

STAYING IN TOUCH



National Association
of Federal Retirees
Association nationale
des retraités fédéraux
NORTH ISLAND - JOHN FINN

North Island - John Finn

Newsletter No. 73

June 2017

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Important Message

The June meeting is on June 14th, 2017 at the Best Western Westerly Hotel in Courtenay. The "SAGE" magazine announcement is a misprint.

Important Notice Regarding Our 14 June Luncheon Meeting

We are still suffering from a shortage of telephoners. To reduce the workload on those who remain, we've cut way back on our call lists. Anyone who receives this newsletter via e-mail will get an e-mail invitation to the meeting rather than a telephone call. All you have to do is reply or send a message to info@nijf.ca telling us who is coming.

For those who receive this newsletter in print: if you have not been called before the weekend prior to the meeting and wish to attend, please call Norma Dean at 250-890-1218 or Cecile Turnbull at 250-338-1857 by Sunday, June 11th.

The reason for this request is that we have to advise the Westerly Hotel as to how many people will be attending. If the number we give them is too small, then we could run out of food. If it's too big, then we end up for paying for meals that don't get eaten.



President's MESSAGE

As you know, Kevin Weighill has been editing our newsletter for something like a decade now. One of the related tasks he volunteered to take on was getting our Branch announcements into Sage magazine. That has been a source of some frustration for him because, occasionally, we've been left out entirely. We did make it into the recently released Summer 2017 edition but the date of our next general meeting is incorrectly reported there as June 1st. Forget that date. The meeting will actually take place, as it always does, on the second Wednesday of the month, June 14th.

President's message continues on Page 2

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MEETING DATES

June 14, 2017
September 13, 2017
December 13, 2017

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By the way, Kevin could really use an assistant editor – someone to back him up. If, for some reason, circumstances prevented him from completing an edition, there would be none. We're almost in that boat right now as Kevin has been working flat out on the BC election. So, if you think you might like to get involved and help out, why not get in touch with him?

I guess another by-the-way is that, if you'd like to help out with phone calls, please get in touch with Norma Dean. The job involves only an hour or two of calls, once every three months.

PSHCP Legal Challenge

If you've been checking your pay records, you will have noticed that your PSHCP health care premiums have gone up again. This is, of course, a continuation of the transition to 50/50 cost-sharing between (former) employee and (former) employer. We are currently at 44/56.

Just to refresh your memories, for a long time, the Harper government avoided dealing openly with the PSHCP file. In the end, then Treasury Board president, Tony Clement (a holdover from the neo-conservative Mike Harris "Common Sense Revolution" which closed Ontario hospitals and fragmented Ontario Hydro) said something like, "Let's negotiate but 50/50 is not negotiable." This was hardly negotiation in good faith from a guy who had previously been censured by the Labour Relations Board over failure to negotiate in good faith with the Foreign Service Officers.

This prompted our Association to mount a legal challenge seeking to prove that the government was wrong to do what it did. It has taken a couple of years for the case to make its way to the courtroom. It finally did and the following account of both sides' legal arguments is taken from a recent National Office bulletin to branch executives:

"Federal Retirees' case against the government's unilateral decision to increase pensioners' share of PSHCP costs from 25% to 50% was heard at the Federal Court in Ottawa on April 10 and 11 by Madam Justice Anne-Marie McDonald. David Law and Guy Régimbald, assisted by student-at-law John Wilson, represented Federal Retirees. Christopher Rupar and Jennifer Lewis represented the Federal Government.

The case was filed by way of application, seeking a declaration from the Federal Court that Treasury Board had unlawfully violated contractual obligations to the National Association of Federal Retirees as well as certain constitutional rights of individual retirees and the Association, when it coerced the Federal Retirees into 'agreeing' to the changes and then implemented the PSHCP changes.

The application made four separate complaints:

- That the Government breached its contractual obligations and the vested rights of retirees by doubling retirees' contribution rates.
- That the Government's actions violated the rights of association of the National Association of Federal Retirees and our members under section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ("the Charter").
- That the government's actions constituted discrimination on the basis of age/or retirement status contrary to section 15 of the Charter.
- That the increase in costs to retirees has the potential to harm the life and security of retirees contrary to section 7 of the Charter.

Our lawyers also argued that none of the alleged Charter breaches could be justified under section 1 of the Charter.

The Government's argument was that retiree benefits are a statutory entitlement, not a contractual obligation, and therefore rather than being vested rights, they can be changed by the President of the Treasury Board. With regard to the Charter arguments, the Government's position was that while association rights may exist, they were not breached, nor were any equality or security rights breached by the Government's actions.

The Government repeated the position that it has advanced since the application was initially filed that essentially retirees are lucky to have the PSHCP, that they can generally afford it and should not complain. Our lawyers pointed out that this is inherently contemptuous of retirees and, more importantly, irrelevant to the issues before the Court.

