

STAYING IN TOUCH



North Island - John Finn

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President's MESSAGE

Hello everyone.

I am sitting at my computer and looking outside to a dreary, rainy sky. It seems very fall like for the end of August, so I am hoping that we get another shot at summer before we have to put away our sandals and shorts and dig out the sweaters and long pants. Despite the continued restrictions due to COVID19 I hope you have been able to enjoy your summer.

COVID19 is still with us and as a result has meant we have not been able to meet in groups larger than 50 and must distance ourselves at least 2 meters (six feet) apart. That makes it pretty much impossible to stage a luncheon meeting for our branch. This is a common issue across all branches and have been advised by National Office to cancel both our September meeting and our Christmas Party. We regret having to do this but as they say, "its better to be safe than sorry." Hopefully, things will improve in 2021 and we can resume our normal schedule of meetings.

During the past three months your executive has been busy. Because we cannot meet in person the favoured methods of communication have been through Zoom meetings, e-blasts and written memos. Our executive meetings have been held using Zoom and several of us have been involved in Zoom meetings on topics such as Advocacy, Membership and Health Benefits. During Public Service Week in June we joined other branches across Canada in an attempt to foster better linkages between retired and working civil servants by putting an ad in local papers thanking them for their hard work and dedication. Health Benefits has seen an increase in the number of questions and concerns raised on a variety of issues. Advocacy has become a major file for the NAFR and will continue to grow in importance over the coming months. There are many important issues that affect seniors and National Office has developed a plan for advocating with senior government officials at the Federal and Provincial levels on the following topics:

- Long Term Care
- National Pharmacare
- National Seniors Strategy
- Veterans.

Our advocacy on current issues such as mentioned above, benefits not only federal retirees but seniors in general.

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MEETING DATES

All meetings cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Watch the Newsletter for Information as the situation evolves

President's Message Continued from Page 1

There is concern that federal pensions will again be scrutinized as a source of funds to offset the deficit brought about by the various new programs to support Canadians through the pandemic. I emphasize that this has not been stated by any political party to date. It is just a concern it might happen. National Office is preparing materials to meet this issue head on if it should happen. The last attempt to rejig our pensions died on the order paper but it does not mean the concept has died. NAFR is there for all of us to protect our pensions and any attack on them would become their number one priority. Please remember this when it comes time to renew your membership. NAFR is more than MEDOC. It is there to fight on our behalf. Also, check out the other Preferred Partners. I now get my cell phone service through Simply Connect and am very pleased with the service and price. I switched my home insurance to Johnson - same terms and conditions, cheaper price. We are all looking for savings these days so consider taking advantage of what your organization has been able to negotiate for you.

Well, that's about it from me for this time. I hope you are all staying safe and well. This too will pass. To quote Dr. Bonnie Henry, "stay safe, be calm and be kind."

Norma Dean

President – North Island -John Finn Branch

Information from the Health Benefits Officer

There have been four requests for information or assistance since my last report.

A member requested information on Personal Response Systems. Information was given for member to make own choice.

A member was requesting a cash refund from an airline instead of a travel voucher. The request was referred to National Office, but airlines were requesting help from the Federal Government to be able to issue cash refunds. This help was not available at the time and the Federal Government condoned the issue of travel vouchers.

A member requested clarification on travel insurance for Covid-19. The Federal Government had issued travel advisories not to travel outside of Canada and travel insurance was not available.

We have a member experiencing Phoenix problems:

Outstanding pay. b) Retro pay. c) Unused vacation pay.

These problems were referred to National Office, but their replies were not encouraging for members with these or similar problems. The Phoenix payroll system is not very efficient and many retirees are facing various difficulties. Unfortunately there is a large backlog of cases, making quick results almost unobtainable. Some retirees affected by serious illness or financial distress have been able to get quicker results by contacting their MP. More information is available at the website: <https://www.federalretirees.ca/en/advocacy/phoenix-backgrounder>

I am asking any member who calls me to leave a message on my voice mail if I am not available to take your call, because I do not call back any phone number on my caller ID I do not recognise, as I have received many scam and robo calls recently.

Gordon Richardson. HBO Phone# (250) 339 5446

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From the Editor's Desk

This unprecedented time in our lives has changed everything! Those of us retired for some time are more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 which has cooled the options for travel, visiting friends and even taken the fun out of shopping. My wife and I have been keeping our contacts with others to a minimum other than for those in our "bubble".

The newsletter this quarter is a bit thin so I have scouted the net for items of interest so I hope that you find this edition worth perusing.

I agreed to continue as the newsletter editor for only one more year when the nominating committee was asking those of us up for re-election if we would run again.

