established as our Canadian flag. During that time, I was working with him and he went through a lot of opposition from John Diefenbaker. And he was very proud of the fact that he got it done. I think it was a shame it was missed.

Al Davidson

Thank you for this, Al. It was indeed an unfortunate omission on our part.



Keep those letters and emails coming.

Our mailing address is: National Association of Federal Retirees, 865 Shefford Rd., Ottawa, ON, K1J 1H9
Or you can email us at: sage@federalretirees.ca

'We have a great association'

The 60th anniversary travel contest generated 2,000 prospective member leads, many of whom decided to join the Association. Bravo for that. **BY ANTHONY PIZZINO**

At the end of June, at the Hilton Lac-Leamy in Gatineau, Que., a successful and productive annual meeting of members took place, and it gave me and my colleagues at national headquarters some new action items.

There was a lot of support from delegates for the Association to increase our visibility and influence. Part of that will be achieved by developing and implementing a digital communication and marketing plan, including revamping our website as a critical communications vehicle. That work is now underway and I look forward to its completion and to sharing it with our members.

Something that's become repeatedly evident to me in the two years that I have been with Federal Retirees is that we have a tremendous association, and

this was once again made clear in the 60th anniversary travel contest we ran. I've been heartened by the success of the contest. As of the end of July, it had generated 2,000 prospective member leads, many of whom decided to join the Association. I encourage all members to keep up that momentum with the 2023 Mega Recruitment Drive launching on Sept. 1. The more members we have, the more our voices will resonate with policy-makers on Parliament Hill and beyond.

After all, our members are what make the Association great. We are brought together by each of your talents, interests and experiences, and I have no doubt you're also involved in building and fostering your own communities.

Take our cover story in this issue of *Sage*: As a spousal member of the

Association, Renate Sutherland is an advocacy policy officer in British Columbia. But that's not all she is. As a lifelong professional social services advocate, she now works hard as a boarder for service dogs. The service dog charitable movement touches some of our Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members who can really benefit from the love and devotion of a service dog to help them stay well.

In our fall issue, we always like to salute Veterans' Week and this story — which details the work of service dog organizations across the country and tells the story of two men who are directly benefitting from these dogs — highlights some of the challenges our veterans experience.

On the ageism file, *Sage* talked to members about the greetings they receive and the words they hear to describe older people when they're in public, going about their business. There's definitely ageism at play in a lot of society, but it occurs to me that it works both ways. Obviously, there is a bias against older people, and systemic ageism is often built into ads, comedy routines, movies and TV. As we work to change that, I realized that the ageism bias goes both ways when someone recently made a disparaging comment about younger people. It's just something to be mindful of as well, and ageism as a whole will continue to be on our agendas.

I wish you a safe and productive autumn. And for the many veterans among our members, I hope you have a meaningful Veterans Week in November. Lest we forget. ■

Anthony Pizzino is the chief executive officer of the National Association of Federal Retirees.



Dogs who double as heroes

Service dogs can give wounded Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP veterans their lives back and members such as Renate Sutherland board and help train the dogs to go to work.

BY JENNIFER CAMPBELL





Renate Sutherland cries every time she has to say goodbye. The advocacy program officer for Federal Retirees in British Columbia fosters service dogs for the B.C. Guide Dog program for about five months before she turns them over to their deserving recipients. Since she retired in 2018, she's worked with six dogs.

The program — one of several that Wounded Warriors Canada supports — breeds its own golden retrievers through an in-house breeding program and they go to people who live with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by occupational stress injuries from work in the Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP or as first responders.

Sutherland and her husband, Neil Dawe, take in the would-be service dogs when they're 18 months old, after they've been fostered by another family while going through rigorous puppy training. Sutherland then works with the young adult dogs — dressed in their service-dog-in-training vests and going almost everywhere she goes — for the next five to six months. It's a tryout to see if the pup really has what it takes to become a service dog.

"I support the training," Sutherland says. "So I have to practise the tasks the dogs are given. The professional trainers do the more intense training. I go to class once a week with a dog and that's where I learn its tasks so I can reinforce them at home. I take the dog where I go as much as possible. I've had them come to pedicures and manicures, doctor's appointments. It's really important that they're well behaved and can manage themselves in almost any situation — escalators, [revolving] doors."

It's a 24/7 commitment when the dogs are with her, but it's one she loves.

"A big part of it for me is knowing that these dogs will make a huge

difference in someone's life," she says. "And sometimes it's a whole family. Their lives will change thanks to these dogs. That's really important to me. It's a continuation of the career I had working in social service settings for 30 years."

Would-be dog recipients undergo an involved application process to qualify. They have to be referred to a mental health professional, they have to be seen as someone who can benefit and their family has to be on board, if applicable.

"That's the same with us as fosters," Sutherland says. "[The dogs] become part of the family."

And yes, she cries when they either go on to become service dogs or return to the training centre to be adopted because they didn't make the cut. Her dog Dakota is one she boarded and adopted when he was unsuitable to be a service dog.

Of the six she's fostered so far, four have become service dogs. She's met three of the people who became their recipient.

"I don't meet them when they get the dog, but I might at events. If I think I recognize a dog, I approach the trainer and ask the name and I'll ask them if the person would be open to my saying hello. Often they are."

Changing lives

Stephane Marcotte remembers the first time he realized a service dog might be an option for him. Marcotte served in the military for 28 years, 18 of which were in submarines. That's where he had some "bad" experiences and was medically released.

"When I retired, I was pretty messed up," he says. "I was always in my basement — never going out."

After a while of wallowing, he took action. While at a retreat with Wounded Warriors Canada, he stopped at a booth at a trade show.

"I visited the [service dog] booth," he says, choking up over the memory. "A dog licked my face and it felt like three years of therapy in one second. I started

Renate Sutherland (background) sits with her dog, Dakota, who was in the service dog program and was boarded by Sutherland, but ultimately was deemed unsuitable. Sutherland adopted him when that was the case. Photo: Adrian Lam



B.C. Guide Dogs is one of the longest-running programs in the country. It has an in-house breeding program of golden retrievers and trains the dogs who board with volunteers throughout the process. Photo: Adrian Lam

the process of applying for one right away.”

He enrolled in a two-year Wounded Warrior pilot program.

“I was very dedicated because I knew it would help me and eventually, I was even able to get off my medication,” he says. “I can honestly say I wouldn’t be here now without my dog.”

He’s had Sarge for 7½ years and is now retiring him, but, as often happens, he’ll keep him as a pet. Meanwhile, he qualified for a new dog he’s been working with since July.

How it works

Partner organizations of Wounded Warriors Canada provide dogs to people with operational (work-related) stress injuries that led to post-traumatic stress. Not all PTSD sufferers are a good fit for a service dog, but those who are, get a dog, says Mike Annan, executive director

of VICD Service Dogs, a division of B.C. Guide Dogs.

“The program is guided by our professional instructors and our mental health director and by the recipients, their families and care providers.”

The dogs spend their first 14 to 16 months in puppy training, living with volunteer puppy raisers. They have a series of behavioural checklists and public-access training that they need to complete to graduate from the puppy program.

“At that point, they enter ‘service dog university,’” Annan says. “These dogs have to work well in a public space, malls, escalators, public transit.”

The dogs and their owners bond in surprising ways. For example, Stephane Marcotte is diabetic and Sarge notifies him when his blood sugar is low. The dogs also are trained to draw attention to their owners’ stress- or anxiety-related behaviours.

“Big, deep breaths, head in hands, increased heart rates — we teach them to alert to all of that,” Annan says. “They’ll rest their chin on your leg if you’re shaking it; we call it ‘alert to agitation’.”

One of the dogs’ biggest jobs is to wake PTSD sufferers from nightmares.

Volunteers such as Sutherland are crucial, Annan says.

“It takes a village to run this program.”

Working from the same playbook

The Wounded Warriors Canada partner programs each work differently, but they’re all certified according to national standards the organization helped establish.

“We established a baseline of criteria,” says Phil Ralph, director of health services at Wounded Warriors Canada. “One thing we said was that they had

“A big part of it for me is knowing that these dogs will make a huge difference in someone’s life... And sometimes it’s a whole family. Their lives will change thanks to these dogs.”

to be collegial and complementary and work with each other, which has been amazing. Instead of reinventing the wheel, everyone is learning best practices from each other.”

Wounded Warrior supports nearly \$1 million worth of service dog training per year.

“We’ve provided our mental health resources to the dog trainers and they’ve provided their dog expertise,” Ralph says. “Twice a year we [hold] an internal conference to learn best practices.”

When he met a service dog at a trade show, Stéphane Marcotte said one lick from the dog felt like the equivalent of three years of therapy. He’s shown here with Sarge, who’s been his service dog for 7½ years. Photo: John Penner Photography

With non-certified operations, it’s buyer beware — and the stakes are high as service dogs cost several thousand dollars. Wounded Warriors Canada funds its partners’ programs so PTSD sufferers get their dogs for free.

Canada’s certified programs

Quebec’s Les Chiens Togo partnered with Wounded Warriors in 2017. It has dogs for people with PTSD and it has dogs suited to prevent the onset of PTSD for first responders.

Togo receives about 200 emails a week from people looking for dogs, but the availability of dogs and the resources required to train them means Togo only

does between five and 12 pairings a year. Not everyone who emails is eligible, of course, and even fewer are suited for a guide dog. Right now, Togo’s vetted waiting list has 40 names on it. It gets its dogs from a network of 35 shelters across Quebec.

“We have trained volunteers to assess dogs for us in those shelters,” says Noémie Labbé Roy, Togo’s founder. “Fewer than one per cent of all dogs we assess will qualify.”

Labbé Roy hopes to access some of B.C. Guide Dog’s puppies as part of their partnership. She’s also actively looking for volunteer puppy raisers across the province of Quebec should they start getting dogs more readily.

At Paws Fur Thought in Nova Scotia, Mike and Kim Gingelle are both veterans. They became involved in the sector when Kim returned from a tour of duty in Sierra Leone “broken.” She says her service dog saved her life. To pay it forward, eight years ago she and Mike





Richard Moreau is training his dog Timo remotely through K-9 Country Inn, a Barrie, Ont. organization. Photo: Mike Carroccetto

took over the organization, which was founded in 2013 by another veteran who suffers from PTSD and was overwhelmed by the job.

The Gingelles gets their dogs from Canine Assistance Rehabilitation and Education Services (CARES), which was founded 30 years ago in Concordia, KS. The dogs are trained partly by prisoners who serve as fosters — a win-win for CARES and the prisoners. Paws Fur Thought pairs a dozen PTSD sufferers with dogs each year. While the dogs come fully trained, the Gingelles' team trains the recipient — sometimes a bigger job than training the dog, Mike says with a laugh.

In Barrie, Ont., K-9 Country Inn owner Laura A. Mackenzie has two programs. The first involves the recipient intensively training the dog from the age of eight weeks, with the help of professional

trainers, over a period of two years. The second involves older adult dogs, whose recipient starts training with the dog when it's six months old. K-9 Country Inn gets its dogs — golden retrievers, Labradors and the occasional Labradoodle — from a network of breeders across Ontario.

Another warrior on the mend

Richard Moreau, who is retired from the Forces and now serves in the reserves, was vacationing in New Orleans when he could no longer ignore his PTSD.

He was walking on Bourbon Street when suddenly, he was back in Mogadishu, Somalia, where he'd served 30 years prior.

"Things get a little hot in crowded places. It took me back 30 years and I was physically ill. I was freaking out."

When a friend of 40 years told him he should investigate whether he had PTSD, he sought counselling through Veterans Affairs Canada and then secured a psychiatric referral.

Today, he's working virtually with K-9 Country Inn to train his German Shepherd Timo, acquired from a breeder near his home in Rockland, Ont.

"It's a journey," he says, of his relationship with Timo, who is already proving beneficial. Because he didn't want to wait to go through Wounded Warriors, he is training the dog himself with help from afar, and is paying for everything himself.

"I wanted to be proactive," he says. "I've lost friends to suicide." ■

Jennifer Campbell is the editor of *Sage*. Usually a cat person, she fell in love with the dogs she met for this story.


 An illustration showing a variety of hands of different skin tones and ages reaching towards a large, dark blue speech bubble. The hands are wearing different styles of watches and clothing, symbolizing diversity and collective action.

Words matter

In the fight against ageism, having programs called Old Age Security and even catch-all nouns such as “seniors” to refer to anyone between the ages of 60 and 100-plus should be re-examined, experts say.

BY SANDRINE RASTELLO

When entering a store or a coffee shop, Cindy Kelly likes nothing more than to be approached with a simple, neutral sentence: “Hi, how are you? Can I help you today?” Most times, that’s what happens. But on some thankfully rare occasions, she is addressed in a way that makes her cringe, such as “Hello, dearie!” or “Hello, you young ones!”

