

MB30 Winter 2025 Sage Branch Report

Greeting from your President:

December is here! The Christmas season is upon us. I genuinely think that the festive music, sparkling lights, and decorations improves our mood. The customary Christmas sweets do make people happy.

We often think back on our childhood holiday seasons around this time of year. I recall our house kitchen being busy making Christmas fruit cakes. It was especially amusing because my mom used leftover tin cans to bake them. The ones that contained strawberry jam and the larger soup cans. I wondered what an oddity this was. I googled “the history of using tin cans to bake fruit cakes” and there are over a million results, including instructions. Wow. It was a common practice!

Today's technologies and the knowledge at your fingertips are amazing. We may order our fruitcakes, dainties, and even the turkey dinner to be delivered right to our homes this holiday season. We shop online and receive advertisements and seasonal offers in our inboxes. Even commercial Christmas cards are sent by email. The use of a smartphone, tablet, or computer is all that is required. And perhaps a relative or grandchild who is able to give guidance.

If you are needing assistance navigating your device or if you want to learn new features; let's face it, there are always updates and new software offerings. Also, we need to be cautious about scams, fraud and false information. Retirees can benefit from a variety of resources.

Programs provided by **Brandon Seniors for Seniors Co-op Inc** are supported by our branch. They offer a Technology Access Program for Seniors (TAPS) which involves computer training for small groups. <https://brandons4s.ca/>

Most rural communities in our branch area have a Seniors Center under the umbrella of Manitoba Association of Senior Communities. Among their goals is to provide training and education in new technology. Check out their locations: Google - Manitoba Senior Communities. Most likely there is one near you. <https://manitobaseniormunities.ca/MemberLocations>

Also, if you search YouTube, you will find many videos on basic computer and smartphone usage.

Another resource I discovered is Cyber-Seniors, which provides 30-minute modules of IT-related topics online and is convenient to access from home via Zoom (which is free).

Cyber Seniors – FREE Technology Help! Do you need help using your smartphone, tablet, or computer? Cyber Seniors can help! Technology Mentors are young people who have been trained to teach technology to older adults. To register for FREE online instruction or to schedule FREE one-on-one help over the phone or via video calls contact 1-844-217-3057 or email info@cyberseniors.org. For more information visit www.cyberseniors.org

Good luck exploring and learning.
Wishing you a safe and joyous holiday season
Sincerely,

Wendy Jarvin
Branch President



Branch Highlights

Annual General membership meeting — April 15, 2025

The branch has implemented a new practice of emailing copies of the agenda, financial statements, and other relevant documents to members registered to attend our general and annual meetings. The initiation is consistent with what other associations and non-profit organizations are doing to decrease not only expenses but also time and effort. We will always have a few extra copies accessible at meetings for members. At the last meeting, it appeared that some members were referring to email attachments sent, from their mobile phones. It's a win-win.

Advocacy Update from Glenn Armstrong, Manitoba Advocacy Programs Officer:

Regarding the Benefits to Survivors, Glen mentioned that your dependant survivors' coverage under the Public Health Service Care Plan (PSHCP) and the Pensioners Dental Service Plan (PDSP) does not automatically continue after your death. Notifying these individuals as soon as possible is crucial in order to start a fresh file for your survivor. The documentation must be prompt. The Pension Centre is clear that each pensioner situation is unique and that the Pension Centre should be consulted at all times throughout the process.

Glenn also discussed our pension increases. At the end of each year, the Treasury Board Secretariat provides the National Association of Federal Retirees with information on the pension indexing increase that is effective Jan. 1 for federal public sector pensions. The pension indexation rate effective Jan. 1, 2025, is 2.7 per cent. Federal Retirees was instrumental in establishing pension indexation back in 1970.

Glen concluded by making a statement about the abundance of false information in the news media and on social media. He issued a warning: Verify the information before you believe a message, leave a remark on it, or repost it.



