

BRANCH REPORT

ON55 | York Branch

CONTACT US

For Branch-specific matters, please use the Branch e-mail, or contact a member of the Board.

BRANCH EMAIL

federalretirees.york@gmail.com

WEBSITE

[Federalretirees.ca/York](https://federalretirees.ca/York)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Meeting of Members

October 19, 2021
(online)
10:30-12:00

Guest Speaker:
Christine Bisanz
CHATS

Branch Board Meeting (in person - TBD)

Sept 14, 2021
Oct 05, 2021
Nov 02, 2021

Members welcome. For information contact Fred Conway 905-669-4489

President's message

This SAGE insert is written in early July: be aware that events may have intervened! SAGE is the only way we can reach Branch members who do not have or share an e-mail address. This report is a version of what was published in July on our Branch website (see sidebar). You may find more current information there than in the twice-a-year insert in SAGE.

I regret to say that our Fall Meeting of Members on Oct 19 will be a virtual/Zoom meeting. We had hoped to resume in-person meetings but, given the planning horizon and continuing uncertainty, we decided to continue with virtual meetings. By October there may be no need for restriction, but better safe than sorry.

Since the spring insert, we've been busy. We held our (virtual) Branch AGM. I attended NAFR's Annual Meeting of Members 2021 at which we said farewell to long-time Ontario Director Ted Young and were updated on the state of NAFR. The Federal Minister for Seniors gave the keynote address (a coup for NAFR!). Federal initiatives sounded good, but fed-prov coordination issues remain. And "there is only one taxpayer"!

By late 2021, we should be reviewing events of the COVID epidemic. Governments and organizations have to act in the face of an emergency, hence pressure to centralize control at the cost of individual freedom. We need to reflect on the decisions made, for the next emergency.



Sincerely,

Fred Conway
Branch President

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York Branch in 2021

Branch Board carried on the full meeting schedule, but virtually (Zoom sessions). This is cheaper and often more convenient (less travelling), but the board members are feeling the effects of working-from-home. The personal interactions are missing, which we all need and which can make work go more smoothly. The general feeling is that we will need to find a way to have hybrid meetings, to combine the benefit of human contact and travelling convenience.

York Branch had its traditional AGM, though virtual, and conducted necessary business (National Office is insistent on proper completion of required business). We actually had a participant from Florida! Our guest speaker was Andrew Hau of Collette – many of us are hoping to travel again soon. While some Branches have not been able to hold their AGM due to COVID issues, York Branch has been successful and is one of the leaders in using virtual meetings.

Annual Meeting of Members (AMM)

The NAFR annual general meeting was a two session Zoom event. The York delegate is the Branch President, with a vote weighted by Branch size – Ottawa Branch rather dominates the voting. This year there will also be a Special Meeting of Members (SMM) in the fall to consider proposals (resolutions) due to legal requirements for notice.

NAFR is in good financial state but suffering from worrisome membership decline. The COVID situation is considered responsible for all of this. Expenses are down with the cancellation of the in-person AMM and overall reduced travel, but membership is down because of reduced interest in travel insurance. NAFR is engaged in efforts to attract new members, and is encouraging Branches to work on retention. There is some optimism that membership will recover when travel resumes. If you know of retirees who are not members, please encourage them to join as there is strength in numbers.

Elections are a fundamental function of NAFR's AMM. The National Board (President, Vice-President, and two Directors per District – Ontario is one District) are all elected at the AMM as a whole, with staggered terms and also term limits (two consecutive three-year terms). This year, Ontario Director Ted Young said farewell, and Carol Grieco (former President of Kitchener Branch) was elected to succeed him. The quality of the candidates for the NAFR Board is always impressive.

There was much AMM discussion of financial issues – specifically of Reserves or saved pots of money. The concern is that some Branches are sitting on considerable funds not shown in NAFR audited corporate financial statements (not the case with York Branch). The outcome was a proposal for a NAFR regulation which will be considered at the fall SMM, defining what reserves a Branch can have. Current regulations already limit the total of Branch holdings. York Branch is in compliance and has transferred funds to Ottawa's Defense of Benefits Reserve from time to time.

Federal Minister for Seniors Deb Schulte gave the AMM keynote address. She spoke well and ably handled questions from members. National Standards for Long Term Care is a priority matter for NAFR. The Federal Government has allocated money for standard development (or redevelopment), but Minister Schulte noted that some provinces are concerned that their own standards might be lowered by new pan-Canadian ones. She also declined to be categorical about private as opposed to public care.

For fuller information on the AMM, members can consult a recording of the AMM which should be available on the NAFR website, as will all the reports presented to delegates.

Fall Meeting of Members

Our guest speaker in October will be from CHATS, and will talk about the COVID experience with a view to the future. Canada needs to learn from the past year and a half, and we need to think about the care that we will want when time has done its job, and how to pay for them.

Unfortunately, our Fall Meeting will be another virtual session, due to continuing concerns about the COVID situation. This meeting is traditionally more of a social than a business event. The National Office has advised of strict limits on the use of association funds for social activities (e.g. for our traditional subsidized lunch subsidy) – an issue the Branch will have to face in 2022.

Upcoming Events

Election season is coming, first the Federal and then in the not distant future the Province. As individuals, NAFR members can and should express their views to candidates and at the ballot box. NAFR has its own association-wide advocacy program, Reach 338, involving contacts with all MPs to support the Ottawa-led advocacy effort. Branch volunteers are always wanted and welcome, for this and other NAFR programs.

Future Concerns

With the COVID epidemic, there has not been time or energy to think about the future of NAFR and what it will look like. The association is financially sound and well run, but is based on a Branch structure which is showing a strain. Delegates to the association governing general meetings are the Branch Presidents. Many Branches are active with well-attended gatherings, but some are finding it difficult or impossible to fill the Branch executive. York Branch still has a viable board, but new volunteers for the board or for NAFR programs such as Reach 338 are disappointingly few. Four to five per cent of the roughly one thousand York Branch members come out to general meetings. Needless to say, this is not a problem specific to NAFR, but there is already discussion of “satellite Branches” and revisiting the Branch funding formula (currently a per capita formula) to provide more funds for smaller Branches.



CONTACT US

Unless you have something specifically for the Branch, we ask that you direct all mail and phone calls to the National Office:

865 Shefford Road
Ottawa, Canada
K1J 1H9
1-855-304-4700

If you have a matter specific to the Branch, please e-mail the Branch or contact a Board member

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL RETIREES

Board and Volunteer Listings 2021-2022

President: Fred Conway
905-669-4489

Vice President: Ken Ackles
905-474-1172

Secretary: Ed Millar
905-833-5883

Treasurer: Tom Nichols
905-505-2079

Membership: Linda Laffree
416-225-9066

Event Coordinator: Marie Macphee
905-841-9244

Website Editor: Frank Froude
905-775-7346

Advocacy Lead: Sharon Carson
905-898-1835

Director At Large: Joe Vettese
908-884-1933

Director At Large: Vasdev Sawhney
905-303-3733

Director At Large: Sharon Paris
905-836-1065

Prospective Director: You!

VOLUNTEERING

Please consider volunteering with the Branch. The Branch would like

- someone interested in updating the sound equipment to take advantage of the newer hearing aids. If you have a knack with electronics this could be you.
- someone to set up the equipment for the Fall and Spring meetings.
- You to join the Board and learn about the issues affecting us as Federal

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