“I take it with a grain of salt,” she says. “The person is doing their job — at least I’ve been greeted. Maybe the person doesn’t know any better.”

Kelly, who lives in Winnipeg, has been vigilant about the manifestations

of ageism, which the World Health Organization defines as stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination based on age. She makes a point of respectfully raising her concerns to companies that don’t feature older people in their advertising campaigns, for instance, and has boycotted some of them.

When dealing with annoying or hurtful words that pop up in conversations, she will only speak up if she finds it excessive, to the point of feeling uncomfortable. That happened once, at a bakery where a sales associate would end every sentence with “Miss.”

“After the 10th ‘Miss,’ I said, ‘Please

don’t address me as Miss,’” recalls Kelly, who received an apology. “Maybe for that person it was a teaching moment, an awareness moment.”

Fighting words can seem like an uphill battle, not only because they are ingrained in culture and education, but also because people often mean well. Mélanie Levasseur, a professor at the Université de Sherbrooke’s Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, remembers a conversation with a caregiver who had called a woman “my beautiful little elder” and didn’t understand why she was offended.

“It is important, when interacting with



Cindy Kelly likes to be approached with a “Hi, how are you?” or a “May I help you today?” Call her “dearie” and you’ll make her cringe. Photo: Réjean Brandt

people — even more so now, with the acknowledgment of diversity — to ask them [what] they want to be called,” says Levasseur, who was also involved in a Quebec initiative to counter ageism.

Drop the ‘dear’

When Federal Retirees asked its members what names they hated, answers ranged from “ma’am,” “honey” or “sweetie,” to more descriptive terms, such as “seniors” or “the little lady.” Being addressed by their first name, or as “tu,” were also mentioned as irritants. Respondents had different combinations of words they rejected and tolerated,

underlining the difficulty of finding one that resonates with everyone.

“Dear,” however, was widely unpopular for its patronizing and infantilizing undertones.

“I do get called “dear” once in a while, which I can’t stand, especially when it is somebody really young who’s patting me on the shoulder,” says Ottawa’s Maggie Mamen. “I don’t mind being called a baby boomer. I really don’t like the term elderly. It would be nice if there were a better term to describe people beyond middle age.”

In 2017, the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* announced it would require authors to use the term “older

adults” when referring to people aged 65. It also made suggestions for respectfully discussing or describing them. Instead of calling the growing share of older people in the population a “tsunami” (as in the phrase “grey tsunami”), for instance, the emphasis could be on Americans living longer and healthier lives, it said.

‘A vehicle for ageism’

“Dehumanizing attitudes are built into the words we use to talk about aging,” says Andrea Charise, an associate professor and associate chair of research in the Department of Health & Society of the University of Toronto Scarborough.

Looking at the “grey tsunami” example, which often comes up in the media, “its terrifying image of a monstrous wave poised to break over our heads is striking and urgent, but it transforms real living people into a many-headed catastrophe: financial, social, cultural,” Charise says. “I’m heartened to see a major medical journal making such a public commitment to examining the language of aging as a vehicle for ageism.”

In Quebec, the government uses the terms “aînés” (elders), and at times “nos aînés” (our elders).” Levasseur, who is also a researcher at the Sherbrooke-based Research Centre on Aging and has spent two decades working on the social participation of older adults, says most people in her research groups don’t identify with the word. It is perceived negatively, she adds.

In a society that values youth to the extreme, not wanting to be considered old and in decline is hardly surprising.

And yet, Charise stressed, there is more to take away in that rejection. What is often left unsaid is that “we, as a society, have tended to collapse ‘aging’ and ‘oldness’ with terribly fatalistic, isolating, undesirable qualities.”

Updating the language

To be fair, there is probably no perfect word to describe the 7.3 million



Hélène Nadeau, right, doesn't like the term "elderly." Maggie Mamen, bottom left, bristles at it, too. Mamen says she doesn't mind being called a "baby boomer." Rick Devlieger, top left, says he just goes with the intention behind the words and will give "dear" a pass. Photos of Nadeau and Devlieger by Dave Chan.

Canadians above the age of 65. A newborn and a teenager have very different realities, yet older adults with an age difference that can span decades get lumped together into one category, Levasseur points out.

"We are all different, and we all get old someday," says Hélène Nadeau, vice-president of the board of Federal Retirees. "What I don't like with descriptions of 'the elderly' is the amalgam. This is not a homogenous group. There is a U.S. president who is 80."

The *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* was not alone in rethinking its terminology. A note on Statistics Canada's website explains that a page previously called "Seniors and aging" was updated to "Older adults and population aging."

In other parts of government, however, outdated language persists. Just ask Ginette Fillion. When she turned 65, the Gatineau, Que., resident became

eligible for the federal government's Old Age Security pension program, a name that didn't sit well with her.

"When I got the form, my first reaction was: 'I'm not old!'" Fillion says. "Back when it started, not many people made it to 65. But now, you are not old at 65." She believes it is time to rename the program.

Invisibility

Rick Devlieger, of Duncan, B.C., didn't have any particularly annoying words to pitch in the Federal Retirees' survey. But he knows some can be upsetting. He still remembers the feeling from many years ago, when, as a recently promoted master seaman trying to establish gravitas, he was referred to as a "young man."

Since then, nothing has really bothered him — including "dear," which he has been called.

"I always go with the intention behind the words [rather than] listen to what the actual words," he says. "If you make it difficult for people to refer to you, people stop referring to you."

That would be akin to invisibility, another symptom of ageism. But back in Ottawa, Mamen is confident that won't happen. Not with the Baby Boomer Generation, now aged 58 to 77.

"The old view of people who are [in their 70s] has to change. All [my] friends are very active. We don't just sit in a rocking chair with a cat and read a book," she says. "We were the leading edge in feminism, the leading edge in lots of things. We're not a generation to be put away." ■

Sandrine Rastello is a journalist who covered business and politics on three continents before deciding to call Montreal home. When she's not reporting, you can find her on a theatre stage.



Fighting the flames of climate change

Unprecedented wildfires are a deadly example of the environmental emergency in B.C. and Alberta.

BY PETER SIMPSON

It is a bleak irony that this series on the effects of climate change has been, at times, delayed because key sources were away fighting its disastrous effects.

Last fall, it was climate experts and others in crisis mode after Hurricane Fiona pummelled the East Coast. More recently, in July, sources on the West Coast battled wildfires on an unprecedented scale. Such fires have erupted across Canada this year — by early June, more land in Canada had burned in wildfires than in any previous year, and all before the usual season for wildfires had even begun.

As usual, Alberta and British Columbia experienced more than their share of destruction. In late July, the Donnie Creek wildfire spanned nearly 6,000 square kilometres, an area that's bigger than

Prince Edward Island, and the biggest fire in B.C.'s recorded history. (Wildfires in Quebec and Northern Ontario were also worse than usual this year, and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick joined the beleaguered club with destructive fires.)

Such scenes of climate-related destruction are distressingly familiar in the West. In late 2020, rainfall was so intense in Merritt, B.C., that it changed the course of the Coldwater River that flows through the town. In 2021, Lytton, B.C., was devastated by fire and flood, yet perhaps none of these scenes outdoes the apocalyptic videos of people fleeing walls of fire in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Alta., in 2017 — a fire that was, as a recent *New Yorker* magazine review of John Vaillant's book *Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*, put it, "hot enough to vaporize toilets and bend

a street light in half." The Fort McMurray fire was also, the reviewer noted, "the most expensive disaster in Canada's history." It is unfortunately clear that that infamous distinction will not stand for long in our hotter world.

Meanwhile, already this year, Alberta communities such as Edson and Yellowhead County have been evacuated repeatedly due to the encroaching threats, and at time of writing British Columbia was still pockmarked with early-season blazes.

The B.C. government is fighting fire with more funds. The 2022 provincial budget announced approximately \$350 million in new funding for the B.C. Wildfire Service (BCWS), the agency that is becoming a year-round service. The government also announced, in the 2023 budget, more than \$1 billion in funds to

British Columbia and Alberta have experienced more than their fair share of destruction during wildfire season this year. The Donnie Creek wildfire spanned close to 6,000 square kilometres and was the biggest in B.C.'s recorded history.

fight the climate change that contributes to the growing fire threat.

The very way that fires are fought has also changed.

“What’s changed is the size of the fires and how we fight them,” says David Greer, the director of strategic engagement and partnerships with the BCWS, who spent 12 years on the ground fighting wildfires. “Things were very different,” Greer recalls. In the 1990s and 2000s, there was less prescribed burning — literally using fire to fight fire, a practice that’s been used by Indigenous people for generations. “The tool is used way more now... so when fires do hit they will be less vigorous.”

Crews also spend much more time making forests “more resilient to future fires,” he says, for example, avoiding monoculture when replanting and including flora that is more fire resistant.

“Our operation has grown significantly in mitigation, prevention and recovery,” he says. Such measures become more critical as the social, cultural and financial impacts of fire continue to grow. “A wildfire is not an isolated issue,” Greer says, “it affects all aspects of your life.”

You needn’t be close to a wildfire to be at risk, as cities and other communities are blanketed by high levels of smoke.

“There’s definitely been, over the last decade or decade and a half, an increase in frequency of wildfire-impacted air quality,” says Dennis Herod, a data manager with the National Air Pollution Surveillance Network, a partnership between Environment Canada and every province and territory. “As you’ve probably seen with the most recent fires, the smoke can travel thousands of kilometres.”

Vancouver and other centres can be shrouded in smoke from wildfires outside the province — in Washington, Oregon or California, and even in Russia.

The threat inside the smoke is particulate matter.

“They’re very tiny,” Herod says. “They can penetrate deeply into lungs and even [into] the bloodstream. During wildfire

Saving sea creatures, and ourselves

The damage from wildfires, and other effects of climate change, reaches from the forests into streams and rivers and out into the Pacific Ocean, threatening some of the West’s most emblematic wildlife.

Experts at the Center for Whale Research have said in recent news reports that skin diseases affecting resident orcas off the B.C. coast may be caused by warming waters, pipeline projects, agricultural pollution and declining food sources for Chinook salmon.

Those salmon are directly affected by wildfires, says Jay Ritchlin, director-general for B.C. and the western region at the David Suzuki Foundation. Fires cause runoff that damages salmon spawning beds, even as salmon face the same temperature increases that orcas are experiencing.

“The water temperature alone makes salmon much more susceptible to disease, making it very difficult for those iconic salmon to survive and recover, even where we have reduced fishing pressure and tried to improve habitat,” Ritchlin says.

Ritchlin says the same heat wave

that killed many people in B.C. also killed millions of sea creatures, and threatens the aquaculture industry that is also beset by rising acidity levels in the ocean that make it difficult for shellfish to form their protective shells.

Ritchlin knows it’s “very challenging to talk about the human culpability for that when in fact many humans are in danger of their lives.” Yet, he adds, “first and foremost, we have to reduce fossil fuels. We can’t stop talking about that.”

“Folks who work in the oil and gas industry are going to be just as affected as everybody else, and their jobs will eventually become redundant, whether it takes three or four more disasters to get us there, or 10 years or 40 years. What we should be doing is working together to find solutions.”

Older workers should get pensions and “let them retire and live in good health,” while others can be helped with retraining and finding new careers,” he says.

“We’ve got to get this economy off of the level of greenhouse gas emissions, and we’ve got to take care of everybody.”



Skin diseases affecting orcas off the B.C. coast may be the result of warming waters.

events, studies have shown a large increase in hospital visits and incidences of asthma and other respiratory aggravation.”

The risk increases as wildfires edge closer to urban areas, which is another worrisome trend. Elderly people are most at risk, especially when smoke combines with higher temperatures such as the “heat dome” that killed hundreds of people in B.C. in 2021.

The provincial government recently announced a \$10-million program to buy 8,000 air conditioners for vulnerable and low-income people.

Herod notes that Health Canada also issues heat warnings that are helpful for older Canadians and those with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions. “Heat warnings are designed to help people plan their activities and limit [them] when it’s higher-risk conditions.”

This double whammy of wildfires and overall rising temperatures is also a threat to iconic industries in B.C. and Alberta. Wildfires challenge B.C.’s

lumber industry and the smoke is trouble for the province’s wine industry. In Alberta, wildfires are contributing to grasshoppers that are being seen earlier than usual and in greater numbers and are consuming tons of agricultural crops. “If it’s not one thing, it’s another this year,” one Alberta farmer told CBC Edmonton.

This creates a domino effect that topples into the province’s beef industry.

