

# NAFR Alberta – Edmonton Branch (AB17)

## 2014 Annual General Membership Meetings (GMMs)

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# 2014-05-14 Annual GMM Report

Our 2014 Annual General Meeting was held May 14, 2014 at the Royal Canadian Legion, Kingsway Branch, 14339 – 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Edmonton, AB. Our AGM's were previously held at our September meeting, however we have moved them to our May meeting for this and future years so that our Audited Financial Statements can be presented to and accepted at a General Membership Meeting in time to meet reporting requirements to National Office.

**Social Hour:** We opened one hour earlier than usual to allow members to have some extra time to socialize with their friends and colleagues ahead of the dinner and meeting. Arriving early was, of course, optional. When, at the end of the meeting, we asked how many appreciated the extra hour before the meeting to socialize, the majority of members indicated they did.

**CAT Service:** Communications Access Realtime Translation (CART) was available for the first time for deaf and hard of hearing members. With CART, everything that is said is “captioned” live for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The CART captions were displayed via a projector on a large screen. The CART provider quickly typed into a stenotype machine using machine shorthand, and the computer software translates that shorthand into real time captions, matching the shorthand against what is in a specialized shorthand dictionary stored in the computer. The process is so fast that there is hardly any lag time between what is said and what the deaf or hard of hearing person is able to read. When asked at the end of the meeting, about 10 members indicated they attended because CART service was available. However, when the members were asked how many found that the CART service was of benefit to them during the meeting, more than half of those present indicated it was.

**Attendance & Guests:** There were 155 **members present** including Board Members: Brian Emdin, Ross Gillespie, Lillian June, Bill Karpo, Clay Kolstad, Bill Lundquist, Mahir Mansi, Doreen Morton, Dalton Philip, Dave Riffel and Gwen Rutherford, along with and Special Guests: Roy Goodall (Prairie District National Director elect) and Larry Sakaluk (AB/NWT RSO).

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm by President Brian Emdin.

**Guest Speaker:** Our Guest Speaker was Eric Storey from the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE). His presentation was on life transitional situations, especially programs available to help seniors stay in their homes, and information about the different levels and types of seniors assisted living accommodations and costs for these, etc. He brought a variety of handouts and answered several questions from members.

**Approval of Agenda & Previous Meeting:** the Agenda and of the Minutes of our previous General Membership Meeting were approved.

**President Report:** Brian Emdin gave his President's Report, discussing the latest Advocacy events, including, in concert with other Alberta Seniors organizations, achieving success in delaying income testing for Alberta Seniors Health Care, and noting the partial success achieved by FSNA's national "Honor Your Promise" Campaign. It is considered to be very successful. FSNA for first time mobilized 100,000+ of its members to take action. The end result included the elimination of the annual, deductible saving members approximately \$10M per year, plus 3 improved benefits as of Oct.1/2014 (1. vision care now provide some coverage for Lazer eye surgery, 2. the is provision for aero-therapeutic devices repairs, and, 3. psychological services coverage will be increased to \$2000 per year).

**Treasurer Report:** There were copies of our audited financial statements available on all tables. Treasurer Clay Kolstad asked for questions or comments from the members present. None were received and the report was accepted as presented.

**Elections:** Larry Sakaluk, Regional Services Officer (RSO) for Alberta/NWT conducted our elections with the following results. Brian Emdin was re-elected for a two year term as President by acclamation; Clay Kolstad was re-elected for a two year term as Treasurer by acclamation; and Gwen Rutherford was elected by acclamation as Secretary for one year (the position is normally filled for a 2 year term in odd numbered years. There were two nominees for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Mahir Mansi and Lillian June . Lillian June won the election. Following the election, Larry Sakaluk (RSO) conducted a swearing in ceremony for all board members.

**New Business:** Under New Business Bill Karpo and Lillian June, two very long serving members of our branch and board, were made Honorary Life Branch Members. In addition to the recognition, the branch will pay their annual dues for as long as they are members.

Special Guest, Roy Goodall, who is one of the two National Directors Elect for the Prairies District will be leaving the Provincial Advocacy Officer (PAO) position. He spoke briefly, noting that FSNA still needs to advocate in partnership with Public Interest Alberta (PIA) because, although income testing for Alberta Seniors Healthcare has been delayed, is not "off the table".

### **Committee Reports**

**Member Services:** Gwen Rutherford reported on up coming changes to the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP), Medical Tax Deductions, new Affinity Partners (Shoppers, Via Rail, Chartwell Retirement Residences), and the expected September launch of the new FSNA National Website.

**Websites:** Ross Gillespie gave updates on the Edmonton website (nafredm.ca), and on the new AB Branches Website (www.fsnaab.ca).