Continued on Page 3

Basically our lawyers asked the Court to declare, at a minimum:

- ◆ that contractual rights existed;
- ◆ that those rights included vested rights in respect of retirement benefits, in particular an agreement not to change the 25-75 contribution rate without engaging in the negotiating process, including binding arbitration, set out in the relevant PSHCP documents;
- ◆ that those vested rights could not be unilaterally changed by the Government;
- ◆ that the Government bargained with the Association in bad faith and the "agreement" it imposed in March 2014 breached the vested contractual rights; and
- ◆ that the Government's conduct violated section 2(d) of the Charter.

A decision is not anticipated before early summer, given the size and complexity of the case."

I'm not sure about you but I find the government's position that retirees can afford the premium increase contemptuous indeed. The average annual pension among our members is in the neighborhood of \$28,000. That is not a lot of money. For many, the eventual doubling of premiums will be significant. About the only concession wrung from Treasury Board back in 2014 was to freeze the premiums of very low income pensioners – those who qualify for the guaranteed income supplement.

So we await the judge's ruling. I don't know that anyone expects a reversal of the premium increases. This is more about establishing the principle that governments should not be allowed to arbitrarily alter accrued benefits (and, by extension, earned pensions).

Bill Turnbull, Branch President

The Final Analysis

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives;

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will acquire some false friends and some true enemies;

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;

Be honest and frank anyway.

If you spend years building, someone may destroy what you have built overnight;

Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, people may be jealous;

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people may forget tomorrow;

Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may just never be good enough;

Give the world the best you have anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it's all between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

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 Norma Dean (Tel.- 250-890-1218), 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.

NAFR NORTH ISLAND — JOHN FINN BRANCH EXECUTIVE

Past President	Cecile Turnbull	338-1857	cecile.turnbull@shaw.ca
President	Bill Turnbull	338-1857	bc.turnbull@shaw.ca
Vice President	Kathi Brown	334-1792	brodak@shaw.ca
Secretary	Edith Kelly	703-9501	edikay@shaw.ca
Treasurer	Serge Gosselin	338-0846	sergegos@shaw.ca
Communications	Unencumbered		
Membership	Steve Bunyan	897-1181	sgbunyan@shaw.ca
Health Benefits Officer	Clint Halfkenny	338-2613	clin-bar@shaw.ca
Historian	Dale Dean	890-1218	dd1218@shaw.ca
Telephone	Norma Dean	890-1218	n-ad-2@hotmail.com
Programs	Cecile Turnbull	338-1857	cecile.turnbull@shaw.ca
Newsletter Editor	Kevin Weighill	926-6032	deonoi@telus.net
Welfare	Deborah Yelf	897-0106	dyelf49@shaw.ca
Director	Nancy Bennett	339-7748	nancy7748@gmail.com
Director	Dave Bell	334-4566	drtrucking@shaw.ca
Independent Financial Review Committee 2015:			
	John Renaud	339-7042	
	Dave Shewchuk	331-0210	

From the Editor's Desk

Summer is finally here. I apologize for the misprint in the recent SAGE Magazine announcement. By the time you read this the election should be decided. What a time! As the Elections BC, District Electoral Officer for the North Island it has been quite a time preparing for the election and then managing it. I am very glad to be done on the North Island.

Because I have been very busy the past 3 months this edition is a little light. Still I hope you find it interesting. The President's message provides an update on the Association's actions on the increase in the Public Service Health Care Plan. With the summer here, there is an article on Healthy Grilling. Of course I added some humour, both visual and in story form.

Please note the paid travel ad by one of our members, Aji Fliss. Kevin Weighill—Newsletter Editor

Publisher
NORTH ISLAND
JOHN FINN BRANCH
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FEDERAL RETIREES
(NAFR)

Mailing Address: NAFR
North Island—John Finn Branch
P.O. Box 1420,
Comox BC V9M 7Z9
President: Bill Turnbull
 Phone: (250) 338-1857
 E-mail: bc.turnbull@shaw.ca
Editor: Kevin Weighill.
 #114 - 2006 Sierra Drive
 Campbell River BC V9H 1V6,
 Phone (778) 346-1710
 Email: kpweigh@shaw.ca
Representing retired employees
and spouses
From the Public Service of
Canada, the Canadian Forces and
the Royal Canadian Mounted
Police

Luncheon News

Hi Folks – we will be celebrating **Canada's 150th Birthday** at the next Federal Retirees Luncheon/Meeting Wednesday, June 14th, 2017 in the 2nd floor Ballroom of the Best Western Westerly Hotel in Courtenay:

Meet & Greet: 11:00 a.m.

Buffet Luncheon: 12:00 p.m.

Business Meeting: 1:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: 1:30 p.m. - Wendy Johnstone of Keystone Eldercare Solutions.

