



National Association of Federal Retirees
North Island – John Finn Branch
General Meeting
Westerly Hotel – 14 September 2016

The meeting was called to order at 1300 hours by the President, Bill Turnbull.

Margaret Crites led the singing of O Canada.

Bill welcomed Doreen, Diane and Jamie to their first luncheon/meeting.

Bill introduced the guest speakers, Aji Fliss, Cruise Travel Consultant and Deb Dewar, owner of Packables.

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved as presented. Moved by Cecile Turnbull, seconded by Elana Gosselin that the 8 June 2016 minutes be approved. Carried.

Committee Reports:

Treasurer: Serge Gosselin reported that as of 31 August 2016, the branch savings and cash accounts totaled \$51,785.80. Income for the period 01 January to 31 August 2016 was \$17,763.60 and expenses were \$12,607.46, resulting in a surplus of \$5,156.14. Moved by Serge, seconded by Norma Dean that the financial statement be accepted as presented. Carried.

Membership: Steve Bunyan was away. Bill reported that Steve said we have 722 Single and 727 Double memberships for a total of 2,176 members. This is down a little bit from the recent past.

Newsletter: Kevin Weighill was absent. Before going on holiday, Steve advised Bill that he had mailed 648 hard copies of the newsletter. Bill e-mailed 770 copies via our website but ran into a problem because the service provider, without his knowledge, had reduced the number of copies that could be sent each hour from 750 to 250. Initially only 250-300 copies went out. To ensure everyone received an e-mailed copy, it was necessary to resend to everyone. The problem has hopefully now been fixed. *Kevin needs a helper. Surely there is a member or two in the John Finn Branch who has some time and can give Kevin a hand. Anyone interested can find Kevin's contact information in the newsletter or let Bill know.*

Benefits: Clint Halfkenny advised recently retired members who have a legitimate disability not to wait until they run into financial difficulties; they should apply immediately for assistance. Clint still has Estate Documents available for \$3.00.

Programs: Cecile Turnbull thought the luncheon went very well. She reminded everyone that no tickets will be sold at the door for the December Christmas luncheon. Cecile and Bill will be leaving on the 24 September for six weeks, returning in early November. The \$20.00 Christmas tickets are a real bargain as the Westerly is charging us \$25.00 per meal plus tax and gratuity. Those who can't wait until Bill and Cecile get back to get their tickets can get them from Norma Dean or Kathi Brown. As in the past, Santa is expected to bring some 50 prizes. In addition, this year there will another big door prize for a one night Sleep and Spa package at the Kingfisher, valued at \$300.00.

Communications: Nil

Welfare: Deb Yelf reported that we lost 2 members in August; however, our sick or injured members are all doing well.

Telephone: Norma Dean said it was nice to see so many people at the meeting. She thanked the phoners for their great work finding out who is coming or not. For anyone who might have a yen to help out, Norma will be needing more phoners next year. It only takes a couple of hours three times a year in March, June and September to contact a short list of members.

History: Dale Dean is still fighting his battle with cancer; however, the chemo is working which is good news.

NEW BUSINESS:

Surplus Funds. Several years ago a regulation was passed at the National level that branches having too much money in the bank relative to their expenses would have the surplus repatriated back to Ottawa. Last year we received a small bill which we eventually paid. This hinges on how the books are kept. We keep our books the traditional way, i.e. gross income, gross expenses while Ottawa deals in net amounts. This has a significant impact on our perceived expenses. To reduce the bank balance, Serge and Bill transferred more money into our large GIC, designated as a Defence of Benefits Reserve, increasing it to \$35,000. At one time, to keep the bank balance down, we were able to donate to local charities, but that is now forbidden.

2017 Fees. Bill has been trying to find out if members who pay by credit card now will be charged the 2016 or 2017 rate.

President's Update. On the organizational side, at the June Annual Members Meeting, Roy Goodall was elected Vice President, leaving a Director vacancy in the Prairie Region. Jean Guy Soulière was elected President and Konrad von Finkenstein resigned, leaving two vacancies in the Ottawa area. All three have been filled by appointment.

Also, about eight months ago a new Director of Communications was hired but she left in August. Simon Coakeley, CEO, has looked at salary scales in the National office and they are low compared to Public Service pay rates but about middle of the pack for non-profit organizations in the Ottawa area. Good bilingual talent in Ottawa often gets 'head-hunted'. Probably using some of his connections, Simon has recruited Andrew McGillivray to act as interim Director of Communications for the next few months while a formal process is launched to hire a new Director. This gives us a couple of high-powered, well-connected retired public servants in National Office which is probably a good thing. The rest of the National Office staff seems relatively stable.

Guest Speaker. Bill introduced Aji Fliss, a certified travel consultant with over 20 years' experience. She is hosting a River Cruise presentation in the Platinum Ballroom at Crown Isle Resort on November 15, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. Those wishing to attend should RSVP Aji by October 15 at 250-898-3358 or afliss@shaw.ca. Aji showed a short video presentation on Viking River Cruises.

Bill next introduced Deb Dewar, owner of Packables. Her presentation focused on mitigating potential travel disasters. She strongly advised learning the rules on what can be packed in a carry-on bag. Prescriptions must be in their original containers or in blister packs with copies of the prescriptions attached. She recommended carrying currency in a money belt and dispersing valuables as much as possible; locking all suitcase compartments prevent unknowingly becoming a "mule" for some drug trafficker; and shredding bar-coded boarding cards rather than simply discarding them.

Well in advance of departure, travellers should check the expiry dates of passports, bank and credit cards and determine where visas are required. Another suggestion was to make high quality copies of all travel documents including passports with the picture being clear and recognizable, certificates of immunization/vaccination, any letters of authorization, prescriptions including glasses and hearing aids, credit and bank cards (front and back). She recommended getting the phone numbers of Canadian embassies in countries to be visited (or the British Embassy if there is no Canadian embassy). People with online e-mail accounts like G-Mail could store sensitive information in a password-protected document and send it to themselves. That way, if needed, it can be retrieved via the internet from just about anywhere.

The two 50/50 draw winners were Martin Thompson and Dave Brown.

The \$50.00 Boston Pizza door prize winner was Allen Angst.

A travel bag donated by Deb Dewar was won by Midge Swedberg.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1430 hours.

Edith Kelly, Secretary

Bill Turnbull, President