**Door Prizes:** Draws were held for two Door Prizes and for the 50/50 draw creating four happy winners.

**Meeting Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm

**Next Meeting:** The next General membership meeting will be a luncheon meeting held on September 10, 2014.

## 2014-09-10 GMM Report

The FSNA Edmonton Branch Fall General Membership Meeting was held Sep.10, 2014 at the Royal Canadian Legion, Kingsway Branch 14339 50<sup>th</sup> St. Edmonton, AB.

There were 119 members in attendance. **CART** (Communications Access Realtime Translation) was provided for deaf/ hard of hearing members.

**Guest Speaker:** Following a delicious meal, our Guest Speaker, lawyer Leroy Hiller B.A. LLB., spoke on Wills, Powers of Attorney, Personal Directives, and the potential problems of joint ownership and beneficiary designations. He answered many questions from the members present.

**President's Report:** Brian Emdin gave his President's Report, advising that as of the June 2014 National convention, we are now **NAFR – National Association of Federal Retirees**. Our branch will be writing new by-laws to comply with new national bylaws and protect our financial ability to provide continued member services and conduct advocacy.

**Advocacy:** Dave Riffel, *Provincial Advocacy Officer (PAO) for Alberta*, advised that National Office is organizing town hall meetings regarding Retirement Income and Health Care Security for all Canadians. This is in response to the federal government quietly announced new framework for voluntary *Target Benefit Plans* (TBP) signaling significant pension reform in Canada. We should be very concerned.

As PAO, Dave sits on the Public Interest Alberta (PIA, [www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org)) Seniors Task Force Committee, jointly producing a paper on Long Term Care for Albertans and working on other seniors' issues. There was little meeting activity with the Alberta Government due to the summer season, recent PC scandals, and the PC leadership election. NAFR's nationwide Advocacy priority is the 2015 Federal Election. He encouraged all members to speak with their MP and other candidates. Speaking notes are being developed.

Dave noted: 1) Alberta Auditor General Saher reported Alberta is failing to properly handle chronic disease; 2) The Deputy Health Minister is now a director at Alberta Health Services; 3) New PC Leader Jim Prentice has stated that Alberta government should team up with religious groups to fund nursing home construction/operation and vows to overhaul the Alberta Supportive Living Initiative. Dave advised that this is not good news. Already a religious group (a homecare facility and provider) supported by the government, laid off 157 long term/experienced employees to be replaced by cheaper temporary foreign workers. 4) The Globe and Mail reported provinces are seeking additional money to help with their deficits, due to federal surplus. The Globe and Mail suggests the response is likely, "Cut your spending like we did."

Dave concluded that we all have vested interests in actions which impact seniors. It is incumbent upon us to speak out, talk politics and be aware.

**Website:** Ross Gillespie asked members to look at the Edmonton Branch website ([www.nafredm.ca](http://www.nafredm.ca)) and the All Alberta Branches website ([www.fsnaab.ca](http://www.fsnaab.ca)). Members are asked to use the Quick Contact section on the right side of the websites to provide comments, suggestions and feedback. The New NAFR website is expected in January 2015.

**Membership:** Ross said a *Thank you* to all the phoners. In May 2013, we had 40 phoners who called 1,600 numbers – about 40 each. For this meeting, we were down to 27 phoners who still called 40 numbers each. We are fortunate that some members who have not been attending have taken their names off the list, and more than 300 have switched to receiving notice of meetings by email. Thank you to all who made the switch. For those who can, please volunteer as phoners. [THANK YOU to 5 members who signed up at the meeting!] Also at the meeting, several members were added to our branch e-mail list.

Under the new national structure, NWT members were assigned to Edmonton branch. That added 192 members bringing our branch total to 5899.

**Health Benefits Officer (HBO):** Gwen Rutherford reported that the Pension Bulletin #8 is out with details of the PSHCP changes, including:

Effective Oct.1,2014

1. Coverage for Laser eye Surgery... lifetime max. \$1000.
2. Increase in psychological services from \$1000 to \$2000.
3. Coverage for repairs, servicing, and replacement parts of aerotherapeutic devices to a max of \$300/yr.

Effective Jan.1/2015... annual deductible will no longer apply.

Effective Apr.1/2015

Cost sharing for retired member contributions will increase from 25% to 50%. This increase will NOT apply to retired members who were members of the Plan before April 1, 2015, PROVIDED their family income falls below the relevant Guaranteed Income Supplement threshold.

In addition, the number of cumulative years of pensionable service required to qualify for coverage as a retired member under the plan will increase from 2 to 6 years.

The new premium cost information is difficult to obtain. Members should contact their pension office for their premium increase information. Pension Office phone numbers are provided below, please know your Pension Number:.

