

Branch Report

Western Manitoba MB30 Branch

Annual General Meeting April 12, 2022

Throughout the year, the board, like other organizations and businesses struggled with not being able to safely host in-person activities. The board was concerned with implementing the strict screening process, not only imposed provincially, but also by our national office - which may have caused members to wait outside in colder weather while we check id's and have tracing forms completed. Now, with the restrictions somewhat lifted, we are currently planning a members' barbecue luncheon in early August and hopefully our next in-person members meeting will be in September.

Going over the past year I have summarized the Branch activities:

April to June 2021 we posted ads in the Brandon Sun, South Mountain Press (Erickson, Onanole) and Boissevain Recorder. These ads carried the message "Who are we". Primarily designed as a recruitment promotions, it was also a reminder to all our members that we were still functioning as a branch, we are still here.

In July 2021, We received 50 free copies of the workbook "You and Your Survivor" (Y&YS) from National Office. The Branch board of directors believe this workbook is a valuable estate planning tool. This 64-page guide provides advice on preparing and documenting all the principal information for survivors and executors. Although it is available online as a fillable PDF format, the board decided some members may find the downloading and printing of 64 pages cumbersome and thus, we choose to offer members a copy of the workbook upon request. We communicated this offer by an Eblast (which is an email generated and sent to all branch members by staff at National Office) and added the offer on our webpage. By September, 15 workbooks were delivered in the Brandon area and 9 workbooks were mailed.

The branch ordered another 50 workbooks from national, and the board extended the offer in the winter Bulletin in Sage. Following Medicine Hat Branch's endeavor, we developed a 9 page insert listing current contacts (Government phone numbers etc.) to accompany the workbooks. We received another 27 requests. In the future, National Office has suggested they will be offering these workbooks at a cost of \$10 each. Our branch plans to offer these workbooks at our next in-person meeting.

As of Sept 2021, we had 767 members, 30 members less than Sept 2020 it was 797. So, we lost some. Today we are sitting at 782. Nationally the association lost 6,000 members, presently at 165,000 members. Some of the losses were attributed to cancellations because of the Pandemic travel restrictions deeming the Medoc coverage unnecessary.

We did a study on where are members reside so we can ensure future ads or promotional activities reaches the most members. Ideally, we would like a member representative in each area or community that has over 30 members. Some of the statistics were published in the winter Branch Bulletin in Sage.

Also this fall, the board spent time, do necessary maintenance, (cleaning up our house) reviewed our branch's assets and sought recommendations for archiving and disposing of same and files. Also ensuring our Branch webpage and Facebook page are current with useful information to our members.

Veteran's Week: Branch members attended and presented wreaths at Remembrance Day services in Brandon, Killarney and Erickson. The Board of Directors believed this was a

meaningful undertaking and our presence at these services should be increased. The 2022 budget reflects our plan to purchase wreaths or contribute to Poppy Funds in more communities where our members reside. We are mindful that members of our branch are also members of their local legions, due to affiliations with Canadian Arm forces and RCMP. Donations or wreath purchases to the Legion/ Poppy Fund are allowed under National's by-laws.

Our branch email was changed as recommended by national as we were receiving spam soliciting from web marketing. We were made aware of Cybersecurity and the vulnerability of branch websites. NO does not recommend a branch having its own independent website outside of the National umbrella. There is a definite need to protect from ransom demands and scams. We don't hear much about it on the prairies, but it is happening in larger centers. If a branch's own separate website is breached, the branch is responsible for the costs. Since the change to our email from Gmail December 2021, we have only received one junk email.

The holiday season was busy with planning our own branch's Holiday greetings in the annual EBlast and newspaper advertisements. We placed "Season greetings" in 4 community newspapers: Minnedosa Tribune, Shilo Stag, South Mountain Press.incl. Crossroads (Hamiota, Shoal Lake, Russell) Totals for the H/G ads were \$760. The board will place H/G newspaper ads again this year in other communities, perhaps including Dauphin or Swan River, which we will plan on a rotating basis. Our members need to know that we are still.

January, February and March are busy times for the Board, especially for the treasurer and me. There were National Office webinars to attend, financial reports to be completed and the Reserve Equity Plan to be completed, in preparation for the Annual General Meeting.

Our Branch belongs to the Prairie District Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I attend monthly meetings with 17 other branch presidents and directors from the District and we have guests from National Office on Zoom with us to answer questions and provide explanations. These meetings are really valuable to our branch as we share resources on recruitment ideas and how to engage with members.

At a recent meeting with the President of the National Board, Jean-Guy indicated he is involved with negotiations with our Public Health Care Plan. Efforts made on his behalf is to keep premiums low and affordable for retirees. In 2023 Canada Life will be taking over the administration of our Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHC). We will move from Sun Life to Canada Life.

Most Recently we have done another plea for volunteers. We have adopted the message that any Involvement with the branch would be appreciated and communicated the idea of a member being a "Friend of the Board" and helping from time to time. All branches are having difficulties securing volunteers at this time, due to the lack of in-person activities. In closing, thanks to my board of directors for their support and guidance. please stay safe, covid is still around. Watch for the upcoming announcement (Eblast) of the barbecue lunch. We are all looking forward to getting back to normal.

Wendy Jarvin, President
Western Manitoba MB30 Branch