



BC 04
Branch Update (#4)
April 2025

Notes from the 2025 Branch Annual Meeting, March 13th...

We tried out a new venue this year, the Salish Dining Room at the Oceana Parc Retirement Residence in uptown White Rock. Reviews have been generally very positive; the lack of on-site parking was an issue for some but we owe a special 'thank you' to St. John's Presbyterian for their help in providing reserved parking close by. We had a good turnout—68 members—and White Rock Mayor, Megan Knight, spoke briefly before lunch. She assured us that given her city's high concentration of older adults (did she say 39%?), White Rock pays attention to the needs and concerns of older adults and is keenly aware of our contribution to the community.

The president reviewed the highlights of 2024: the branch annual meeting at Hazelmere; the summer barbecue at Peace Arch Park; the provincial election townhalls for Surrey-White Rock and the three Langley ridings; the recognition of our volunteers with the national Branch Excellence Award (in the '*large branch, no employees*' category) and the Claude Edwards Leadership Award.

Looking forward, with a federal election imminent, he noted the branch has reserved funds to support election meetings and advertising in collaboration with partners in the Semiahmoo Seniors Network, Langley Seniors in Action and the Langley Seniors Resource Centre Society.

He announced the date for this year's summer barbecue and upcoming 'Meet and Chat' meetings (see page 2) and, finally, he noted that Rod Tondevold is stepping down as branch treasurer, thanking Rod for his two years' of dedicated service.

Rod Tondevold delivered the treasurer's report: the branch finished 2024 with a small surplus.

Bernd Hirsekorn delivered the report of the Nominations Committee. Elections were held, conducted by Branch Services Co-ordinator, Steve Sawchuk; the twelve members offering their names in service were elected by acclamation.

Thanks to everyone who attended and to all the volunteers (Rob, Eric, Laurie, Judy, Arlene, Rod, Verda, Bernd, Rocky, Thelma, Stuart, Ilene) for making it work!

Mark your calendars!

Barbecue and Branch General Meeting

July 10th, 2025

(Thursday)

Peace Arch Park

Hwy 99 & Beach Avenue
 Surrey, BC



Watch for registration details in upcoming 'Updates'
 or on the branch web-site at
www.federalretirees.ca/fraservalleywest

Presenting....for 2025

Your Fraser Valley West Branch board

President	Ian Spence (604) 753-7845
Vice President	Eric Ross
Secretary	Ilene Fika
Treasurer	Kamlesh Kumar
Directors	Leslie Gaudette
	Arlene Johnston
	Judy McLellan
	Sharon Riches
	Glen (Rocky) Rockwell
	Rob Terris
	Verda Tondevold
	Stuart Wilson

Meet and Chat

JAVA WITH JUDY AND SHARON...

Join hosts Judy McLellan and Sharon Riches

WHEN?

Wednesday, April 16th
1:00—3:00 p.m.

WHERE?

CENTRE FOR ACTIVE LIVING

1475 Anderson Street, White Rock
(Next to the Centennial Arena—
Note: All day parking is \$2.25)

With special guest speaker

Stephanie Chan, 'Home to Home' Services



(from the web-site) **Home to Home** provides eldercare planning, transition assistance and care management services....We help seniors navigate the private and public healthcare and housing systems... Home to Home can help you select the ideal residence, as well as plan and manage all aspects of the downsize and move.



+ COOKIES!

Mark your calendars!

RSVP (please) to Judy at

judymichelle1@live.com

or call Ian at (604) 753-7845

(so we can be sure to have enough cookies!)

There are over 700 Federal Retirees
in South Surrey-White Rock!

Come out and meet your neighbours.

All members and potential members are welcome!

If you know a potential member—
whether still in service, recently-
retired or long-retired but 'forgot' to
join—bring that lucky person along!

Upcoming 'Meet and Chat' dates:

- May 14th (2nd Wednesday,
- June 11th, 2nd Wednesday.

Judy and Sharon are planning to have another speaker on June 11th. May 14th will be an informal chat date.

Keep in touch!

For questions on health benefits, call Glen (**Rocky**)
Rockwell at (604) 496-4426 or
email grockwell@shaw.ca

If you need to update your membership info:
call **Ian** at (604) 753-7845 or email
nafrbc04@gmail.com

Welcome, New (and returning!) Directors!

At the Branch Annual Meeting, after the dust settled from the elections, we were happy to welcome **Stuart Wilson** back to the Board along with two new faces, **Kamlesh Kumar** and **Verda Tondevold**. As mentioned in the March 'update', Thelma Graham, Bernd Hirsekorn and Rod Tondevold have stepped down from the board. We wish them well in their new adventures.



Kamlesh Kumar is our new branch treasurer, taking over the books from (a grateful) Rod Tondevold. Kamlesh retired in 2022 from the Canada Revenue Agency as a Director at the Domestic Tax for International and Large Business Directorate, after 36 years of service. She is a CPA, CMA member and brings a wealth of leadership experience. Not always as serious as she looks in the photo, Kamlesh is a 'people's person' and enjoys time with her family and grandkids.