“Our cattle need to eat, and so between grass for pasture and hay and silage, and grain crops for feed, that sector really does impact our sector as well,” says Karin Schmid, the production and extension lead with Alberta Beef Producers. “If there’s not enough feed resources, that is a significant challenge for us.”

Water is also a worry, Schmid says.

“Some areas of the province are likely doing all right, some areas are really dry. I have some concerns about what that looks like for this year and for future years because we rely quite heavily on snowpack and runoff from snowmelt

to fill dugouts for water for cattle, and to recharge that soil moisture. If we don’t have that runoff in the spring, if there’s hasn’t been a lot of snow, then those spring rains become even more important.”

Farmers are keenly aware of their role in protecting the environment, Schmid says. Beef production accounts for 2.4 per cent of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions, she says, and over the past 30 years, farmers have reduced emissions by 15 per cent while they’ve produced the same amount of beef using 17 per cent less water and 24 per cent less land.

“We see lots of evolution in the ways that farmers and ranchers try to steward the land for themselves, but also for future generations. A big part of that is learning to deal with some of these climate impacts.” ■

Peter Simpson is an Ottawa writer who is fortunate to have stood in awe amid the natural beauty of Alberta and British Columbia.

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Real estate, mortgage and moving trends 2023

Canada needs 3.5 million more units than currently planned to restore affordability in the housing system.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) annual Housing Supply Report offers insight and analysis of the current housing supply trends and challenges facing Canadians.

This report looks at the overall affordability for the entire housing system. See www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca for the full report. Below are key highlights, projections and observations:

- To restore affordability, it projects Canada will need 3.5 million more units than planned at the current rate of new construction (19 million units by 2030.)
- Two-thirds of the 3.5-million-unit gap is in Ontario and British Columbia.
- Additional supply would also be needed in Quebec. It has seen a marked decline in affordability over the last few years.
- Other provinces remain largely affordable for a household with the average level of disposable income. However, challenges remain for low-income households in accessing housing that is affordable across Canada.

The Canadian Real Estate Association's (CREA) market statistics reports issued on June 15, 2023, indicate that the market is "picking up steam."

National home sales for May increased by 5.1 per cent, and, while monthly new listings increased 6.8 per cent, they remain at a 20-year low. The national average sales price rose 3.2 per cent, year over year for May. Remarkably, sales were up in about 70 per cent of all local markets, including Canada's largest markets — the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Montreal, Greater Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa.

Mortgage terms extensions

As reported by Canadian Mortgage Trends, an online mortgage information resource, more than "a quarter of CIBC's residential mortgage portfolio now has an effective amortization of 35-five years or longer."

The *Toronto Star* similarly reported this year that almost one third of homeowners with a mortgage will pay off that debt over more than 30 years due to higher interest rates — a significant increase over the once standard 25-year amortization period.

Moving trends

While 2022 saw an increase of long-distance moving, generally West to East, there is now a trend toward local and short-haul moves; that is, moves

occurring within a 240 kilometers radius of origin. Long-distance moves are trending toward the West again. Notably, many seniors and younger families are relocating closer to families and housing affordability in Alberta.

Moving scams

In October 2022, the Toronto Police Service arrested four people in connection with a months-long undercover investigation involving a group of "discount" moving companies. According to police, two men bought and operated multiple companies, quoting customers low amounts when they reached out online. However, police say after the companies picked up a person's belongings, they used contracts without signed amounts and would then withhold their customers' belongings until a higher amount was paid. Police said that would often be "thousands of dollars more than they were originally quoted." ■

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The view from the helm

We talk to four former Association presidents about their time leading Federal Retirees — their challenges and their wins. **BY MARG BRUINEMAN**

Keeping Federal Retirees focused on advocacy for its members and encouraging individual engagement through the local branches has been a recurring theme for the organization’s leadership, recent interviews with three past-presidents and the current president reveal.

A post-pandemic mandate

Roy Goodall looks forward to a post-pandemic world.

Federal Retirees’ most recently elected president is continuing the advocacy work so important to the Association. Among his other goals is developing a strategic plan and protecting federal civil service pensions and medical plans. But he is also focusing on the branches. He’s helping to pull some out of near-dormancy brought on by the pandemic and finding members ready to sit on branch boards to help the branches reach their potential and grow the organization.

The branches, which range in size from 200 to 33,000 members, play a double role, he says. They advance the interests of their members and mobilize them to implement the organization’s strategic plan.

“We always consider ourselves a grassroots organization,” Goodall says, a year into his presidency. “Branches for the past two years have not been able to do a lot because of COVID.”

After a 39-year career in the army, Goodall transitioned into a second career

Clockwise from top left: Former Federal Retirees president Jean-Guy Soulière (Photo: Dave Chan), current president Roy Goodall (Photo: Dave Chan) and former presidents Gary Oberg and Dennis Jackson share their memories of their time in office on the occasion of the Association’s 60th anniversary.

and became a financial planner and also participated in the Alberta community development's not-for-profit governance training program, becoming a facilitator, teaching not-for-profit governance and sitting on boards.

In 2006, he started volunteering for Federal Retirees' Calgary board. He went on to become its president and then moved into an Alberta advocacy position, eventually joining the national board as director for the Prairies and NWT from 2014 to 2016. He served as vice-president as of 2016, before becoming president in 2022.

Goodall stepped into the role just as his predecessor finished negotiating the Public Service Health Care Plan renewal. In the end, Goodall signed off on it.

Nearly three decades of service

Jean-Guy Soulière takes great pride in having active roles with the National Association of Federal Retirees for nearly half of its existence.

When Soulière's 30 years in the public service concluded in 1994 (he had held a variety of posts, finishing as director-general of human resources with Labour Canada), he launched the next phase of his career, devoting close to three decades working for and advocating on behalf of retirees. It began as executive director of Federal Retirees under Claude Edwards, the president at that time. He remained in that position until 2007.

“It was one of the greatest jobs I ever had,” Soulière says...

That year, he was named the first chair of the country's National Seniors Council, a position he held until 2013. He then joined Federal Retirees' board of directors, becoming president in 2016, and continues to have an active role on the organization's advocacy committee.

“It was one of the greatest jobs I ever had,” he says, adding that the rewards

of the volunteer position he held for six years as president until 2022 far outweighed the lack of salary. “I kept saying there were a lot of zeros in my salary, including the first digit.”

Last year, Soulière was presented with the association's highest honour, the Fred Whitehouse Founder's Award, for having made a significant positive impact on the association and Canadians and being recognized as a leader and community builder. It was the first time the award had been bestowed.

A highlight of his time as president, he says, was placing extra emphasis on advocacy. “It's always been our *raison d'être*, but we didn't have as much qualified staff working in that area. So I emphasized that,” he recalls.

Other achievements during his time with Federal Retirees include his involvement in the Public Service Health Care Plan, pushing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new Liberal government to re-establish a minister of seniors and emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic with a strong organization.

Bringing branches together

For Dennis Jackson, leading Federal Retirees meant ensuring its longevity.

A big focus during Jackson's time in the president's seat, which he held from 2001 to 2006, involved connecting with branches across the country. He wanted to know how they were performing, if they had members they could call on and what people's concerns were.

“It was a good exercise,” the British-born retiree says. “The purpose was to ensure the branches were operating well and to ensure they had sufficient funds.”

Jackson sees his current project with Federal Retirees as an extension of that effort. He is now serving as a B.C. member on the special committee on branch financing, communicating with branches again, which involved circulating a survey last summer. The goal was to examine the financial needs of the branches and find out whether additional funding was necessary.

“The result of that is that we came up with some decisions on additional funding to branches that can be requested by branches if they have a need for it,” he explained. Branches with extra members and those in larger areas where members must travel longer distances are examples of where additional funding might be required. He expects to be involved in a follow-up committee that will spend the next two years examining the effect of that approach and the impact of the extra funding.

Jackson left the public service in 1993 as director of real property for the federal government across the country after having moved to British Columbia from Ottawa as part of the job. He eventually settled in Vancouver where he works as a realtor.

Jackson's involvement in the Federal Superannuates National Association (FSNA), now the National Association of Federal Retirees, began in 1996 when the district director of British Columbia recruited him to take over that post. That later led to him becoming president.

“For me, it was basically enjoyable to be part of it and I knew people very well across the country and that was also important,” Jackson says.

Building better bylaws

When Gary Oberg retired from his 27-year RCMP career in Lethbridge with his wife, Margaret, he was invited to the spring 1996 meeting of the FSNA, now Federal Retirees. Intrigued, he attended the next meeting and with a nudge to the ribs from Margaret, he responded to the call for volunteers.

“I enjoyed it... There is a thought process to it and I was beginning to understand what the Association was all about. And [was keen to work on] anything I could do to make things better, not only for myself and for the members, but also, if I were to pass on, to make life better for my wife in my absence. And this association had some ability to advocate on that behalf. So

“I enjoyed it... There is a thought process to it and I was beginning to understand what the Association was all about. And [was keen to work on] anything I could do to make things better, not only for myself and for the members...”

that’s why I took it on and have been going ever since,” he recalls.

Nearly three decades later, Oberg remains active and has been enjoying parallel celebrations of both the RCMP’s sesquicentennial and Federal Retirees’ 60th anniversary.

Oberg became president of the local branch in his early years with the organization. Recruited in part for his computer skills, Oberg worked to computerize the branch’s business.

Then he became a national director, which came with a seat on the national board of directors in 2004. After that, he worked through a series of positions and, in 2013, became president of Federal Retirees, a job he held until 2015.

During his time as president, the biggest challenge was adapting Federal Retirees’ bylaws to conform to the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act because it really wasn’t designed for a group as large as Federal Retirees, which currently has a membership of about 170,000 people.

There would be no perfect fit, so the goal was to find the best fit. And the bylaw review committee, of which he was part, eventually found a solution with new bylaws.

The process involved many trips to Ottawa and travel to branches across the country to determine the goals of the membership. The group had just two years to align itself to new legislation.

“It was a very difficult process,” recalls Oberg, who presented the resolutions at the annual meeting of members and then fielded the resulting questions with the Association’s governance officer. “Between the two of us, we made that happen.”

“We finally got the resolution where our new bylaws were passed. And that was a huge accomplishment, but it was not without a lot of difficulty and consternation because a lot of people had a difficult time adapting to that change.”

Oberg is currently working on his Federal Retirees’ branch’s anniversary celebrations and is also a member of the RCMP Veterans’ Association and treasurer of the local division.

In 2012, Oberg was awarded the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for volunteer work with Federal Retirees. ■

Marg Bruineman is an award winning freelance journalist based in Barrie, Ont., who focuses on human interest and legal stories.

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The evils of identity theft

Identity thieves are increasingly sophisticated; we provide some tips for protecting yourself against them.

It's easy to spot a suspicious purchase on a credit card or catch a fraudster who asks for your social insurance number (SIN). But in this digital age, thieves are ever more resourceful. And it isn't always about easy money. Personal information can open doors for fraudsters to apply for loans, rent apartments or cars and more.

The problem is widespread. According to a recent survey Johnson Insurance commissioned, 42 per cent of Canadians have noticed an increase in suspicious emails, texts, phone calls or online advertisements.

And 52 per cent of Canadians were unable to identify the warning signs of identity theft, even when the signs are provided in a list.

When it comes to forged documents, identity thieves will use their victims' personal information to apply for a variety of services. In the midst of the pandemic, scammers reportedly applied for the financial relief on behalf of their victims.

Meanwhile, the work-from-home trend means more sensitive information goes in household recycling bins; it's easier to lift a lid than hack someone's email.

How we can help

Only 26 per cent of Canadians say they have identity theft protection or insurance. To learn more about such insurance through Johnson, give us a call or visit www.johnson.ca/home-insurance ■



Signs of identity theft

Most people notice identity theft when they see purchases or withdrawals they can't explain. However, identity theft isn't always as obvious as a stolen or missing wallet. Here are some less obvious signs:

- **Health plans:** Fraudsters know there's money in health plans. If you're suddenly not covered for a condition or surprised you've reached your benefit limit, it could mean someone has stolen your identity.
- **Calls from creditors:** Being contacted by a creditor to approve or deny credit you never applied for.
- **No mail:** If you're not receiving expected bills or other mail, fraudsters may have redirected or stolen it.

Identity theft prevention in Canada

The harder we can make it for thieves to steal our identity, the better off we are.

- **Create strong passwords:** Use online passwords that include a combination of capital letters, numbers and symbols. Never use one password for all your accounts.
- **Spot bad emails:** Fraudsters fake official looking emails with links to forms that may look as if they're from a cable provider, a financial institution or the government. Always double-check the sender's address by hovering over it to reveal the full address and never click on links unless you're sure they're legitimate.
- **Cover your paper trail:** Shred financial documents when you no longer need them. Avoid keeping written records of your bank account, PIN number(s), SIN and computer password(s) in the house or your wallet.

