

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL RETIREES (FSNA)

## Vancouver Island North Branch

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL RETIREES | ASSOCIATION NATIONALE DES RETRAITÉS FÉDÉRAUX



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Representing retired employees and spouses from the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, it has been a very busy time at the local, regional and national levels of FSNA.

In March, your executive, along with those from other island branches, met our new Executive Director, Sylvia Ceacero. She discussed her role and her ideas as to the direction of the FSNA. In particular, she stressed the importance of making advocacy the primary focus. We gave her feedback as to how we at the local level would like better communication from the National Office. All in all it was a constructive meeting.

We have had a few changes at the regional level that will be implemented after the June Congress. First, Jim Cotter, Provincial Advocacy Officer (PAO) for BC, retired from that position as of December 09 and our BC National Director, Julie Spencer, assumed that responsibility until a new PAO could be appointed. Al Heinrich, President of the Nanaimo Branch, has been selected for the role.

The position of BC National Director was up for election this year and we had the incumbent, Julie Spencer, and our own Regional Services Officer (RSO), John Finn, running for that job. John Finn won the election and will assume that responsibility at the end of June. John has done a great job as RSO over the past couple of years. That leaves the RSO position empty as of the end of June and, after a long search, Al Heinrich, has agreed to take on the job for one year (to complete John's term). So once again, we will be looking for a talented member to come forward to fill the RSO position.

At the National Level there will be changes from the President's position to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President level. Julie Spencer has been nominated to run for 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President.

In the next edition of On Guard you can read the biographical sketches of those running for positions on the National Board of Directors: H. Lizotte, J. Sanderson, G. Oberg, L. Chipperfield, A. Cox, R. Porsch, G. Dobson, R. Smith and J. Spencer. This year we will be electing our 12<sup>th</sup> National President.

## MEETING DATES

June 15, 2010  
September 15, 2010  
December 08, 2010

In May, I attended a Presidents' conference in Richmond with all the other BC Presidents, where we discussed strategy regarding resolutions to be presented at the Congress (Annual General Meeting) in June. We are particularly interested in our proposal for a review of voting procedures and may have to align ourselves with the interests of other branches in order to garner enough votes. The second day of the conference was an information and training session for the Health Benefits Officers.

**Please note that our June General Meeting has been pushed back one week to Tuesday, June 15, 2010.**

Have a great summer. Cecile Turnbull - President  
Vancouver Island North Branch

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## From the Editor's Desk

This edition of the newsletter is very much about the business of the National Association of Federal Retirees—FSNA.

I hope you find this edition useful. As always should you wish to contact any of the Executive members our names, addresses and phone numbers are noted below. Kevin Weighill—Newsletter Editor

**Relocation Services Group is FSNA's approved and recommended real estate, moving and mortgage provider, offering "cash back" from your real estate transactions.**

For FSNA members and their families, RSG's referring real estate brokerage will send you a "cash back" rebate of up to \$3.20 for every \$1,000 of your home sale or purchase when you book through RSG. RSG has assisted thousands of clients with all aspects of relocation, through the entire relocation process whether being transferred corporately or moving personally. Its services include: arranging for a top producing realtor at both the place of origin and destination, choosing a reliable and reputable van-line affiliated moving company to complete an in-home assessment, providing you with a quotation for the move of your household goods, and auditing of billing prior to payment which ensures no errors or overcharges have occurred.

**For further information, please call one of RSG's friendly consultants today toll-free at 1-866-865-5504.**

Visit us online at [www.relocationservicesgroup.com/fsna.htm](http://www.relocationservicesgroup.com/fsna.htm)

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**Luncheon News**

The dates for the Luncheon/Meetings for 2010 are the following:

**Tuesday, June 15,  
Wednesday, September 15 (Third week) and  
Wednesday, December 08, 2010**

**GUEST SPEAKER FOR JUNE: Beth Regehr – Lawyer from Swift Dato Law Corporation – speaking on Elder Law – Legal concerns for Seniors**

The FSNA Business/Luncheon will be held at the Westerly Hotel. A reminder that the luncheon cost is **\$15.00 per person**. This includes a hot and cold Chef's Buffet with dessert, tea, coffee, the room rental, gratuity and tax. It will be payable at the door. The doors open at 11:00 a.m. for the meet and greet. The luncheon Buffet starts at 12:00 noon and the Business meeting starts at 1:00 p.m. All new and old members are encouraged to attend. We will be having a Roast Beef Dinner.

Tickets for the **Christmas Luncheon** will be sold in advance again this year. The tickets will be available at the **June and September** meetings and after that the tickets will be available from the Executive until **November 30**. Please buy your Christmas tickets early, as we can accommodate no more than 210 members (1 room only). The cost for the tickets is \$15.00 per person. Tickets will be available by calling Cecile & Bill Turnbull @ 250-338-1857 or Barb Schneider @ 250-703-2504.

Hope to see everyone at the June meeting.