To Celebrate Canada Day

we are having an indoor BBQ Lunch which includes:

Chicken or Beef Patty Burgers with white/whole wheat buns

All the fixings – Cheese slices, tomatoes, lettuce, red onion

Mustard, relish, ketchup, mayo

Pasta, Potato and a green salad with dressing

Fresh strawberry fruit tarts and fruit kebabs (one each per person)

The cost of the buffet lunch is \$18.00 per person - payable at the door.

Telephoners will be calling you to reserve with them, or if you do not receive a call you can call Norma Dean at 250-890-1218. If you wish you can e-mail Norma at n-ad-2@hotmail.com.

As usual we will have our 50/50 and door prize draws.

Our Xmas ticket sales will start at this meeting, so if you plan to be around in December, be sure to get your tickets early. \$20.00 per person – No sales at the door in December.

Cecile Turnbull - Programs Director

Membership Fee Reminder

A short note concerning membership . The fees for 2017 are:

- ★ Single memberships cost \$47.76
- ★ Double memberships are \$62.04

You can read more about the revised fee structure in the fall 2016 edition of *Sage* magazine. Also, the Association recently announced that it will no longer issue renewal stickers for membership cards. This will save about \$100,000 annually.

If your fees are not deducted from your pension, you can mail a cheque to:
NAFR, PO Box 1420 , Comox, BC V9M 7Z9



60 Minutes Correspondent Andy Rooney (CBS)

As I grow in age, I value women over 40 most of all. Here are just a few reasons why:

A woman over 40 will never wake you in the middle of the night and ask, 'What are you thinking?' She doesn't care what you think.

If a woman over 40 doesn't want to watch the game, she doesn't sit around whining about it. She does something she wants to do, and it's usually more interesting.

Women over 40 are dignified. They seldom have a screaming match with you at the opera or in the middle of an expensive restaurant. Of course, if you deserve it, they won't hesitate to shoot you if they think they can get away with it.

Older women are generous with praise, often undeserved. They know what it's like to be unappreciated.

Women get psychic as they age. You never have to confess your sins to a woman over 40.

Once you get past a wrinkle or two, a woman over 40 is far sexier than her younger counterpart.

Older women are forthright and honest. They'll tell you right off if you are a jerk if you are acting like one. You don't ever have to wonder where you stand with her.

Yes, we praise women over 40 for a multitude of reasons. Unfortunately, it's not reciprocal. For every stunning, smart, well-coiffed, hot woman over 40, there is a bald, paunchy relic in yellow pants making a fool of himself with some 22-year old waitress. Ladies, I apologize.

For all those men who say, 'Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?', here's an update for you. Nowadays 80% of women are against marriage. Why? Because women realize it's not worth buying an entire pig just to get a little sausage!

Andy Rooney is a really smart guy!

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass.....
It's about learning to dance in the rain.

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

E-mail address:.....

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

Healthy Grilling

By Karen Ansel, MS, RDN, CDN

Warmer weather means it's time to get out of the kitchen and fire up the barbecue. While grilled foods are packed with flavor, the way you prepare them can have a big impact on how healthy they are. Follow these simple steps for a cookout that's tasty *and* good for you.

Dial Down the Heat

When proteins in meat, chicken and fish are cooked at searing temperatures, cancer-causing compounds called heterocyclic amines, or HCAs, form, especially where meat is charred. "Charred meats that have been grilled at high temperatures or over an open flame undergo changes that increase chemicals that may increase the risk of cancer," says Kristen Gradney, RDN, LDN, a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "It is best to grill meat low and slow to prevent excess charring." Flipping food frequently also can prevent crusting.

Note: Always [use a food thermometer](#) to ensure food has reached a safe minimum internal cooking temperature.

Cut the Fat

Fat from meat can drip into your grill's flame, causing it to flare up. The flame and resulting smoke contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, which have also been linked to cancer. Trimming the fat from meat prior to cooking can reduce PAHs, as can removing skin from chicken or fish. Cooking outside the flame rather than directly over it can also help prevent flaring.

Marinate

One easy way to minimize HCAs and PAHs is to [marinate meat](#) for at least 30 minutes before grilling. Acidic ingredients such as vinegar, lemon juice or orange juice are especially effective. Or try beer, wine or even green tea.

Mix It Up

Fruits and vegetables are less likely to form carcinogens at high heat, so try swapping produce for some of your animal protein. Barbecue a veggie burger or portobello mushroom. Thread tomatoes, onions, squash and peppers on kebabs. Or grill pineapple, peaches or nectarines for a gooey, naturally sweet dessert. You'll cut carcinogens and add cancer-fighting phytochemicals to your meal in the process.

Keep It Clean

Too much heat isn't the only thing that can turn a good barbecue bad. Make sure your food is safe by discarding any unused marinade and using clean utensils and plates for cooked food. "Cooking with a clean grill, free of lighter fluid or charcoal, prevents the contamination and consumption of food with these harmful substances," says Gradney. When the cookout is over, make sure your grill cleaning brush has no loose bristles that can fall onto the grates and potentially stick to food next time you grill.



Somebody forgot where they left their glasses

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