

BRANCH REPORT

NB65 | Fundy Shores

President's message

I hope that this newsletter finds you in good spirits as the summer draws to a close and that you were able to spend much needed time with family and friends. Inch by inch we are getting back to a more normal life.

Since my last report to you much has happened, so I will start from early April moving forward to the Annual Members Meeting that was held in late June, in person in Ottawa. July and August are slower months with almost nothing to report.

The branch was able to have a general meeting in early April via Zoom, but with just enough members to make quorum. We had a lot of business to take care of and I will bring you up to speed.

Our treasurer, Donna Bovolaneas, took on the hard work of rewriting the branch bylaws as they were not up to par with the national requirements. She wrote, I checked and then back and forth with questions to the national office, we succeeded in developing a document that will last for some time. My sincere thanks to Donna on this project, much appreciated.

Since the new bylaws had passed the members, we needed their approval to keep the current board in place until 2023. Under the new bylaws board members can only stay on for 2 terms of 3 years each. We had promised the branch members we would remain in place for consistency during the pandemic. We held firm on that idea to provide the best service to you as members. Many on the board will no longer be there after April 2023. New faces and names will come on to support you, but we will need your help in this task.

The second item was our finances and again Donna did a great job. We have 4 reserves moving forward, with slight increases in them to cover inflation. We have our annual income from the members to cover our operating expenses and a few cents left over. I had hoped to have an in-person meeting with the membership this fall, but there is still a reluctance to meet face-to-face. We plan to have a meeting next spring and hopefully a nice dinner to celebrate our 60th anniversary.

Membership in the branch has dropped slightly to approximately 1,100 but that is not of great concern as new members have joined.



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We were also able to elect a new board member, Howard Pearn. Thank you for the commitment to work with us as we keep moving forward.

I closed out the general meeting with a quick overview of my work here and what I have been doing on the national level.

In mid April there was a 2-day regional meeting for presidents in Dartmouth. I was unable to attend as I was away visiting my daughter in Utah. Geoff Howson was kind enough to go in my place and his report is as follows:

Dear members of Fundy Shores,

On behalf of Lorraine Scott, our branch president, I was asked if I would attend the Atlantic District Annual Meeting of Federal Retirees held in Dartmouth, N.S from April 20-21 of this year.

I found the meeting most interesting and was thrilled at the amazing gifts and talents that make up our organization. We are part of an incredible group of people committed to the welfare of federal retirees.

Some of the topics discussed were volunteer burnout, declining membership in some branches, communication, and how to spread the good news of our organization to government employees who are not yet retired and who can join whether they are retired or not.

Observing the intense interest of folks trying to discern who would be the next federal president of the Association of Federal Retirees was enlightening. Hopefully in the future Zoom presentations will not be the norm since one does not get a full flavour of the people who were running for president and district representatives who sit on the national committee. Lorraine can fill you in on all those details!

A very important issue discussed was the present negotiations with the treasury board over the public service health and dental plan. We all know this is of utmost importance and we will await the outcome in the coming months. This issue will be something the new president of the Association and executive director will be focussing on for the foreseeable future.

At the meeting, most of us met the new Association executive director, Anthony Pizzino, for the first time. My impression is that he committed to strengthening the bonds between the branches of the organization and the national office. He certainly was made aware of the concerns of local branches wanting more transparency and two-way conversations between the national office and the branches outside the Ottawa region.

Finally, the need to strengthen our advocacy work was a topic of the meeting. It is apparent that we must keep our local Members of Parliament informed of our work and to advocate for improvements for seniors, not just federal retirees. A concern that was raised was the need to re-visit the impact of retirees remarrying after they have left the federal government. As you know if you remarry, whether as the result of divorce or the death of a partner, that person does not receive any benefits or pension after the retiree dies. It is a complicated issue, and my understanding is that while the national office has raised the issue it is not at all certain what the outcome will be on this matter.

Geoffrey Howson.

On behalf of the board, thank you for your report and support, Geoffrey.

I attended the Annual Members Meeting in Ottawa in June along with Geoff Howson as an observer from the branch. This meeting was conducted in-person and via Zoom for those that were not able to make the trip there. It was also live streamed if anyone wanted to follow the proceedings.

I have worked for the past few years as a co-chair of the presidents with Richard Chevarie from the Lethbridge, Alberta branch. After a long hiatus, we were able to hold the forum where presidents got to input their ideas on at least 2 very important questions presented to them. The information was gathered and will be sent back to us for follow-up. Richard and I do not want this information to be just another piece of paper, but a work in progress for the future co-chairs. We had great feedback and we were pleased with what was presented to us.

I attended an advocacy workshop on storytelling and how it effects your work and effort in advocacy. Olivia Chow was the presenter of this very informative morning. She is a very good storyteller herself and shared tips and tricks to improve your approach. I really enjoyed it.

The last bit, but not the least, of national news is that Jean-Guy Souliere retired as your national president. Not that he wanted to give up the job, but his mandate had come to an end. Our new national president is our former vice-president, Roy Goodall from Calgary. I have worked with Roy over the past few years and look forward to his leadership in the future. Congrats Roy!

On the regional level we said a fond farewell to Len Leblanc as a director from Atlantic Canada, as his mandate had expired as well. Len will be missed as it was a pleasure to work with over the past 6 years. We wish you well. Our new director is Roland Wells from Newfoundland. Welcome aboard and hope to see you in this area soon. Congrats to Roland!

There were 2 new directors elected as well, one for BC and one for Quebec. New faces with new ideas should prove to be good down the road.

So much for the national scene back to branch info. Over the fall and winter the branch board will be meeting in-person, working on new members for the board and our 60th Anniversary celebrations. I have asked before and I am asking again, if anyone would like to join the board or help in our anniversary dinner, please feel free to contact me. Many hands make light work.

If anyone is interested and wants to see our new by-laws or financial statements, please contact me and I will gladly email them to you.

That wraps up all that I have to share. Do take care.

Lorraine Scott

President

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