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Iconic global destinations

Read what travellers had to say about their experiences at some of world's most desirable destinations.

Travellers all have that one dream trip. For some, it's taking the leap and getting over to Australia and New Zealand. Others may want to trace the footsteps of the history they've spent their lives reading about and experience Egypt and Jordan beyond that textbook or documentary. Nature lovers could decide it's time to experience ethereal landscapes much different from the ones in their backyards and explore Iceland.

Australia and New Zealand are a draw to adventurous travellers. Together, they have a perfect blend of being remote but well-established, and having unspoiled nature plus world-class cities.

This region is vast and it takes a while to get there, so many travellers opt

to explore both of these South Pacific nations. And for traveller Nancy B., that journey across the Australian continent was a part of what made her 27-day trip magical. "New, exciting and eye-opening things were experienced every day, even days involving bus trips, double domestic flights or early risings," she said. "Not a day was wasted." Her favourite things about her trip were toasting the sunset at the sandstone monolith Uluru, and taking in the sunrise here while riding a camel.

History lovers are often the ones answering the call to destinations rich with history. Travellers feel as if they've stepped back in time when visiting places such as Egypt and Jordan. They experience a dramatic

world beyond imagination as they enter into these lands of legends, relics and indescribable beauty.

Traveller Linda R. found the lessons she learned along the way to be the most rewarding part of her trip to Egypt and Jordan. "I loved learning about the history, culture and treasures from outstanding experts," she said. "Their knowledge exceeded expectations and made learning come alive." Some of the highlights from her travels? Viewing of the tombs of King Tut and Ramses VI during a tour of the Valley of the Kings, meandering through historic Petra, known as the "Rose Red City," and discovering the secrets of the Nile, the world's longest river, on a three-night cruise.

Visitors to Reykjavik, Iceland, shown here at night, may get lucky and see the Northern Lights.



One traveller picked toasting the sunset at Uluru, shown here, as the highlight of her trip to Australia and New Zealand. Petra, in Jordan, appeals to history buffs.

For outdoorsy adventurers looking for cooler climates, Iceland is the perfect destination. It's a land of dramatic natural contrasts. This is a place where steaming lava fields reflect a volcanic nature and massive glaciers sculpt mountains and valleys, leaving behind thundering waterfalls and plunging fjords.

To traveller Nancy D., it was unlike anywhere else she'd ever been. "We loved absolutely everything, but narrowing it down to one thing would probably be the amazing activities that filled our days," she said. "We felt like each one was a unique experience, something we'd never be able to experience anywhere but Iceland."

Her favourite activities were taking a glacier cruise and visiting the iconic Blue Lagoon.

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Engaging MPs in meaningful ways

Having an MP as a guest speaker is also a good way to draw members to branch meetings. **BY AMY BALDRY**

When it comes to federal advocacy, members across the country have been busy drawing the attention of MPs to Federal Retirees' issues and priorities.

Avalon-Burin Peninsula branch invites MPs to AGM

Branch volunteers invited their members of Parliament to their annual general meeting (AGM) in January, as part of the branch's advocacy work and to benefit members and prospective members.

MP Ken McDonald attended the meeting. MPs Joanne Thompson and Churence Rogers sent regrets due to scheduling conflicts, but said they look forward to attending a future meeting.

During this meeting, Joanne Morrissey, branch director and branch advocacy liaison, led a discussion on Federal Retirees' advocacy priorities, including government actions to address these issues and where there is work to be done.

"We're always trying to increase the number of members who attend branch meetings, especially since COVID, when people started staying home," Morrissey says. "Having an MP attend as a guest speaker is a great way to draw more members to meetings and recruit new members. With MP McDonald in attendance, we did see an increase in [attendance.] This was a great opportunity for our members and our

MP to learn more about Federal Retirees' priorities, and for our members to hear from their MP."

When asked why advocacy is important to her as a Federal Retirees member, Morrissey answered: "MPs need to hear our voices and understand that all Canadians deserve to live out their retirement in dignity, and the government needs to address the issues that affect older adults."

Interested in inviting your MP to attend a branch meeting or other branch event? Email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca for help getting started.

Windsor and Area branch hosts MP

The Windsor & Area branch is focused on advocacy to raise awareness of the issues affected federal retirees, older adults and their loved ones.

As part of this important work, branch president Daniel Hébert invited Irek Kusmierczyk, MP for Windsor-Tecumseh, to attend the AGM in April to involve members in advocacy by providing them an opportunity to meet their MP.

Members asked Kusmierczyk questions about Federal Retirees' priorities using the *Questions to ask your MP* advocacy guide. This handy document was created at the request of Sharon McGovern, advocacy program officer (APO) for Western Ontario, in preparation for this meeting, to provide a starting point for members to begin discussions with their MP.

"A lot of people don't know what to ask, so this set of questions on the priorities can help," McGovern says.

During the meeting, members asked Kusmierczyk questions on health care, long-term care, a national seniors strategy and pensions.

The *Questions to ask your MP* document is available to all members and is useful when speaking with local MPs. This document can be easily

Colchester-East Hants branch president Mike Devine, right, met with Cumberland-Colchester MP Stephen Ellis when he was in Gatineau, Que., for the annual meeting of members.

viewed online, or printed, and includes questions to ask on all four Federal Retiree priorities — retirement security, a national seniors strategy, veteran well-being and pharmacare.

Want your own copy of *Questions to ask your MP?* Email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca.

Saskatoon volunteers hold MP meetings

Saskatoon branch acting president Christine Haynes and advocacy officer Shawna Murphy, along with Saskatchewan advocacy program officer Richard Simpson, met with MPs Corey Tochor and Kelly Block at their constituency offices in May.

Both meetings featured an overview of Federal Retirees' advocacy priorities, with a deeper focus on the topic of long-term care, including both institutional care and home supports as part of a continuum of care.

Wondering which MPs are in your branch's area? Ask your branch, or email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca to find out.

Nova Scotia volunteers meet with MPs on the Hill

While in Gatineau, Que., for the Federal Retirees' annual meeting of members (AMM), Cape Breton branch president James Wheelhouse, Nova Scotia



From left, Cape Breton branch president James Wheelhouse, MP Mike Kelloway and Nova Scotia advocacy program officer Michelle Langille on Parliament Hill.

advocacy program officer Michelle Langille and Colchester-East Hants branch president Mike Devine took the opportunity to meet with MPs on Parliament Hill.

"Michelle and I had a productive meeting with MP Mike Kelloway. We accomplished our goal of obtaining a commitment from the MP to reject legislation that would enable employers to walk away from their pension commitments. In addition, he committed to speaking with the key cabinet ministers regarding income security and a seniors strategy," Wheelhouse reports.

Interested in meeting your MP on Parliament Hill or locally? Email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca for tools, such as key messages and questions to ask.

Nanaimo and Area Branch wins award

The Nanaimo branch has worked hard to establish good relationships with its area MPs. Thanks to the branch's ongoing advocacy work, branch past-president Bob Willis and advocacy liaison Marg Smith attended a seniors' health-care roundtable in Qualicum Beach hosted by MP Gord Johns and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh.

Willis and Smith were two of just 10 community leaders invited to attend the roundtable. Read more about Nanaimo branch's advocacy award on page 45.

PROVINCIAL ADVOCACY

PEI branches hold townhalls for snap election

On March 6, Prince Edward Island called an election for April 3. And under the leadership of PEI advocacy program officer Anne MacEwen, branches rallied to pull off two successful events despite a very tight timeframe.

The Summerside branch hosted a townhall meeting that was very well attended, with Federal Retirees members and members of the public taking part.

Questions continued to flow after the formal question period, and several participants, together with all the candidates, remained at the event to continue their discussions.

The Charlottetown branch townhall was also well attended. And quite a few people — and all the candidates — stayed for nearly an hour after the event.

As a bonus, four members who attended this event asked about becoming volunteers themselves and joining the branch board.

Following the events, candidates thanked Federal Retirees for holding the townhalls and stated how much they appreciated the opportunity to speak with members.

Alberta branches hold candidates' forums

The Southern Alberta branch covers two provincial ridings. And so, for the Alberta election, it held one candidates' forum in April and a second in May, to help members hear from local candidates before voting.

Lethbridge-East candidates attended the first forum to share their party's position and answer questions related to Federal Retirees' priorities and issues seniors face. Lethbridge-West candidates attended the second forum.

Both events were held at the Nord-Bridge Seniors Centre and recorded by Shaw Media. These recordings were shared on the Federal Retirees website for all Alberta members to watch.

Up next: Manitoba election

Manitobans will head to the polls by Oct. 3, and Federal Retirees is running an advocacy campaign to make sure its priorities are heard by candidates.

Contact your local branch, or email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca, to learn how you can make sure the next Manitoba government has a plan for older adult care. ■

Amy Baldry is Federal Retirees' advocacy co-ordinator.



Solving the primary care crisis

Canada is spending record amounts of money on health care in the post-pandemic landscape, so why are Canadians still facing challenges accessing it? **BY HEIDI MODRO**

Canada's 2023 federal budget provided an investment to provinces and territories of \$198.3 billion, which includes \$46.2 billion in new funding to support the country's public health-care system. As such, health spending was expected to reach \$331 billion in 2022, or \$8,563 per Canadian citizen.

Provinces are also collectively still spending higher amounts on health care than they were four years ago. Yet, many Canadians are still having problems getting a prescription renewed, or a referral to see a specialist and are often still waiting several weeks or even months for critically essential surgery. Polls have consistently shown that large numbers of Canadians report that they experience difficulties accessing specialists, primary care, emergency care, surgeries and diagnostic testing.

Canadians were already facing serious challenges getting access to basic and specialized care prior to the pandemic, but the situation has by all accounts since worsened. One in five Canadians or a total of 6.5 million do not have access

to either a family doctor or a nurse practitioner. Those statistics are even higher in the Maritimes, B.C. and Quebec, where one third of the population doesn't have access to a primary care specialist.

"Care was delayed during the pandemic and we're starting to see significantly more demand and more problems within the overall health-care system. However, there's no physician who currently would identify money as the only problem within the system," says Lawrence Loh, a medical doctor and the executive director and CEO of the College of Family Physicians of Canada. "Money is critical, but where and how money is spent is also extremely important."

The Commonwealth Fund's recent 2022 International Health Policy Survey of Primary Care Physicians found that 75 per cent of physicians said they believe "the quality of care patients receive throughout the health-care system had worsened since March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began."

Family doctors are often feeling the

brunt of a failing health-care system. Half of Canadian family physicians also reported they were experiencing burnout while 52 per cent of primary care doctors said that they would soon stop seeing patients. Many already have.

Canadians value their health-care system. While some would argue that more private delivery is a solution, those beliefs should be examined in light of compromising the principle of universal and equitable health care for all citizens.

Yet, the question remains: Are there ways to reform the system and make it run more efficiently? Loh points to the need for better funding for primary care as an obvious solution. The College of Family Physicians of Canada reports that 70 per cent of health-care services are delivered by family practices. Yet, Canadian family physicians get only 13.6 per cent of Canada's overall public health-care funding.

"Traditionally, health-care funding goes to hospitals," Loh says. "But if people received better care in their communities, they wouldn't need to go as often to an emergency room and to a hospital."

What needs to happen

The answer according to medical advocacy groups such as the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and the College of Family Physicians of Canada lies in pursuing administrative reforms and providing better support to family practices. These groups suggest creating interprofessional collaborative teams with general practitioners (GPs) and nurse practitioners who are connected to teams of health specialists, such as dietitians, registered nurses, physiotherapists and mental health specialists. In addition, more emphasis needs to be placed on reducing the administrative burden on GPs by reducing the need to do non-critical paperwork.

"We're relying on just one person to do everything from carrying out complex health-care operations

without the resources to do so," says Katherine Smart, past president of the CMA. "We need more integrated care where GPs work in teams where they get the support from other health-care specialists. There's also a big need for better home care and long-term care, which would also benefit primary care."

Advocacy groups also point to the need to support national licensure for physicians, allowing physicians to work across provincial and territorial borders. In addition, there is a need to reform the remuneration system for doctors so they are paid more fairly for their work and for treating more complex cases.

Surgeries have been another cause of concern in terms of accessing the health-care system.