Stuart Wilson and Verda Tondevold complete the complement of Directors-at-Large. **Stuart**, of course, is a familiar name; after a long career with Agriculture Canada and the CFIA, he joined the Branch in 2006, served as President 2008-2011, and stayed on as Director, working on the 'old' and 'new' Branch web-sites, and serving as Treasurer 2021-2023. Great to see you back, Stuart!

Verda's first job as a 'Fed' was in Yellowknife, where she and Rod moved shortly after they married in Saskatchewan. She worked in the Office of the Commissioner of the NWT, when Stuart Hodgson was the incumbent. She took time out for family, then joined the federal service again in 1990 with HRDC in North Battleford. She worked in Ottawa for CRA and Customs and was a Senior Project Officer during the introduction of the NEXUS program. There followed positions with Western Economic Diversification in Saskatchewan, then with Veterans Affairs in Saskatoon, and as Client Services Team Manager in Vancouver and Surrey. Verda and Rod have four children and fifteen grandchildren. Verda is in charge of remembering the birthdays.

Welcome, and thank you, thank you, and thank you!

Adapting our approach to advocacy...

Remember the days when talking politics at the kitchen table, someone might say, "I'm going to have to vote for the candidate, not the party."? Back then, you might actually look at the candidates' credentials and their ability to represent you, you weren't simply choosing a party parrot. However, as political parties increasingly move to control their messaging by limiting access to their candidates and not allowing them to participate in public debates, Federal Retirees is coming to terms with a how to adjust our approach to advocacy. The following is from a note to Advocacy Program Officers in January, from Amy Baldry, Campaign & Engagement Officer (National Office):

This federal election will be a big one. It will be the first federal election to take place following the COVID-19 pandemic and times have changed. The where and when of advocacy have changed. And how advocacy is best done has also changed. Gone are the days when all candidates were eager to attend public events and speak to large groups, which means town halls are no longer the gold standard. Often one or more parties will decline to participate. This creates a gap in our advocacy work, particularly if candidates from a missing party end up being elected.

Instead, it is much more effective to ensure all members are prepared to speak with their local candidates, are informed of party positions on Federal Retirees' priorities and know when and where to vote. Meeting candidates individually — and involving as many members as we can — builds broad public support for our priorities and ensures candidates hear the same message from as many of their constituents as possible. We'll be looking to branches to get involved in our federal election campaign by connecting one-on-one with as many candidates as possible, making sure branch members are informed and prepared to speak to candidates about our priorities, and helping create attention, pressure and momentum to ensure the next federal government acts on priorities that matter to older adults in this country.

- Sincerely, Amy

And this means your Branch will be looking to you—and working with you—to know who your candidates are, connect with them by social media (*If you know how to do that, can you show me?*) and see if they understand (and believe!) that good pensions are good for the community and that age-friendly communities are good for everyone.

CHANGING YOUR TRAVEL PLANS? Here are a few local 'staycations' to consider...

(offered by our friends at the Langley Senior Resources Society—for info: lrs.ca)

Bus Trips

Enjoy the Trip

\$59 Members
\$79 Non Members
*Cancellations accepted by March 25

GRANVILLE ISLAND

TUESDAY, APRIL 8 9:30AM - 4:30PM



PACKAGE INCLUDES

- 4 hours Granville Island Free Time
- Professional Driver
- Convenient Drop Off / Pick Up Area

LEVEL: EASY

There is so much to do on Granville Island! Spend the day on the Island Oasis in the heart of Vancouver. Visit the Public Market, see local artisans at work and delight in the many lunch options to choose from.

Secret Cove SUNSHINE COAST

Wednesday, April 23rd 7:00AM - 7:30PM

Explore the Sunshine Coast aka the "Best Place on Earth"! Visit Davis Bay, an Ancient Forest and 5-star Rockwater Secret Cove Resort for lunch.

Level: Easy

Package Includes:

- Boardwalk Rockwater Secret Cove Resort
- Lunch at Rockwater Secret Cove Resort
- Hidden Groves, Davis Bay, Gibson's Landing

\$139 Members
\$159 Non Members

*Additional \$10 ferry fee for 64 years and under
(Cancellations accepted until April 9)

Langley Senior
RESOURCES SOCIETY

TOURIST IN YOUR TOWN

MONDAY, MAY 5 8:45AM - 6:00PM

Take the Aqua Bus on a narrated cruise of False Creek, visit the VanDusen Botanical Garden, enjoy lunch at Steamworks Mount Pleasant, ice cream at Earnest Ice Cream and board the West Coast Express at Waterfront to Mission City.

Package Includes:

- West Coast Express
- Aqua Bus Tour
- Lunch at Steamworks Mount Pleasant
- VanDusen Botanical Garden
- Earnest Ice Cream Cone

Members \$139
Non Member \$159

THE JOURNEY
Enjoy

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL Crystal

Wednesday, June 4
3:00PM-10:30PM

Travel to the Pacific Coliseum for a show to remember featuring stunning skating and acrobatic feats that defy the imagination. This tour includes a light dinner at Café Calabria and escorted seating.

Package Includes:

- Cirque du Soleil CRYSTAL Ticket
- Level 1 PL5 Ticket
- 7:00pm Performance
- Escorted Entry & Seating
- Dinner Café Calabria

Level: Easy

\$179 Members
\$199 Non Members
(No Refunds)

Langley Senior
RESOURCES SOCIETY

get
YOUR
TICKETS