After this edition I will only be putting together the December 2020 and March 2021 editions. Hopefully one of you will come forward in the interim willing to take over. Should no one step forward, I fear that the newsletter publication will be discontinued. Regardless of that fact, after working on it since 2005 it is time for me to pass the baton.

I will be happy to provide some guidance and I will prepare the base copy for the balance of the 2021/22 period so that whoever takes over can simply add the information in the appropriate areas. I will also provide digital copies of all the editions for which I have been responsible.

Kevin Weighill—Newsletter Editor

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Representing retired employees
and spouses

From the Public Service of
Canada, the Canadian Forces and
the Royal Canadian Mounted
Police

Luncheon News

The National Office has recommended that all gatherings be suspended until at least 2021. They may be suspended longer depending on COVID 19.

Paddy O'Blenis - Programs Director

Signs of Poor Nutrition in Seniors

Learning all about good nutrition for seniors is a wise move, but you should also know the warning signs of poor nutrition. You or your loved one may experience symptoms that point to a nutritional deficiency that can be resolved with dietary changes. If you suspect any kind of deficiency, then follow up with your doctor in order to be properly tested. Here are some common signs that may indicate that certain vitamins or minerals are lacking from your or your family member's diet:

- Brittle or dry hair, or increased hair loss
- Mouth issues—such as cracking or inflammation at the corners of the mouth or a pale, smooth, or swollen tongue
- Nails becoming dry and brittle, developing ridges, or taking on a spoon-like shape where they come off the nail bed
- Poor digestion or sudden or unexpected changes like constipation or diarrhea
- Unexplained fatigue, especially if no sleep issues are present
- Unexplained mood changes such as anxiety, depression, irritability, or general moodiness
- Unexplained weight loss

Weight loss is a common concern for many older seniors. It may become necessary to eat every two or three hours, eat larger portions at the time of day when your appetite is strongest, incorporate healthy fats into your diet, make healthy smoothies for snacks, and have a healthy bedtime snack.

Additionally, if you smoke, then speak to a healthcare professional about resources that can help you quit. (Smoking can reduce your appetite and ability to taste.)

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH FEDERAL RETIREES AND ADVOCACY IN BC?

“We cannot control the winds, but we can adjust the sails.”

Due to the Covid 19, all of us are experiencing a major transition in our lives. We need to create new ways of living our lives but remain part of the community and learn to find happiness within the constraints imposed upon us.

The advocacy work of the National Association of Federal Retirees is also affected. The Advocacy Team in National Office has been working closely with the Nation Advocacy Committee, the National Board of Directors, and the provincial Advocacy Program Officers to adjust to our new reality.

The Advocacy Program Officer for the BC region is Leslie Gaudet.

Following up on the great success we collectively achieved during the 2019 Federal Election, the National Office of the NAFR were starting to launch Reach 338 in February. Reach 338 is a project aimed at having each Member of Parliament (MP) connected with a local branch by the end of a four-year election cycle. Then everything changed, our National Office staff started working from home and many plans had to pivot to the virtual reality.

Branches are now getting ready to move to set up virtual meetings with MPs starting with the 18 MPs identified as priority out of the total 43 MPs for BC and the Yukon. The two MPs for the North Island – John Finn branch are Gord Johns and Rachel Blaney.

National Office advocacy staff have adapted a wealth of material to our current situation, focusing on our four key priorities of National Seniors Strategy, Retirement Income Security, Pharmacare, and Veterans. Over the next weeks, a related campaign on Long Term Care will be rolled out, starting with a recent email asking members to send a letter to their local MP or MLA. This fall will also see us take action on the Annual Federal Budget consultation.

The Long-Term Care campaign calls for national standards for both long term care and home and community care to ensure a full range of services is available to Canadians in their homes and communities. The goal is to attain better health outcomes and quality of life. Federal Retirees call on all governments to collaborate on a national review of long-term care, with a view to implement a national framework that:

- ensures appropriate levels of funding;
- ties funding to national criteria and care standards;
- establishes a national health workforce planning strategy; and recognizes and supports informal caregivers as crucial partners in delivering care.

Such a review must be public, independent, evidence-based and informed by older adults, informal caregivers and subject matter experts.

In BC, we will organize a provincial arm of this plan, through contacting our MLAs. This will ready us for the provincial election which will take place by October 2021. Your interest and support of these efforts will be crucial to make real change for Long Term Care. We are counting on your enthusiasm and commitment.

If you have questions, concerns or would like to get involved in participating in any or all of these endeavours please contact your president, Norma Dean or your Advocacy Officer Warren Kelley.