There were 937,000 (14 per cent) fewer surgeries performed in Canada during the first 31 months of the pandemic, for example. While there are improvements in terms of tackling the backlog of surgeries for cancer and hip fracture operations in particular, wait times for joint replacement surgeries

remain on average higher than prior to the pandemic. In 2022, only half of patients had a knee replacement within a six-month time frame and only 60 per cent of patients had a hip replacement within the target wait time of 182 days.

"Right now, surgeons are working 80 to 100 hours a week and hospitals are working at 100 per cent capacity across the country," says Sean Cleary, president of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons, which represents 2,500 members across the country.

Cleary added that many provinces reduced the number of hospital beds during the 1980s and 1990s, which was probably the right decision at the time. However, the system's capacity hasn't kept track with Canada's growing and aging population and the fact that many hospital beds are now occupied by patients with complex and chronic conditions.

Cleary believes surgical care can't be delivered in a vacuum and that the entire public health-care system needs to be enhanced so that there is

better collaboration between surgeons, hospitals and community care.

A final and often overlooked aspect of the Canadian health-care system has been the need for more nurses.

According to a 2021 Statistics Canada report, there are 32,295 regulated nursing positions that were vacant then, with nearly half of these vacancies remaining open for 90 days or more. A followup report in 2022 showed that one in four nurses (24.4 per cent) planned to change or leave in the next three years due to workplace stress.

"A lot of surgeries are not being performed in Canada due to a lack of staff," Smart says. "The lack of nurses plays a big part in surgical staffing shortages."

However, the health-care landscape isn't all bleak in Canada.

"We are moving forward," Loh says. "There is an overall recognition that the system needs fixing." ■

Heidi Modro worked as an advocacy officer for Federal Retirees.

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A continuing legacy of anguish

Federal Retirees surveyed members on their experiences with the Phoenix pay system. Close to 1,300 responded, nearly half of whom had been overpaid or underpaid. **BY PATRICK IMBEAU**



On Feb. 24, 2016, the first phase of the Phoenix pay system rolled out to 34 federal departments and 120,000 employees. On April 21, the second phase added 67 departments and 170,000 employees. Soon, it came to light that one-third of employees had an error in their paycheques. By December 2017, the backlog at the pay centre exceeded 600,000 transactions awaiting processing. This affected employees and retirees who would find themselves waiting years for severance pay and other adjustments.

Seven years later, the issues persist, plaguing thousands of our members.

In December 2022, Federal Retirees sent out a survey to the members who had joined since Phoenix was implemented to ask them about their experiences, their stories — to understand how they had been and continued to be affected by Phoenix. More than 1,300 responded. Nearly 70 per cent of respondents said they experienced an issue related to Phoenix.

These issues were wide ranging, though the most common ones were regular pay (46 per cent had an issue with being properly paid and of those, half were underpaid and the balance were overpaid) while 38 per cent reported their severance had not been paid out. Other issues included deductions (25 per cent) and pension calculations (21 per cent), acting pay (21 per cent) and group insurance (4 per cent.) Slightly more than a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) reported being contacted to resolve an overpayment after retirement. Many participants (28 per cent) reported having “other issues,” which included unpaid overtime, shift premium issues, or leave-without-pay issues. There were 150 custom responses — too many to list here.

Members feel betrayed. From issues that began while they were still employees, to those that have lingered for half a decade or more, they feel a serious breach of trust with their

former employer. They don’t trust their calculations, they don’t trust the letters they’d received from them, they don’t trust them to pay them properly. Confidence and faith in their employer has been shattered.

When the Phoenix pay system was planned, the hope was that it would reduce a burden. It would simplify a complex compensation approach and provide the government with some cost-cutting measures. Careless decisions in planning and implementation led to the initial issues, but that we continue to be in the midst of issues, seven years later, is egregious.

The problems are wide-ranging and the stories are heart-breaking. So many new retirees delayed or abandoned vacations, renovations and help for their children to afford a home. All the things we dream of in retirement were replaced with stress and anxiety.

Some members had to leave the public service as they dealt with issues that were already hard (compassionate care leave, leave related to critical illness, medical retirement, etc.) and found their stress compounded by a Phoenix issue, adding financial stress in one of the most difficult times of their lives.

That it has been seven years and that these issues still linger is unacceptable. No other Canadian employer would be allowed to be so cavalier about their active and former employees’ compensation.

The damage that has been done will take a long time to heal, but the government could begin repairing that relationship by addressing these issues with compassion and speed. ■

Patrick Imbeau is an advocacy and policy officer at Federal Retirees.



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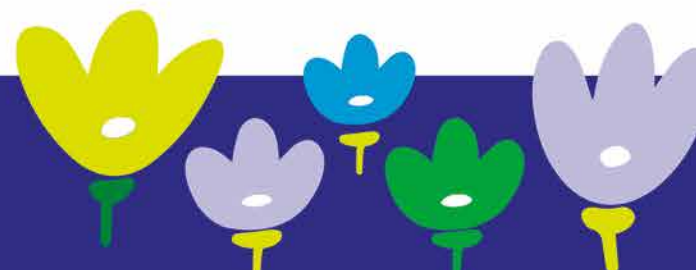
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- Preparing for meetings in advance to allow for positive participation in discussions;
- Serving on one or more board committees and participating actively in committee work;
- Overseeing the Association's finances and helping the board to fulfil its fiduciary responsibilities; and
- Representing the Association as required and supporting its advocacy and policy positions.

Application process

In 2024, the following four three-year positions will be open for election: vice-president, and directors from the Prairies and Northwest Territories, Ontario, and Ottawa and Nunavut. Nominations for these positions open Oct. 19, 2023.

If you're interested in joining the National Association of Federal Retirees' board of directors and lending your voice to speak for the security of retirement for our members and all Canadians, or if you would like more information, please email elections@federalretirees.ca to contact the nominating committee.

The nominations process closes on March 27, 2024.



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The latest news



APEX Award winner

Congratulations to Curtis Jackson, winner of the Federal Retirees-sponsored 2023 APEX Career Contribution Award, who has spent his career serving Canadians. Beginning with Corrections Canada in 1992, he has multiple impressive roles. In May 2016, he was appointed assistant deputy commissioner of correctional operations for the Ontario Region, where he continues to achieve significant results.

Jackson also serves his community by supporting a mentoring program for middle managers in his region and continues to make a difference through his dedication to transforming corrections and strengthening public safety.

The award was presented in person by Federal Retirees president Roy Goodall at the annual APEX Awards of Excellence ceremony May 30.

Johnson rebrands to belairdirect

Starting this fall, Johnson Insurance's car and home division will gradually re-brand to belairdirect to offer an enhanced customer experience for members. MEDOC® travel insurance will undergo a similar re-branding later in 2024. Coupled with the company's unwavering commitment to its affinity partners, customers and community, this exercise will offer an enhanced customer experience to members, along with best-in-class insurance.

Welcome new directors

Three nominees got the nod to serve the Association on the national board of directors after voting took place at the 2023 AMM held in Gatineau, Que.



Scott Hodge

Director, District of British Columbia & Yukon

Beginning in 1980 as a radio technician with the Canadian Armed Forces,

Scott Hodge progressed through increasingly responsible roles with the Canadian Coast Guard and the Department of National Defence before returning to the Canadian Armed Forces in 2019. In addition to his extensive military experience, Hodge also brings a passion for volunteerism, having advocated to protect and expand the rights of federal public servants for more than 25 years.



Dan Butler

Director, District of Ottawa & Nunavut

Dan Butler spent his 42-year career as a labour negotiator and a neutral arbitrator

supporting the federal public service. As general secretary of the National Joint Council, he played a leadership role in bringing representatives of the Association into PSHCP negotiations as a full partner. His considerable experience in effective communication and

From left: Daryell Nowlan, chairman of the APEX board of directors; winner Curtis Jackson; and Federal Retirees president Roy Goodall.

advocacy was welcomed by the Ottawa Branch board.



Pierre Bilodeau
Director, District of Quebec

When he retired in 2012, Pierre Bilodeau held a leadership position within the policy integration

directorship of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Throughout his career, he took on various roles, including credit risk manager, district manager, loans officer, business process re-engineering team member, internal auditor and financial consultant. In 2021, Bilodeau brought his expertise in co-ordination and leadership to the Montreal Branch.



Brenda Teed
Director, District of Atlantic

Brenda Teed's public service career was spent in the administration of the public service

pension plan within Public Works and Government Services Canada. During her career, she honed her analytical, strategic and decision-making skills in various positions before retiring from a leadership role with the senior executive committee of the Government of Canada Pension Centre. Teed became president of the South-East New Brunswick Branch in 2021.

Please join us in welcoming our new board members and in thanking our departing board members — Megan Williams (Atlantic), Jacques Lambert (Quebec), Daniel Brunet (Ottawa & Nunavut) and Brian Strongman (B.C. & Yukon) — for giving generously of their time and expertise during a particularly

challenging period for the Association and for all Canadians.

Canada Life transition



Many members have faced serious challenges with the transition of the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) to Canada Life. We had hoped the transition would be seamless, but for many, it was not and the situation intensified when Canada Life became the PSHCP provider on July 1.

There have been communication challenges. For example, Canada Life failed to notify some members about the transition. We have also learned of processing delays for paper enrolment forms, website challenges, a failure to include some partners/spouses and difficulties and unexpected payments at pharmacies.

Members have encountered significant wait times at the Canada Life call centre or have been completely unable to reach an agent to correct problems or answer questions. Although the PSHCP contract is between Treasury Board and Canada Life, we are working to help members sort out their problems. At our end, there have also been delays because of the high volume of calls and emails (700 in one week in July, for example).

The Association has escalated its concerns with Canada Life's service to Treasury Board. We met with staff at the office of the Treasury Board president, and Association president Roy Goodall has requested a meeting of the PSHCP Partners Committee to address these

issues. We're assured that the Treasury Board president spoke with the president of Canada Life to share concerns and hear directly what the company is doing to improve service. Improvements should be forthcoming and we will continue to advocate for our members on this file.

Vax up!



Keeping current on vaccinations is important to the health of all Canadians, but especially older adults. As fall arrives, it's time to consult with your health-care provider and see what you need to protect yourself and those you love. While COVID-19 vaccinations have taken centre stage the last few years, it's important to remember that flu, shingles and pneumococcal vaccines (to name a few) are just as essential. For general information on vaccines, visit the Government of Canada website at www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccination-adults.html

Have your say

Keep an eye on your email for our 2023 member engagement survey. We value your input and put a premium on your feedback for strategic planning. In early 2020, 18,524 members participated. This time, we're hoping for even more members, so if you haven't shared your email address with us, call our member services team at 1 (855) 304-4700. They will also send you a paper copy of the survey. ■

Cross-Canada roundup

1 The 2023-24 National Association of Federal Retirees board of directors. Front row, from left: H el ene Nadeau, Roy Goodall, Connie Kehler and Andr ee Lise Provost. Second row: Brenda Teed, Carol Grieco, Dan Butler, Roland Wells and Pierre Bilodeau. Back row: Rick Brick, Scott Hodge, Michael Jolicoeur and Ted Young. Absent: Michael Fine.

Photo: Dave Chan



2 Mark Peters of Johnson Insurance addresses the audience on hand at the 2023 volunteer recognition dinner.

Photo: Dave Chan



3 Steve Sawchuck, branch service co-ordinator for Western B.C. and Yukon, speaks at the 60th anniversary banquet jointly hosted by the Central Fraser Valley and Chilliwack branches.



4 Award winners from the Outaouais branch, from left: Michael MacNeil, Donald D ery and Jacques Lecomte.



5 Attendees get into the '60s spirit at the 2023 annual meeting of members' volunteer celebration.

Photo: Dave Chan

6 On hand for the South-East New Brunswick branch's 60th anniversary banquet are, from left, L eonard LeBlanc, Jodi Wilks, Megan Williams, Roy Goodall, Linda Trenholm, Sheila Huntley, Norma-Jeanne Lavoie, Paul Cassidy, Eileen Whyte, Dorothy Burns, Brenda Teed and Lise Bourque.