Barb Schneider—Programs

**A Reminder.**  
If you agree to attend a General Meeting Luncheon and subsequently change your mind, you must inform Barbara Schneider at (250) 703-2504.  
If you don't .....**you will be billed for the cost of the meal !!!**

**MEMBERSHIP UP-DATE**

**Do we have the correct information on you as a member?**

It is important to us and to you that our records are up to date. If the label on this newsletter has your INITIALS instead of your given name, we may not have all the information we need to ensure that you get all the updates from your branch or National Office. Please fill in the following and send it to us (address on Page 1).

Surname ..... Given names:.....

Mailing address: .....

City/town ..... Postal Code ..... Phone .....

Pension is from: CF .... PS .... RCMP .... Other ..... I receive a survivor's benefit Yes..... No .....

**It is important to let the branch know of any changes in the above information**



### **Paying Dues by Cash or Cheque**

Members who pay their dues by cash or cheque are reminded that their membership may be terminated if they are still in arrears at the end of June. Most of the members concerned have received notification and the rest will be contacted in the near future. Members who have not yet renewed are asked to do so as soon as possible. If you do not intend renewing or intend to have your dues deducted from your pension, you are asked to inform the branch so we can get our records straight. Renewal rates remain at \$44.40 double, \$34.20 single and \$15.00 for associates. If you wish to pay by pension deduction, the Treasurer has the forms required.

Uncertain of your dues status - contact the Treasurer. Associate members cannot pay by dues deduction.

T Dandeno—Treasurer

## **“NAME OUR NEWSLETTER”**

**What do you call our newsletter when you talk to others about articles in it? Is it the North Island Newsletter, the FSNA Newsletter or that information sheet we get every three months? We think our newsletter needs a name so we have decided to tap the creativity of all of you. We are therefore announcing the “Name our Newsletter Contest”**

**The rules are simple.**

- It should be a short name and can be humorous;**
- It is open to all the members of the Vancouver Island North Branch**
- The contest ends Sept 1 for winner selection at Exec. September meeting**
- Prize is \$100.00**
- Contest entries can be e-mailed or phoned in to any executive member, mailed to the Local Branch, or handed in at the March or June General Meetings. Don't forget to give us your name and contact information.**
- The winner will be announced at the September General Meeting and in the December edition of the newsletter.**

**Get your creative juices flowing and send in as many ideas as possible.**



### **Hello Phoners!**

**Members on the phone committee please remember.....**  
If you're going to be out of town prior to a general meeting and you're unable to phone the people on your list, please phone Paddy O'Blenis (Tel.- 250-338-2318), so that she can re-assign those names to another phone committee member. It is important that members know about upcoming general meetings, and it is important that we know whether or not they intend to come.

## Notes from the Health Benefits Officer

### It Pays to Ask

Recently, I was approached on behalf of a member who, a couple of years ago, was diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening disease. He responded well to medication, his doses have been progressively reduced and there is reason to believe that he will soon be completely cured. He wanted to make a short holiday trip to the USA and his specialist gave him clearance.

Our member wondered about out-of-province medical coverage and reviewed the public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) document where he noted the following exclusion:

“No benefit is payable for:

expenses for the regular treatment of an injury or disease which existed prior to the participant's departure from their province/territory of residence.”

He interpreted this to mean he would not be covered. He then called Johnson Insurance in Langley, BC about his MEDOC coverage and someone there said he would not be covered because of a pre-existing condition. The relevant section of the MEDOC policy reads:

“7. Any medical condition for which, prior to your day of departure:

You were awaiting the outcome of medical tests, the results of which show any irregularities or abnormalities;

Future investigation, consultation with any physician, treatment or surgery (except routine monitoring) is recommended by a physician or planned before your trip.”

It turns out that both of these conclusions were wrong. I called *Sun Life* and was told that, with a doctor's clearance, you are good to go. Any medical emergency, even if it's related to the pre-existing condition, will be covered.

I also contacted FSNA National Office who in turn contacted Johnson Insurance who then called our member to assure him that he was covered and apologized profusely for the error made by the local office.

So there you have it. With your doctor's clearance to travel, you are covered for that first 40 days out of province by both PSHCP and MEDOC should a medical emergency arise during your trip. “Medical Emergency” is the key phrase. Routine treatments might not be covered.

The flip side of this has to do with items that the Plan document says are covered but may be capped in some way. Before making a major expenditure on, say, some expensive piece of equipment, it's worth checking with Sun Life concerning any limitations before you commit to a purchase.

### VIHA Case Management

At our last General Meeting, Denise Wanleff, a Case Manager from the local Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) office gave us a presentation on support offered by that organization to people who are, for medical reasons, finding it difficult to live independently. For those who missed it, the following is taken from VIHA's case management document:

### ***What is Case Management?***

Case managers work in partnership with clients and their families, to coordinate appropriate community resources, to meet client's health care goals. Your Case Manager will:

- ☞ Visit you to discuss your health care needs;
- ☞ Assist you to develop a plan to meet your health care goals;
- ☞ Give you information about available resources;
- ☞ Assess eligibility for subsidized services such as home support, adult day centers or facility care and authorize payment of these resources if appropriate;
- ☞ Decide with you how to monitor your plan of care; and
- ☞ Communicate with service providers on an ongoing basis, to ensure you are receiving the help you need.