We are reachable by phone or email or if you recognize us in the parking lot of the grocery store. We will be the ones wearing masks. We hope you are also.

Please take care, stay safe and be kind.

Looking to save money, look no further. Here is a list of discounts available to seniors in Canada.

The following list includes the store, discount, and minimum age requirement. The list is not all inclusive as I am sure there are others of which I am not aware.

- **A&W (age: 60+):** 10% off food purchases, every day.
- **The Bay (age: 60+):** 15% off your purchase, first Tuesday of every month.
- **Bulk Barn (age: students AND 60+):** 10% off your purchase, every Wednesday. Discount cannot be combined with any other discount (\$3 off \$10 coupons).
- **Canadian Tire (age: 65+):** 10% off regular priced items, first Wednesday of every month.
- **Golden Griddle (age: 55+):** 10% discount, excluding alcohol, every day.
- **Go Transit (age: 65+):** 1/2 price of a single ride adult fare, every day.
- **Greyhound (age: 62+):** 10% off your purchase, every day.
- **Imperial Buffet (age: 65+):** 25% off the buffet price, every day.
- **Lawtons Drug (age: 55+):** 20% off select merchandise, every day.
- **M&M Meats (age: 60+):** 5% off your purchase, every Tuesday.
- **Mandarin Chinese Buffet (age: 65+):** 20% off the buffet price, every day.
- **Marriott (age: 62+):** 15% off or more on your room rate, every day.
- **McDonalds (age: 60+):** Large coffee for \$0.85, every day.
- **Rexall PharmaPlus (age: 55+):** 20% off your purchase of regular priced merchandise every Tuesday of the Month.
- **Rona (age: 65+):** 10% off your regular priced purchase. First Tuesday of the month.
- **Salvation Army (age: 60+):** 10% off your purchase, every day. Discount cannot be combined with other offers.
- **Shoppers Drug Mart (age: 55+):** 20% off your purchase of regular priced merchandise (excludes certain items), every Thursday.
- **Smitty's:** With a \$2 annual fee, receive a \$5 gift certificate and save 15% off any menu or retail item, every day.
- **Value Village (age : 55+):** 10% off your purchase, every Tuesday.
- **Via Rail (age: 60+):** Save on adult regular fare, every day.

Cook Like My Mother

"Darling," said the husband to his new bride, "I am not casting any reflections on your cooking, but I sure wish you could learn to make the kinda of bread my mother use to make."

"I don't think that should be too difficult," she said sweetly, "If you will learn to make the dough my father used to make."

TOP TEN CONCERNS OF SENIORS

Oct 14th, 2011 | By [Dr Jerry D Elrod](#) | Category: [Senior Moments Blog](#)

Senior citizens carry a variety of concerns around with them these days. Issues vary from one person to another, but there are likely some commonalities as well. SCJ recently found a post on the query list that identifies search terms our readers use to find topics of interest. Someone inquired about the **top 10 concerns of seniors**.

We thought we might give it a stab, knowing that, unlike Dave Letterman, we won't be able to come up with such humorous and prosaic lists as he does. But here are the ones SCJ editors generally agree could likely be the top ten.

Here goes:

- To **stay healthy**.
- To be **financially secure**.
- To encourage **love** in my life.
- To **worry less and be happy more**.
- To **enjoy my spouse (partner), family and my own person every day**.
- To be **open to new adventures**.
- To be **kind, thoughtful and caring** to others.
- To **have a reason to be**.
- To **feel safe**.
- To discover and sustain **contentment in my life**.

This is my list and only mine. *While it may not speak for you, why not make your own list?* It might be a good exercise for us seniors to identify the top ten concerns in one's life. Post it somewhere prominently so you are reminded of it and allow it to open a window to your soul. Use your own words. Explore your own deepest desires and wishes. Discuss it with trusted friends and family members.

Check on yourself now and again to be sure you are addressing your list of concerns as completely as possible. Change it, modify it, rework it as necessity and insight demand.

Strive to be happy and good and whole in all that you do.

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

Parrot Skills

A man entered a pet shop, wanting to buy a parrot. The shop owner pointed out three identical parrots on a perch and said, "The parrot to the left costs 500 dollars."

"Why does that parrot cost so much?" the man wondered.

The owner replied, "Well, it knows how to use a computer."

The man asked about the next parrot on the perch.

"That one costs 1,000 dollars because it can do everything the other parrot can do, plus it knows how to use the UNIX operating system."

Naturally, the startled customer asked about the third parrot.

"That one costs 2,000 dollars."

"And what does that one do?" the man asked.

The owner replied, "To be honest, I've never seen him do a thing, but the other two call him boss!"

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