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Your branch in brief

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BC05 NANAIMO AND AREA

P.O. Box 485
Lantzville, B.C. V0R 2H0
(250) 248-2027
ashdown@shaw.ca

BC06 NORTH ISLAND-JOHN FINN

P.O. Box 1420
Comox, B.C. V9M 7Z9
1-855-304-4700
nijf.ca
info@nijf.ca

BC07 CENTRAL OKANAGAN

P.O. Box 20186
RPO Towne Centre, Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 9H2
(250) 712-6213
federalretirees.ca/centralokanagan
centralokanagan@federalretirees.ca

BC08 VANCOUVER AND YUKON

4445 Norfolk St.
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 0A7
(604) 681-4742
fsnavan@shaw.ca

60th anniversary celebration: Sept. 12,
Italian Cultural Centre, 3075 Slocan St.,
Vancouver

Christmas luncheon: Dec. 7, Italian
Cultural Centre, 3075 Slocan St.,
Vancouver

BC09 VICTORIA-FRED WHITEHOUSE

c/o Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 292
411 Gorge Rd. E., Victoria, B.C. V8T 2W1
(250) 385-3393
victoriafredwhitehouse@federalretirees.ca



BC10 SOUTH OKANAGAN

696 Main St., Penticton, B.C. V2A 5C8
(250) 493-6799
s.okanagan@federalretirees.ca

BC11 OKANAGAN NORTH

5321 21 St., Vernon, B.C. V1T 9Y6
(250) 549-4152
federalretirees.ca/northokanagan
okanagannorthbr11@federalretirees.ca


Volunteer fair: Sept. 23, 10 a.m.,
Schubert Center, 3505 30 Ave., Vernon

General meeting and lunch: Sept. 24,
ANAVETS Unit 5, 2500 46 Ave., Vernon,
details TBD by email —  


Seniors fair: Oct. 6, Schubert Center,
3505 30 Ave., Vernon

BC12 KAMLOOPS

P.O. Box 1397 STN Main
Kamloops, B.C. V2C 6L7
(250) 571-5007
kamloopsoffice@gmail.com

60th anniversary luncheon: Sept 20,
11 a.m., 730 Cottonwood Ave., Kamloops
— 

General meeting: Nov 15, 11 a.m.,
730 Cottonwood Ave., Kamloops

Christmas luncheon: Dec 6, 11 a.m.,
730 Cottonwood Ave., Kamloops — 

Volunteers wanted: communications
director, events coordinator

BC13 KOOTENAY

396 Wardner-Fort Steele Rd.
Fort Steele, B.C. V0B 1N0
(250) 919-9348
federalretireeskootenay@gmail.com

General meeting: Sept. 19, noon, Prestige
Lakeside Inn, 1301 Front St., Nelson —

  +1

General meeting: Nov. 21, noon, Creston
Hotel, 1418 Canyon St., Creston —

  +1

BC14 SIDNEY AND DISTRICT

P.O. Box 2607 STN Main
Sidney, B.C. V8L 4C1
(250) 385-3393
federalretirees.sidneybc@gmail.com

BC15 PRINCE GEORGE

P.O. Box 2882 Station B
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4T7
federalretirees.ca/princegeorge
princegeorgebranch@federalretirees.ca

General meeting: Sept. 25, 12:30 p.m.,
Elder Citizen's Recreation Centre,
1692 10 Ave., Prince George

**60th anniversary and RCMP 150
celebration:** Oct. 18, 10 a.m., Prince
George Senior Centre, 425 Brunswick St.,
Prince George

Alberta

AB16 CALGARY AND DISTRICT

302-1133 7 Ave. S.W.
Calgary, Alta. T2P 1B2
(403) 265-0773
federalretirees.ca/calgary
calgarybranch@federalretirees.ca

LEGEND

For detailed information,
contact your branch.



– Food will
be served.



– Guest speaker.



– There is a charge for
members and guests.
Dollar amounts presented
indicate pricing.

RSVP – RSVP is required; deadline
indicated by date. Contact
the noted telephone
number or email address.

+1 – Guests and
prospective members
are welcome to
attend this event.

Members' meeting: Nov. 24, 10:30 a.m.
Carriage House Hotel and Conference
Centre, Windsor Ballroom, 9030 Macleod
Trail, Calgary

**AB17 EDMONTON AND
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9
(780) 413-4687
1-855-376-2336
federalretirees.ca/edmonton
edmonton@federalretirees.ca

AB18 SOUTHERN ALBERTA

Nord-Bridge Senior Centre
8-1904 13 Ave. N.
Lethbridge, Alta. T1H 4W9
(403) 328-0801
nafr18@shaw.ca

Volunteers wanted: contact branch
for more info

AB19 RED DEER

c/o 126-4512 52 Ave.
Red Deer, Alta. T4N 7B9
(587) 877-1110
federalretirees.ca/reddeer
reddeer@federalretirees.ca

AB20 MEDICINE HAT AND DISTRICT

865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9
(403) 952-7110 (voicemail/text)
medicinehatbranch@federalretirees.ca

AB21 BATTLE RIVER

17124 Township Rd. 514
RR2, Ryley, Alta. T0B 4A0
(780) 663-2045
cvhyde@mcsnet.ca

AB92 LAKELAND

P.O. Box 1391, STN Main
Cold Lake, Alta. T9M 1P3
(780) 594-3961
louethel@telusplanet.net

Saskatchewan

SK22 NORTHWEST SASKATCHEWAN

161 Riverbend Cres.
Battleford, Sask. S0M 0E0
(306) 441-1819
tbgs@sasktel.net

SK23 MOOSE JAW

c/o Jeff Wall
267 Wellington Dr.
Moose Jaw, Sask. S6K 1C5
(306) 693-3848
mcwall@sasktel.net

SK24 REGINA AND AREA

112-2001 Cornwall St.
Regina, Sask. S4P 3X9
(306) 359-3762
regina@federaretirees.ca

SK25 SASKATOON AND AREA

P.O. Box 3063 STN Main
Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 3S9
(306) 374-5450
(306) 373-5812
federalretirees.ca/saskatoon
saskatoon@federalretirees.ca

SK26 PRINCE ALBERT AND DISTRICT

P.O. Box 211
Candle Lake, Sask. S0J 3E0
(306) 314-5644
gents@sasktel.net

SK29 SWIFT CURRENT

847 Field Dr.
Swift Current, Sask. S9H 4H8
(306) 773-5068
leyshon@sasktel.net

Manitoba

MB30 WESTERN MANITOBA

311 Park Ave. E.
Brandon, Man. R7A 7A4
federalretirees.ca/western-manitoba
westernmanitoba@federalretirees.ca

MB31 WINNIPEG AND DISTRICT

526-3336 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, Man. R3K 2H9
(204) 989-2061
nafrwpg@mymts.net

MB32 CENTRAL MANITOBA

12 Radisson Ave.
Portage La Prairie, Man. R1N 1A9
(204) 856-0662
r1n1a9gj@gmail.com

MB91 EASTERN MANITOBA

P.O. Box 55
Pinawa, Man. R0E 1L0
(204) 753-8402
nafr-mb91@hotmail.com
ttveiv@mts.net

Ontario

ON33 ALGONQUIN VALLEY

P.O. Box 1930
Deep River, Ont. K0J 1P0
(613) 735-4939 (president)
fsnaalgonquinvalley.com
vhulley@nrtco.net
avb.on33@gmail.com

ON34 PEEL-HALTON AND AREA

1235 Trafalgar Rd.
P.O. Box 84018
Oakville, Ont. L6H 5V7
(905) 858-3770
(905) 824-4853
federalretirees.ca/peel-halton
nafrtreasureron34@gmail.com

ON35 HURONIA

80 Bradford St., Barrie, Ont. L4N 6S7
1-855-304-4700
federalretirees.ca/huronia
huronia@federalretirees.ca (RSVP)

Fall AGM: Oct. 24, 10:30 a.m.,
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 147,
410 St. Vincent St., Barrie — **\$7 RSVP**

ON36 BLUEWATER

P.O. Box 263 STN Main
Sarnia, Ont. N7T 7H9
(226) 886-6599
federalretirees.ca/bluewater
bluewaterbranch@federalretirees.ca

Volunteers wanted: secretary, volunteer
recruitment and engagement director,
program coordinator, advocacy program
officer, French translator

ON37 HAMILTON AND AREA

14 Highland Park Dr.
Dundas, Ont. L9H 3L8
(905) 627-3827
hamiltonarea@federalretirees.ca

ON38 KINGSTON AND DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1172
Kingston, Ont. K7L 4Y8
1-866-729-3762
(613) 542-9832 (information)
federalretirees.ca/kingston
nafrkingston@gmail.com

**ON39 KITCHENER-WATERLOO
AND DISTRICT**

c/o 865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9
(519) 742-9031
federalretirees.ca/kitchenerwaterloo
kitchenerwaterloo@federalretirees.ca

Members' meeting: Nov. 1, 10:30 a.m.,
20 Tyson Dr., Kitchener — **\$29 RSVP** Oct. 13

ON40 LONDON

865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9
(519) 439-3762 (voicemail)
londonbranch@federalretirees.ca

ON41 NIAGARA PENINSULA

P.O. Box 235
Jordan Station, Ont. L0R 1S0
(289) 969-5414
nafrsecretaryniabranh41@outlook.com

ON43 OTTAWA, NUNAVUT AND INTERNATIONAL

2285 St. Laurent Blvd., Unit B-2
Ottawa, Ont. K1G 4Z5
(613) 737-2199
nafrottawa.com
facebook.com/nafrottawa
info@nafrottawa.com

ON44 PETERBOROUGH AND AREA

P.O. Box 2216 STN Main
Peterborough, Ont. K9J 7Y4
(705) 786-0222
jabrown471@outlook.com

ON45 QUINTE

132 Pinnacle St. (Legion)
P.O. Box 20074
Belleville, Ont. K8N 3A4
(613) 968-7212
quintebranch@federalretirees.ca

ON46 QUINTRENT


77 Campbell St.
Trenton, Ont. K8V 3A2
(613) 394-4633
federalsupernet@bellnet.ca

ON47 TORONTO AND AREA

P.O. Box 65120 RPO Chester
Toronto, Ont. M4K 3Z2
(416) 463-4384
fsna@on.aibn.com

ON48 THUNDER BAY AND AREA

P.O. Box 29153 RPO McIntyre Centre
Thunder Bay, Ont. P7B 6P9
(807) 624-4274
nafrmb48@gmail.com

Fall recruitment meeting: Sept. 19,
11:30 a.m., Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 5, 229 Van Norman St.,
Thunder Bay — 

ON49 WINDSOR AND AREA

207A-1995 Normandy St.
Lasalle, Ont. N9H 1P9
(519) 982-6963
nafron49weck@gmail.com

ON50 NEAR NORTH

P.O. Box 982 STN Main
North Bay, Ont. P1B 8K3
(705) 498-0570
nearnorth50@gmail.com

ON52 ALGOMA

P.O. Box 167
Echo Bay, Ont. P0S 1C0
(705) 248-3301
lm.macdonald@sympatico.ca

ON53 OTTAWA VALLEY

P.O. Box 20133
Perth, Ont. K7H 3M6
(343) 341-2687
federalretirees.ca/ottawavalley
ottawavalley@federalretirees.ca

ON54 CORNWALL AND DISTRICT

P.O. Box 28
Long Sault, Ont. K0C 1P0
(613) 327-7384
federalretirees.cornwall@gmail.com



ON55 YORK

865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9
1-855-304-4700 (general)
(905) 505-2079 (branch)
federalretirees.ca/york
federalretirees.york@gmail.com

ON56 HURON NORTH

34 Highland Cres.
Capreol, Ont. P0M 1H0
(705) 618-9762
federalretirees.ca/huron
huronnorth56@gmail.com

Recruitment and engagement barbecue

luncheon: Sept. 27, noon, Royal Canadian
Legion Branch 76, 1533 Weller St., Sudbury
—   **+1 RSVP**

Volunteers wanted: treasurer

Quebec


QC57 QUEBEC

162-660 57^e rue O.
Quebec, Que. G1H 7L8
1-866-661-4896
(418) 661-4896
anrf-sq.org
facebook.com/retraitesfederauxquebec
anrf@bellnet.ca


QC58 MONTREAL

300-1940 boul. Henri-Bourassa E.
Montreal, Que. H2B 1S1
(514) 381-8824
anrfmontreal.ca
facebook.com/retraitesfederauxmtl
info@anrfmontreal.ca

Protective measures, assistance and representation for adults (in French):

Sept. 19, 1:30 p.m., 5000 Sherbrooke St. E.,
Montreal — \$0 

Protection mandates, homologation and protection plans (in French): November,

1:30 p.m., Laval, details TBD by email —
\$0 

QC59 CANTONS DE L'EST

1871 rue Galt O.
Sherbrooke, Que. J1K 1J5
(819) 829-1403
info@anrf-cantons.ca


QC60 OUTAOUAIS


115-331 boul. de la Cité-des-Jeunes
Gatineau, Que. J8Y 6T3
(819) 776-4128
admin@anrf-outaouais.ca


QC61 MAURICIE


C.P. 1231
Shawinigan, Que. G9P 4E8
(819) 537-9295
(873) 664-5625
federalretirees.ca/mauricie
anrf.mauricie@gmail.com
anrf-mauricie.adhesion@outlook.fr
activites.anrf.mauricie@gmail.com