Glen Armstrong, MB APO delivering his Advocacy Report

Guest Speaker: Rob Jaska, BSc. Pharm. Pharmacist/Manager/ Owner, Super Thrifty Drugs

Rob talked about the duties of a pharmacist and the qualities to consider while choosing one. He explained how Canada Life billing works for pharmacists and how a pharmacist can assist you with any information that Canada Life may require. He discussed the Generic Substitution Program and Dispensation Fees. In Manitoba, Pharmacies are required to submit their fee schedule to Government. There were numerous questions from the members present, Rob's presentation was well received. Our branch may invite Rob if and when the National Pharmacare Program is introduced.



Rob Jaska, BSc. Pharm.

National Public Service Week June 15 to 21, 2025

At the National Association of Federal Retirees, we know that public service doesn't end with retirement. Public service is the thread that connects generations — past, present and future. It shapes the programs we rely on, the values we hold dear and the country we call home.

As part of National Public Service Week, the Western Manitoba Branch once again visited the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Station in Brandon to thank employees for their service. During the afternoon coffee break, we served ice cream to delighted employees.



Branch Volunteers prepared to hand out ice cream treats at NPSW

Focus on Western Manitoba Branch Board Members. **Introducing Jane Brunet**



Cheerful and reliable, Jane is currently a Director at Large with the branch. Jane, like most of our board members, is also a volunteer board member with other organizations.

“I worked within the Federal government in Healthcare for 35 years in many different provinces and territories. I was able to complete the goal of four different careers during my work life. When I retired, I had a period of adjustment as I was no longer traveling and working. I found things I could do to fill the time. I was asked by a former Branch President to temporarily fill in as Secretary. When that short term role ended 5 years ago, I joined the Board of Directors, and I've been a Board member since then. I enjoy the comraderies and interaction with other retirees. We are all connected in some relationship through the news and history.”

Western Manitoba Webpage Updates

There have been some significant modifications to our website, driven by what information members have requested and require regarding the PSPHC plan, links to Canada Life Member Services Website and claim forms. Also provided are linkages to the public service superannuation pension, CPP and OAS, In the Event of a Retiree's Death, and Manitoba preferred partners.

Please check it out: [Western Manitoba | Federal Retirees](#)

Outline of the webpages on our website:

Western Manitoba Branch

Branch Board Members / Contact Us

Branch By-Laws

Branch Reports / Newsletters

In the Event of Death of a Retiree

Important Links

Preferred Partners

Branch General Meetings Minutes

Preferred Partner Highlight - Brandon Mobility

Brandon Mobility has been an independent vendor for medical equipment for over 25 years! They carry an extensive selection of rental equipment to meet short- or longer-term needs. All equipment is cleaned and disinfected before use, for your safety. We are a family-owned business, and our customers are our top priority. Check out their website for more information and their list of products. Brandon Mobility will give members a 10% discount on all purchases to a maximum of \$150.

425 Pacific Ave

Brandon, MB, R7A 0H3

Tel: [\(204\) 727-6191](tel:2047276191)

Email: brandon@brandonmobility.com

Hours: Monday – Friday 8AM – 5PM



The Computer Swallowed Grandma!!

The computer swallowed Grandma.
Yes, honestly, it's true!
She pressed "control" and "enter"
And disappeared from view.

It devoured her completely.
The thought just makes me squirm.
She must have caught a virus.
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin
And files of every kind.

I've even used the internet,
But nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Mr. Google
My searches to refine.
The reply from him was negative,

Not a thing was found "on-line".
So, if inside your "inbox",
my Grandma you shall see,
Please "Copy, Scan and Paste" her,
And send her back to me!

Email addresses continue to be the best mechanism to send timely news, invitations and reminders to members, so, please ensure yours is up to date. Please contact the branch email westernmanitoba@federalretirees.ca. if you are not receiving recent emails. Or through our national office: Phone: 1-855-304-4700 Email: service@federalretirees.ca