#### **General Rules**

- ◆ The services you will receive are based on the plan you and your Case Manager have developed.
- ◆ A financial assessment will be completed to determine your costs for Home Support Services and Facility (care home) costs. Please have your most recent income tax return available.
- ◆ Services that are authorized are intended to supplement what you and the people in your life can manage.
- ◆ Service priorities for Home Support are assistance with bathing, grooming, dressing and mobility to promote independence and safety.
- ◆ If short term services were set up by a liaison nurse before your discharge from hospital, a case manager will visit you at home within three weeks to review the authorized service and to complete the financial assessment.

You will note that the level of assistance is means tested. As with other BC support programs, line 236 of your last income tax return is used in this assessment ... which is a good reason for always seeking to minimize that value.

Contact information for VIHA Offices in your area follow:

### **VIHA Home and Community Care Offices North Island**

Campbell River Home and Community Care  
110 Birch Street  
Campbell River, BC V9W 2S2  
Ph: 250-850-2150 Fx: 250-850-2180

**Courtenay Home and Community Care**  
941A England Avenue  
Courtenay, BC V9N 2N7  
Ph: 250-338-5453 Fx: 250-338-9921

**Campbell River Home Support Office**  
427-10th Avenue  
Campbell River, BC V9W 4E4  
Ph: 250-850-2144 Fx: 250-850-2634

**Port Hardy and Area Seniors, Home and Community Care**  
9120 Granville Street, P.O. Box 790  
Port Hardy, BC V0N 2P0  
Ph: 250-949-3411 Fx: 250-949-7000

## Assisted Living

On a related note, for those who should no longer stay in their own homes, the next step would be to move into an “assisted living” care home. The following is taken from an article in the *Victoria Times Colonist* (20 Feb 2010):

The Vancouver Island Health Authority stipulates that someone may be eligible for publicly funded assisted living if they:

- ☞ are eligible for Home and Community Care Case Management;
- ☞ are receiving personal care assistance in the community;
- ☞ require hospitality services - meals, housekeeping, recreation supports, emergency response;
- ☞ are able to make decisions on their own behalf, or live with a spouse who is willing and able to make decisions on their behalf;
- ☞ may be at significant risk in their current living environment (e.g. falls, isolation, poor nutrition);
- ☞ are able to communicate and be understood by others; and
- ☞ have stable health conditions.

Individuals may stay in assisted living as long as:

- ☞ their health remains stable;
- ☞ they can make decisions on their own behalf or live with a spouse who makes decisions on their behalf; and
- ☞ their care needs do not exceed the provisions of assisted living.

The Community Care and Assisted Living Act (2004) provides health and safety standards for the protection of assisted living residents. The Assisted Living Registrar oversees the administration of the act and investigates complaints concerning health or safety of a resident. The toll-free number is 1-866--714-3378 and e-mail address is [info@alregistrar.bc.ca](mailto:info@alregistrar.bc.ca)

Bill Turnbull—Health Benefits Officer

### Karen Finn Resigns

Many of you know Karen from her work on the Executive as the Secretary. Following her term as Secretary she remained on the Executive as a Director. The Executive would like to express our appreciation for her service to the Branch and we wish Karen well as she supports her husband John Finn, the newly elected FSNA Regional Director who is currently recuperating from a skiing accident.

This article is interesting to read and, while written in 1996 by a former Executive Director, Jean-Guy Soulière, it is as valid today as it was then:

**THE IMPORTANCE OF A BRANCH**  
**by Jean-Guy Soulière, Executive Director**



I frequently have the good fortune to visit our branches. Some have difficulty encouraging members to be on their executive committee. I point out to prospective executive members that they need commit only 8 hours of their time a month to be an effective executive member. I have also been making a brief presentation on the importance of a branch. Here is a summary of what I tell the audience.

The Branch is the cornerstone of our Association. Without branches, our Association would not survive. Its strength is directly proportional to the strength of the branches. We must make every effort to ensure not only that branches survive, but that they thrive, keep growing and become even more dynamic in these changing times.

The main role of a Branch is to ensure that there is a link between the individual members and the National Association. It accomplishes this through a number of ways. Since each Branch is autonomous and varies in size and geography, each has its own ways of accomplishing its role but the following seems to be the norm.

A Branch accomplishes its role:

- by communicating with its members through periodic meetings, newsletters, special information meetings and training sessions;
- by participating in the management of the Association through the active recruitment and retention of members, submitting resolutions to be considered at Triennial Conventions and administering the affairs of the Branch;
- by providing services to members such as visitations, transportation;
- by participating in local/provincial advocacy, assisting the Regional Director, dealing with issues of importance to superannuates and seniors in their community and ensuring that local politicians and MPs know about FSNA and its policies;
- by organizing social activities (many branches do this even though FSNA is not a "social club"); and
- by fulfilling its responsibilities under our by-laws such as reporting to the National Office its financial statements and minutes of its annual general meetings.

A successful Branch needs a strong executive committee and must always strive to have individuals interested in seeking election to office. The training of potential Branch executives is a key to this success and the recently published revised Administrative Guidelines is one tool to assist branches.