**1) Public Service Pension Center –**

English: 1-800-561-7930 or [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/psm-fpfm/pensions/index-eng.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/psm-fpfm/pensions/index-eng.asp)

French: 1-800-561-7930 or [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/psm-fpfm/pensions/index-fra.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/psm-fpfm/pensions/index-fra.asp)

From Outside Canada and the United States (call collect): 506-533-5800

E-mail: [pensioncentre.centredespensions@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca](mailto:pensioncentre.centredespensions@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca)

**2) Canadian Forces Pension Office**

1-800-267-0325 or <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/forces-pensions/index-eng.html>

**3) RCMP Pension Office**

1-855-502-7090 or <http://rcmp-grc.pension.gc.ca/accueil-home-eng.html>

**4) Judges Act Pension Office**

1-877-583-4266

**5) Veterans Affairs Canada**

1-866-522-2122 or <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng>

**NOTE:** Members only need Level 1 PSHCP coverage in Alberta.

Through our branch advocacy we work cooperatively with the [Alberta Friends of Medicare](#) (FOM) who are part of the National/Provincial Health coalition. There is an immediate danger that clinics charging user fees could be let off the hook and the equity and fairness of our public health care system could be in jeopardy. We need people to contact FOM who have been charged user fees for surgeries, or colonoscopies or cataracts or other medically necessary procedures at private clinics. As many of you will know, one of the largest private for-profit clinics in the country, owned by Dr. Brian Day, has initiated a court case in an attempt to dismantle single-tier Medicare. In the court challenge, the BC Government (which brought in the private clinics in the first place), is defending single-tier public health care for all in court against Day's challenge. In the meantime, Dr. Day is doing all kinds of media interviews advocating against single-tier health care. We urgently need to counter the anti-public health care messages in the media and we need to ensure that the BC government stands up for public Medicare in the negotiations. Health Coalitions across Canada will be holding press conferences to warn of the dangers of private clinics and appeal to the BC government to uphold single-tier Medicare. Any members with first-hand experience being charged a user fee by a private clinic for a medically necessary procedure like cataract operations, hip or knee surgery, MRI or

colonoscopy, please contact your provincial health coalition. In Alberta, that is Alberta Friends of Medicare, Co-Ordinator:

Sandra Azocar, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 10512 – 122 Street, Edmonton, AB T5N 1M6

Tel: 780-423-4581

Fax: 780-420-0435

email: [fominfo@telus.net](mailto:fominfo@telus.net)

Website: [www.friendsofmedicare.org](http://www.friendsofmedicare.org)

**Prize Draws:** The meeting concluded with prize draws. Winners were: Door Prizes – Tillie Chudyk and Grace Smith... 50/50 – Sandra McPherson and June Skjonsberg.

**Next Meeting:** Our Next Meeting is a luncheon meeting on Dec.10, 2014 Roy Goodall, who is one of the two new Directors for the Prairie District, will attend.



## 2014-12-10 General Membership Meeting Report

A general membership meeting was held December 10, 2014 at the Royal Canadian Legion, Kingsway Branch. As with the past few meetings, the doors opened early to allow members time to socialize. When signing in at the door all volunteers were provided with a rose and pen in recognition of their service.

**Attendance:** 133 members attended including Board Members.

**Guests:** Also in attendance were three guest speakers from the Alberta Health Advocates Office and **Roy Goodall**, one of two National Directors for the Prairies and NWT District of the Association. CART (Communications Access Realtime Translation) captioning was used during the meeting since many members found the service beneficial at previous meetings.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was call to order at 12:05 pm by **President Brian Emdin**.

**President Report:** Because he had to leave early for another commitment, **Roy Goodall** was invited to speak prior to the meal. To apprise us of his background, Roy outlined his activities with the National Association of Federal Retirees (the Association) which started in 2006. He has served as a Director, Treasurer, and President on the Calgary Board and was instrumental in its incorporation. He also wrote the Calgary Branch bylaws and participated in re-writing the national bylaws. He said that new national bylaws dictate that, as National Director, he: a) represents all Association members without bias; b) attends Branch meetings when invited at the expense of the Branch. He noted that many meetings of the National Board of Directors are held “in-camera” now which limits information sharing. The President and National Office are solely responsible for official communications.

The new mission of the Association is to significantly increase the quality and security of the retired members and all Canadians and to lead in areas of concern (pensions, benefits, other issues) so that they enjoy dignity and security in their retirement years. Roy asked members what they thought of the Association advocating on behalf of all pensioners. Many members felt that the Association was formed to advocate on behalf of superannuates ONLY.

Roy concluded by saying he is the Chairperson of the Fees Committee and that he will be meeting in January to develop a fee increase proposal. He asked members to consider how much of an increase they can tolerate.

**Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes:** After the meal **minutes** from the last general meeting and **agenda** for this meeting were presented and approved.

**Advocates Presentations:** Guest Speakers **Deborah Prouse** (Alberta Health Advocate), **John Cabral** (Interim Seniors' Advocate) and **Carol Robertson-Baker** (Alberta Mental Health Advocate) from the Alberta Health Advocates Office spoke generally of their separate responsibilities. Each Advocate is there to help the public/patients through complaint processes. They also report and make recommendations directly to their respective Ministers. The Health Advocates Office is the common point of contact for the public for all three Advocates, and allows collaboration on complaints that involve overlapping jurisdictions between the three Advocates. They share information on resources and referrals and share a database for tracking authorized files and issues. **Contact information** is:

Office of the Alberta Health Advocates  
12th Floor, 10035 – 108 St., Edmonton AB T5J 3E1  
Telephone 780-422-1812 Toll free 310-0000  
[www.albertahealthadvocates.ca](http://www.albertahealthadvocates.ca)

**Vice-President Report:** Vice-President, **Ross Gillespie** made several announcements:

- Dues notices for members who don't have dues deducted from their pension should be received from Head Office within 2 weeks.
- PSHCP Level 1 coverage is all you need in Alberta.
- After April 1, 2015, If you are not a PSHCP member now and have less than six years pensionable service you will not be eligible to join the plan. If you are not a member you may wish to join before April 1, 2015.
- 2013 claims for PSHCP must be received by Sun Life by December 31, 2014.
- the Association has launched legal action against the change of PSHCP cost sharing ratio of premiums from 25/75 to 50/50 which is being implemented by Treasury Board.
- Please provide the Branch with your current email address. You will receive information faster and it will take a load of our phone volunteers.
- Elections for the first Vice-President and Secretary will be held at the May 6th dinner meeting. Nominations can be made in advance or at the meeting.
- Roy announced that MEDOC will now confirm Association membership before paying any claims.
- LIFT Drive Happiness, a collaborative partnership of three non-profit societies within Edmonton is available to assist Edmonton seniors with travel throughout the city. They are also looking for volunteer drivers. More information is available on their website ([www.drivehappiness.ca](http://www.drivehappiness.ca)).

- The Branch needs more volunteers. Help may be required to organize awareness campaigns and to lobby during this election year (both federal and provincial). Volunteers are also required to help with routine operations. Some work may be on a project basis or on a limited, but regular basis. If you are interested please contact any Board member or contact us through the Quick Contact link on the lower Right side of this webpage.

**PAO Report:** Copies of a report prepared by **Dave Riffel, Provincial Advocacy Officer** were provided to each table. His report is provided following those Minutes.

**Door prizes:** Door prizes were won by Merle Proulx and Sandra Ward. 50/50 draw winners were Tom Charchuk and Norma Yurex.

**Meeting adjournment:** The meeting was **adjourned** at 2:40 pm.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be May 6, 2015.

**National Association of Federal Retirees**

**Alberta Provincial Advocate Officer Report to NAFR Edmonton Branch AB17, December 1  
General Membership Meeting.**

**On Dec. 1, 2014, NAFR National President Gary Oberg,** announced that the Association is engaged a public relations firm, Hill & Knowlton Strategies, to help develop an advocacy plan in preparation for the 2015 Federal election in 2015. More information will be forthcoming.

**The four key advocacy objectives of the Association identified in the 2012-2014 Strategic and Operational Plan are:** health care; pensions; support for veterans; and senior's advocacy.

**The Association's Strategic Advocacy Goals are:**

**Short Term:** develop a strategy that will engage volunteers and members in NAFR advocacy; and development of a partnership with stakeholders and collaborators who, with the NAFR volunteer members, will identify solutions to move long-term goal forward together.

**Long Term:** develop and implement a strategy to move from solutions to outcomes that will help Canadians achieve retirement income and health care security.

**Alberta Provincial Advocacy Officer (PAO) recent activities:**

-Introductory meetings were recently held with the Alberta Health Advocate, the Alberta Senior Advocate, and the Alberta Mental Health Patient Advocate. Future meetings with these Advocates are being planned.

-Numerous meetings with the Seniors Task Force, as well as the STF sub-committee regarding Long-Term-Care/Assisted Living/Home Care. A report will be released very shortly that has received support from the NAFR and 15 other like-minded groups.

-The Grey Matters 2014 Conference was held in Red Deer this Sept. and many of the topics related to current seniors issues.

-The NAFR Alberta Advocacy Committee, which is made up of advocacy officers from Alberta's branches, is **identifying** member/seniors issues that will be **identified** in advocacy activities for upcoming Federal and Provincial elections.