Branch trip: Sept. 6, Huron Traditional Site
Wendake and Aquarium of Quebec

Breakfast: Sept. 13, 9 a.m., Maman
Fournier Restaurant, 3125 boul. des
Récollets, Trois-Rivières — 

Breakfast: Oct. 10, 9 a.m., Chez Auger
Restaurant, 493, 5e rue de la Pointe,
Shawinigan — 

Breakfast: Nov. 8, 9 a.m., Maman Fournier
Restaurant, 3125 boul. des Récollets,
Trois-Rivières — 

Holiday dinner: Nov. 29, 5 p.m.,
Metaberoutin Golf Club Hall, 5 chem. de
l'île St-Joseph, Trois-Rivières — 

QC93 HAUTE-YAMASKA

C.P. 25 SUCC Bureau-Chef
Granby, Que. J2G 8E2
(450) 915-2311
haute-yamaska@retraitesfederaux.ca

New Brunswick

NB62 FREDERICTON AND DISTRICT

P.O. Box 30068 RPO Prospect Plaza
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 0H8
(506) 451-2111
federalretirees.ca/fredericton
facebook.com/branchnb62
nafrfred.nb62@gmail.com

NB63 MIRAMICHI

4470 Water St.
Miramichi, N.B. E1N 4L8
(506) 625-9931
smithrd@nb.sympatico.ca

NB64 SOUTH-EAST NB

281 St. George St.
P.O. Box 1768 STN Main
Moncton, N.B. E1C 9X6
(506) 855-8349
southeastnb@federalretirees.ca

NB65 FUNDY SHORES

P.O. Box 935 STN Main
Saint John, N.B. E2L 4E3
(506) 529-3164
fsna65@gmail.com

NB67 UPPER VALLEY

4-105 Lewis P. Fisher Lane
Woodstock, N.B. E7M 0G6
(506) 594-1194
gloglaw@gmail.com

Members' meeting: Oct. 2, 10:30 a.m.,
Florenceville Kin Centre, 381 Centreville Rd.,
Florenceville-Bristol — **🍴 +1**

NB68 CHALEUR REGION

2182 Ch. Val-Doucet
Val-Doucet, N.B. E8R 1Z6
(506) 764-3495
japaulin@rogers.com

Nova Scotia**NS71 SOUTH SHORE**

100 High St., P.O. Box 214
Bridgewater, N.S. B4V 1V9
1-855-304-4700
nafnrs71pres@gmail.com

NS72 COLCHESTER-EAST HANTS

865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9
(902) 662-4082
(902) 986-8996
colchester-easthants@federalretirees.ca

NS73 NOVA SCOTIA CENTRAL

503-73 Tacoma Dr.
Dartmouth, N.S. B2W 3Y6
(902) 463-1431 (RSVP)
nafn@bellaliant.com

National Seniors Day celebration:

Oct. 1, 2 p.m., Rosaria Student Centre,
Multi-Purpose Room, 166 Bedford Hwy.,
Bedford — **\$0 🍴 👤 RSVP** Sept. 12

60th anniversary celebration: Oct. 25,
11 a.m., Best Western Plus, 15 Spectacle
Lake Dr., Dartmouth — **\$20 🍴 RSVP** Oct. 19

NS75 WESTERN NOVA SCOTIA

Box 1131, Middleton, N.S. B0S 1P0
(902) 765-8590
federalretirees.ca/western-nova-scotia
nafn75@gmail.com

60th anniversary fall meeting:

Oct. 16, 11:30 a.m., Digby Pine Resort,
103 Shore Rd., Digby — **\$25 🍴**
👤 RSVP Sept. 22

Christmas dinner: Dec. 7, 11:30 a.m.,
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 98,
1472 Veterans Lane, Kingston — **\$14 🍴**
RSVP Nov. 22

NS77 CAPE BRETON

P.O. Box 785
Sydney, N.S. B1P 6J1
(902) 567-6156
wheelhouse@seaside.ns.ca

Fall members' meeting: Oct. 27, 2:30 p.m.,
Steelworker's Pensioners Hall, 30 Inglis St.,
Sydney — **\$10 🍴 👤 RSVP**

NS78 CUMBERLAND

P.O. Box 303
Parrsboro, N.S. B0M 1S0
(902) 661-0596
gerard.cormier@ns.sympatico.ca
carose1948@gmail.com

NS79 ORCHARD VALLEY

P.O. Box 815 STN Main
Kentville, N.S. B4N 4H8
1-855-304-4700
tandrcross@outlook.com

NS80 NORTH NOVA

P.O. Box 924 STN Main
New Glasgow, N.S. B2H 5K7
(902) 485-5119
margaret.thompson@bellaliant.net

Prince Edward Island**PE82 CHARLOTTETOWN**

P.O. Box 1686 STN Central
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7N4
1-855-304-4700
federalretireescharlottetown@gmail.com (RSVP)

Seniors conference: Oct. 24, 9:30 a.m.,
Holy Redeemer's Jack Blanchard Parish
Centre, 7 Pond St., Charlottetown —
\$0 🍴 👤 RSVP

Christmas gala dinner and entertainment:

Nov. 21, 6 p.m., Holy Redeemer's Jack
Blanchard Parish Centre, 7 Pond St.,
Charlottetown — **\$20 🍴 👤**

PE83 SUMMERSIDE

194 Spruce Way
O'Leary, P.E.I. C0B 1V0
(902) 214-0475
summersidepe83@gmail.com

Newfoundland and Labrador**NL85 WESTERN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

P.O. Box 128
Howley, N.L. A0K 3E0
(709) 639-5350
wayneronaldbenett@gmail.com

Stephenville fall luncheon: Details TBD
— **\$5**

Port aux Basques fall luncheon: Oct 18,
noon, location TBD — **\$5**

Deer Lake fall luncheon: Nov. 1, noon,
Pizza Delight, 14 Commerce St., Deer Lake
— **\$5 🍴 👤**

NL86 CENTRAL NEWFOUNDLAND

132A Bayview St.
Twillingate, N.L. A0G 4M0
(709) 884-2862
wlkjenkins@personainternet.com

NL87 AVALON-BURIN PENINSULA

P.O. Box 21124 RPO MacDonald Dr.
St. John's, N.L. A1A 5B2
(709) 745-4517
richard.sparkes@nf.sympatico.ca

General meeting: Sept. 20, 2 p.m.,
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1,
57 Blackmarsh Road, St. John's — **👤**

Annual barbecue and dance: Sept. 29,
6:30 p.m., Freemasons Hall, 100 Masonic
Dr., Mount Pearl — **\$35 🍴**

General meeting: Oct. 11, 11 a.m.,
Conception Bay N., details TBD — **🍴 👤**

General meeting: Nov. 15, 2 p.m.,
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1,
57 Blackmarsh Road, St. John's — **\$ 👤**

Annual Christmas dinner and dance:
Dec. 1, 7 p.m., Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 1, 57 Blackmarsh Road, St. John's
— **\$ 🍴**

Volunteers wanted: branch secretary

LEGEND

For detailed information,
contact your branch.



– Food will
be served.



– Guest speaker.



– There is a charge for
members and guests.
Dollar amounts presented
indicate pricing.



– RSVP is required; deadline
indicated by date. Contact
the noted telephone
number or email address.



– Guests and
prospective members
are welcome to
attend this event.

In memoriam

BC02 CHILLIWACK

Shirley Bellamy
Erik Olson

BC04 FRASER VALLEY WEST

Elinor Sanders
George Will

BC06 NORTH ISLAND-JOHN FINN

Bruce Barnes
Jack Campbell
Margaret Crites
Leonard Erler
Ralph Hogarth
John McLellan

BC07 CENTRAL OKANAGAN

Adair Banerd
Derril Mann
Ronald Huybers
James Shackleton
Kenneth Sinclair
Lloyd Sveinson

BC08 VANCOUVER

Derek Booker
Garry Elwood
Buchanan
Sheila Cox
Mary Cecelia Hobbs
Doris Irvine
Berthe Jean Lambert
Doreen Malinowsky
Ryan Ralph
Francis Square-Briggs
Grace L. Unger

BC09 VICTORIA-FRED WHITEHOUSE

David Appleby
Shirley Ball
Dorothea Brealey
Elizabeth Denbigh
Lorraine Doyle
Robert Ferguson

Ruth Ferguson
Mary Jean Findlay
Arthur Fraser
Bill Graham
Ivy Graham
C. J. Grills
Robert Gruno
Roy Hyndman
Walter King
Joanne Manley
Mona Olmstead
Sterling Ross
Jacqueline Rush
Marion Savage
Bruce Steel
Robert Siberry
Lucille Stewart
Jacqueline Van Campen
Roger Wheelock
Charles Woods

BC10 SOUTH OKANAGAN

Frances Ehrler
Stephen Horvath
Kevin Ritcey

BC11 OKANAGAN NORTH

Francis Dennis
Tucker

BC15 PRINCE GEORGE

Hennie Cook

AB20 MEDICINE HAT

Alan Harink
Darlene Kemp
Kathleen Kottmeier
George A. (Sandy) Morrice
Michael E. Sawicki

AB92 LAKELAND

Lynn Danforth
Stephen Simmons

SK25 SASKATOON AND AREA

Michael Caswell
Sherry Lynn Parker

MB30 WESTERN MANITOBA

Dennis Affleck
Sharon Anne Brooks
Joan Brown
R. A. Carter
Joseph Chamberlain
Albert Dunham
Joyce Gawletz
F. J. Keilback
W. H. McMillan
Nelson St-Pierre

ON36 BLUEWATER

Brian Palmer

ON38 KINGSTON AND DISTRICT

Todd Cole
Anna Christena Lee Ehler
Francis (Fran) Irene Kraus
Beverlie (Bev) MacKenzie
Jacolyn (Jacki) Mary McCabe
Hastings Freeman Purney
Robert (Bob) William Senior

ON39 KITCHENER-WATERLOO AND DISTRICT

Mary Jane Hundt
Mary Nowak
Vivian Parkinson
Frank W. Steffler

ON43 OTTAWA

Gilles A. Longtin
Doug Shaw
Ian James Tait

ON47 TORONTO

Irving Abella
Carolyn Clement
Gerald V. Cooper
Gulam Fazal
Lilian Goh
Kathleen McCready
Gerald McSheffrey
Larry Olsson
Edna Piggott
Patrick J. Turner
Rosa Vecchiarelli
Robert A. Watson

ON55 YORK

George Edwards
Sharon D. Smith

QC57 QUEBEC

Louis H. Bérubé
Jean-Charles Drapeau
Hubert Leurs
Florian Morissette

QC58 MONTREAL

Jean-Pierre Ally
J. G. J. Brunet
Robert Cantin
Norman C. Cox
J. R. G. Dinelle
Denis Dufour
Germain Gagnon
Irene Girard
Percy Jackson
Claude Lauzon
L. Lebel
Gisele Levert
Myron M. Owad
Georges Palasse
Claude Pilon

QC60 OUTAOUAIS

Lionel Aubrey
Micheline Beauchemin
Suzanne Clairoux
Diane Dupont Cyr

Claude Dubé
Daniel Lafleur
Suzanne Lanthier
Gérald Léger
Pierre Migneault
Pierrette Pilon
Lyse Ricard
Doug Robinson

QC61 MAURICIE

Jeanne D'Arc Deschênes
Bellemare

NB64 SOUTH-EAST NEW BRUNSWICK

Noella Bellefleur
Yvon Belliveau
John A. Gay
Peter Nowlan

NB65 FUNDY SHORES

Arthur Cipryk
B. C. W. (Wallace) Fletcher
Frank Hanlon
Neil Hobson
Marshall Christie
Norman White

NB67 UPPER VALLEY

Caroline Dow
Charles Lagassie

NS72 COLCHESTER-EAST HANTS

Elizabeth Collier
William (Bill) Stewart

NS73 NOVA SCOTIA CENTRAL

Josephine E. Basden
Basil James MacDougall

NS75 WESTERN NOVA SCOTIA

Blaine Bezanson
Edward Blizzard

Leroy Cleaves
Elsie Cole
Fred Cress
Frank Elmore
Marguerite Gauthier
Shirley Keddy
Paul O'Sullivan
Constance Prince

NS77 CAPE BRETON

Pierre Camus

NS80 NORTH NOVA

John Peitzsche

PE82 CHARLOTTETOWN

Emil Anton (Tony) Halvorson
Walter John (Kip) Holloway
George Stanley Kells
Edward Terrance (Ted) Lomatski
Charles William Lund
Florence G. McNichol
Errol Champion Monkle
Jennie Etta Murchison
Marjorie Helen Read

PE83 SUMMERSIDE

Freeman Bendell
James Black
Ken Bridges
James Cramm
William Poirier
Clive Sharpe



Hats off to volunteers

The annual meeting of members held an awards ceremony for volunteers who've made a difference to the Association.

BY JENNIFER CAMPBELL

Robert Giroux worked alongside Claude Edwards at the Public Service Alliance of Canada for five years and in June, Giroux received an award in Edwards' name.

For his work, including heading up the Ottawa branch of Federal Retirees for six years, Giroux became this year's recipient of the Claude Edwards Leadership Award, which goes to an Association volunteer who's demonstrated outstanding leadership and perseverance in advancing an Association cause or causes to the benefit of members.

"Claude Edwards was the president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada," Giroux says, of the man for whom the Federal Retirees' national office building is named. "And I was a research officer working on compensation and job classification. Claude and I travelled across the country together to talk about

collective bargaining. I worked closely with Claude and I have tremendous respect for him. The award means a lot to me from that perspective."

Giroux retired from the federal public service as president the Public Service Commission of Canada in 1994, having served as deputy minister of National Revenue, Customs and Excise and deputy minister of Public Works Canada. He went on to work as president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and then served as chair of the board of governors at the University of Ottawa from 2008 to 2017. He joined Federal Retirees in 2012 and has been active with the Ottawa branch for 11 years, serving as president from 2017 until May 2023.

"The Ottawa branch is the biggest branch in the Association by far and we're lucky that we have a very well qualified board of directors and staff,"

Giroux says of his branch, which has nearly 35,000 members.

As president, Giroux asked his board colleagues what his branch members needed and it became clear that financial literacy was a major gap in understanding among members. The branch started giving workshops on the subject, which became immensely popular, and soon, it added healthy living as a subject, too.

The branch uses the workshops as recruitment tools, encouraging members to bring a friend who's eligible for membership.

"We've been able to increase our membership as a result of these workshops," he says, adding that travel is another area the branch is developing.

Giroux served on the national advocacy committee, which is, he says, at the core of the organization with the goal of protecting federal pensions

60th anniversary winners

In honour of Federal Retirees' 60th anniversary, the Association gave special awards to 16 members, chosen by their district directors for their contributions to the Association and its work.

B.C. & Yukon

Ian Spence
Rick Devlieger
Brian Strongman

Prairies & NWT

Richard Chevrier
John Erkelens
Winnipeg Branch

Ontario

Fiona Price
Bruce Challis
Ottawa Branch

Quebec

Jocelyne Wiseman
Jean-Marc Demers
Pierre Cousineau

Atlantic

Léonard LeBlanc
Peter Kerr
Derm Coady

National

Michael MacNeil

and benefits. Prior to becoming branch president, he was branch treasurer for several years. He also served on the nomination committee as well as the special committee for branch financing.

He said the latter came into being thanks to a motion he introduced in 2021.

"I sat on the special committee, which met for about a year and a half and it culminated in two recommendations to the annual meeting of members (AMM), which were approved," Giroux says.

"The special committee did a lot to unify large branches and small branches."

Of the award, Giroux said he was surprised to receive it and that it "means a lot — I'm very humbled and grateful."

Strategic planning for the win



Jacques Lecompte has a talent for strategic planning and Outaouais branch president Donald Déry happened to know that, so when Déry needed a strategy for recruitment, he turned to Lecompte for help.

Lecompte wrote the strategy, but then determined he needed a number of volunteers — volunteers they didn't have — to implement it. He soon came up with the idea of restructuring so the branch could hire part-time staff to implement the plan, which included finding local companies to offer rebates to Outaouais members. Eventually, they convinced a total of 16 partners, including the Ottawa Senators, Mont Cascades ski hill, a spa and two restaurants, to offer rebates to members.

He also bought some promotional items such as toques and thermos warmers to help with recruitment. "Now our numbers are slowly starting to climb up," he says.

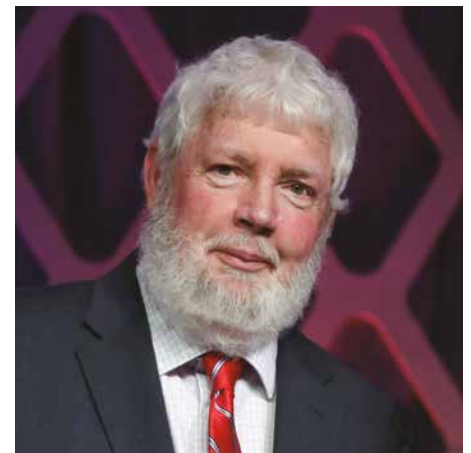
For his work, Lecompte received the national award for collaboration at the annual meeting of members in June. The collaboration involved bringing in other branches in the Quebec district as well as the Ottawa branch to attend, for example, some of Outaouais' virtual workshops. The branch also began offering the workshops in French and

English and it collaborated with other organizations, many of them also non-profits with a sizable number of members, some of whom were retirees.

"We figured we needed to start rubbing elbows with these [folks,]" Lecompte says, "so we started planning some joint activities with them."

In addition, the branch brought its staff member, who took Lecompte's strategic plan and developed actions around it, to a meeting of the Quebec district's branches to share those ideas with colleagues at other branches.

All-round volunteer



Gerard Carmichael has always volunteered for his community. His first gig was in 1974 when he was a leader at his local 4H club near Albany, P.E.I. When he was 24 and his neighbour's house burned down, he led the fundraising to help the family get back on its feet. Within 30 days in a punishing P.E.I. winter, the community had raised funds and built a new home for the family.

"It was so cold the day we were putting the floor in, I remember we had to heat the nails in the neighbours' oven," Carmichael says.

It's therefore no surprise that Carmichael received the annual volunteerism award, presented to the Association member who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to community service through volunteer activities outside of the Association.

He has served on many church councils over the years, between P.E.I. and Kitchener-Waterloo. He was an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society within his parish, for example, and regularly shopped for, filled and delivered food hampers and organized Christmas baskets for those in need.

"Many hands make light work," he says, and credits his parents with giving him the example of volunteerism. His late mother even received the Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee Medal in recognition of her 35 years of volunteering with 4H clubs in P.E.I.

At the Kitchener-Waterloo branch of Federal Retirees, the former meat inspector and Ontario emergency co-ordinator for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), has served as a health benefits officer and office administrator for 10 years, from 2012 to 2022. He has delivered pre-retirement seminars to those the branch was lucky enough to reach within the federal system in his area.

"I did that for eight to 10 years, which was great," he says. "We had some contacts that allowed us to come in."

Flexing the project management muscle



Michael MacNeil received a 60th anniversary award, and was singled out for his exceptional support to the national office and the special committee on branch financing.

And yet, he says he's not the only one who deserves it.

"Yes, I put in the hours; yes, I put in expertise that I had — it's just what I do — but so many other people have also put in an exceptional performance and considerable time, too," he says, adding that "nobody ever missed a meeting or a deadline or a deliverable."

Humility aside, MacNeil was pleased with how things worked with the committee.

"Over the 18-month journey, I was probably the subject matter expert on things that had to do with project management," he says. "As committee members got to know me and were happy with what I turned in, I became effectively the project manager."

In the end, the committee set a threshold of \$6,600 as branch funding and decided that smaller branches that weren't reaching that level could apply for supplemental financing.

Branch prizes

Nanaimo & Area branch president Rick Roberts says it was "an honour and a privilege" to accept the advocacy award on behalf of his branch.

"The congratulations really goes to them and not to me," he says, adding that he has a very strong advocacy committee that has developed a good relationship with area MPs. In addition, they've attended some roundtables on health care and homelessness, one of which featured NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh. Roberts, who is serving his third two-year term as president, writes a number of letters each year and the branch takes part in several advocacy initiatives. The active branch has 14 directors and has a program through which it calls every branch member at least three times a year to check in.

He also lauded the work of Renate Sutherland, his district's "wonderful new advocacy program officer" (see more on Sutherland in our cover story on page 8.)

Ceci O'Flaherty, president of the **Winnipeg & District branch**, accepted

the Volunteer Engagement and Recruitment Award on behalf of her branch at the AMM.

Her team received the award for work done in 2022, including organizing a board retreat to reinvigorate the branch and its leaders and to set a strategic path forward. To encourage engagement, the branch surveyed members to find out what topics they'd like covered in webinars and "lunch and learns."

With respect to recruitment, the branch has two incentives. Members who refer someone who joins get a \$25 gift card to a place of their choice. And members who add their spouses receive a \$15 Tim Hortons or Starbucks gift card.

The branch also takes part in expos, trade shows and community fairs, including one at Canadian Forces Base Winnipeg. In addition, the branch held two luncheon meetings and it holds a golf tournament every year. Members are always encouraged to bring friends who are eligible for membership.

Outaouais branch president Donald Déry picked up the award for membership recruitment and development, making a total of three awards going to this branch. The prize goes to a branch for excellence in the delivery of programs, activities, and services as well as participation in national recruitment initiatives.

Déry says the branch hosted many social activities before the pandemic, and during the lockdowns, it started to pivot and re-organize. First, it ensured governance remains with volunteers, but operations are now handled by three people who are employed to work 15 hours per week. They work on newsletters, webinars and partnerships with other groups. Its Zoom webinars are well attended and often attract members from other branches, too.

"That permits us to augment the recruitment done by volunteers," Déry says, adding that the Outaouais branch has more than 10,000 members and is the third largest in the country. ■

Jennifer Campbell is the editor of *Sage*.

Mega Recruitment Drive is back



Spreading the word has its perks.

Autumn is almost here, which means the Mega Recruitment Drive (MRD) is now live. From Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, members will again be rewarded for promoting the benefits of a Federal Retirees membership. Each successful word-of-mouth referral will get you a ballot for our fantastic slate of prizes, including our \$10,000 cash grand prize, courtesy of Johnson Insurance. There are 14 prizes in total, including an early bird prize worth \$500, courtesy of IRIS Advantage, to be drawn at the end of October. There is no limit to the number of ballots you can acquire, so start recruiting early and often.

The MRD is not just a fun way to recognize the recruitment efforts of our members. Statistics reveal that word-of-mouth referrals are the most successful way for new and former members to discover and rediscover the Association. Therefore, the tremendous work our members do during the MRD actually represents a significant source of our annual recruitment intake. Not surprisingly, you — our loyal members — are the best recruitment tools we have. As with our advocacy work, our true strength and success lies in you.

Thank you in advance for supporting Federal Retirees again this year.

Switch to DDS and save

Still paying your membership dues by cheque or credit card? Here's why switching to DDS is by far the best way to maintain your membership with Federal Retirees:

- It's quick, easy and can be done online or over the phone when renewing;
- With no more renewal notices, the Association economizes by saving paper and postage fees;
- There's no connection to the Phoenix pay system, so there are no associated complications;

- Fees are just \$4.38 deducted monthly for single memberships and \$5.69 for a double;
 - Receive three free months of membership simply by making the switch;
 - You can cancel or change your method of payment at any time.
- For questions or assistance in making the switch, contact our recruitment and member services team at service@federalretirees.ca or 1-855-304-4700 (toll-free). They will be pleased to serve you.

Renew your membership

1. Your membership is automatically renewed when you have your dues deducted from your monthly pension cheque (DDS).
2. We send members who pay by credit card or cheque a letter advising them that it's time to renew.

To pay by credit card:

Log on to federalretirees.ca

To pay by cheque:

Send cheque payable to National Association of Federal Retirees:

National Association of Federal Retirees
865 Shefford Rd.
Ottawa, Ont. K1J 1H9

For assistance or to change your payment method to DDS, please do not hesitate to call our membership team toll-free at 1-855-304-4700, ext. 300, or in Ottawa at (613) 745-2559.

2023 membership fees

	YEAR	MONTH
Single	\$52.56	\$4.38
Double	\$68.28	\$5.69

How to sign up?

1. Visit federalretirees.ca and click on the Join menu.
2. Call our membership team toll free at 1-855-304-4700, ext. 300, or in Ottawa at 613-745-2559.

Contact us

Have you moved or changed your email address recently? Email us your updated information to service@federalretirees.ca or call our membership team toll-free at 1-855-304-4700, ext. 300, or in Ottawa at 613-745-2559.



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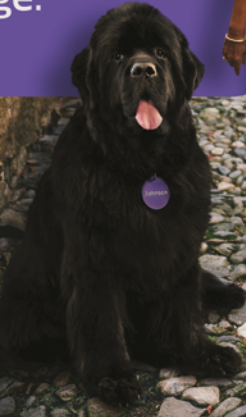
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