



National Association  
of Federal Retirees      Association nationale  
des retraités fédéraux

FRASER VALLEY WEST

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# BC04 Branch Report

for year ending 2020 12 31

Presented at the 2021 03 24 BC04 Branch AGM

## • 2020 in Review – President's Report

Although, almost immediately after our 2020 AGM on March 12<sup>th</sup>, Public Health directives required us to suspend in-person gatherings, the Branch stayed calm and carried on, on several fronts.

### **National Public Service Week**

We marked National Public Service Week June 14-20 by placing ¼ page advertisements in weekly newspapers in White Rock, Surrey and Langley, as a 'thank you' to public sector workers for keeping the lights on and for managing an unprecedented roll-out of emergency benefits to millions of suddenly unemployed Canadians. (The advertisements also served, we hoped, to promote Federal Retirees and maintain our profile with the BC Federal Council – government department heads - whose co-operation will be key to the success of future recruitment initiatives.)

### **Virtual Meet & Chat / Speaker Events**

In September we began a series of monthly 'Virtual Meet & Chat' presentations: "Downsizing", "Relocation Services", "Memory and Aging", "Coping with Covid (Bounce Back)", and continuing in 2021 with "ICBC Enhanced Road Assessment (drivers 80+)", "Frauds and Scams", and "Personal Planning". Ilene Fika has been a valued partner in learning how Zoom works, researching topics and presenters and managing and hosting presentations.

### **Advocacy** (see report)

We were active in canvassing candidates in the BC provincial election and contacting Members of Parliament in step with the national "Reach 338" initiative.

### **Communications & Web-site development** (see report)

Instead of the quarterly newsletter format that was used in past years, we opted for monthly (more or less) "Updates", to get branch news to our members quickly.

We continue to work at improving branch communications and expanding the resources available to members on the branch website. Stuart Wilson has done a great job of making sure information posted on the site is timely and accessible.

## **Membership Administration (see report)**

Steve Sawchuk has kept a steady hand on Membership Administration and continues to serve the Branch in that capacity even though he has taken on the role of Branch Services Coordinator for the Western BC Region (comprises Vancouver, Fraser Valley West, Central Fraser Valley, Chilliwack and Prince George).

A couple of notable challenges/successes during the year: The “Win Back” project. Steve took on the project of contacting members whose memberships were about to lapse. He discovered that two-thirds of them had simply not received notification of the status of their account and were glad to renew.

The “Blocked email” project. We learned that email addresses for 200 of our members had been ‘blocked’ in our national mass email system for repeated delivery failures. We contacted each of them individually, first by email, then if that didn’t work, by follow-up letter, and managed to re-connect with three quarters of them.

So, exciting times in Membership Administration!

In summary, the Board’s key priorities have been staying in touch with our members and giving as much local value to their memberships as we can. It has been a privilege for me to work with a dedicated group of volunteers and I thank each and every one for their help during the year.

It is always gratifying when members signal a willingness to volunteer on the board. Last year, we were glad to welcome Tim Knight, who came on board as Branch Secretary. Unfortunately, Tim has had to step down in February of this year to focus on health and family. We send him our thoughts and best wishes.

I am pleased to note that the list of volunteers prepared to serve on the 2021 board includes at least one new name. I endorse all the names on that list and hope you will too.

I particularly want to underscore my appreciation to Ilene Fika for her energy, creativity and patient feedback (always keeping it respectful) as we tried to figure out what to do next. In the coming year, Ilene will be focusing on family but, I am glad to say, she will remain on the Board. I look forward to her continuing contribution.

All the best,  
**Ian Spence**, Branch President

## • **Branch Advocacy Report**

### **BC Provincial Election**

When the provincial NDP called a snap election, we went into “advocacy mode” and contacted all candidates (NDP, Liberals and Greens) in “our” 12 provincial ridings, urging their support for national standards for long-term care, national pharmacare and a national seniors’ strategy. We followed-up with letters congratulating those who were elected. Thanks to Leslie Gaudette’s unstinting efforts, Federal Retirees was a key partner in a virtual Town Hall on seniors’ issues, held in collaboration with the Council of Senior Citizens Organizations (COSCO) of BC.

**Reach 338**

In step with the national “Reach 338” initiative, we requested meetings with all MPs whose ridings fall within branch boundaries and have so far held initial meetings with the three Liberal MPs (Dhaliwal, Sarai and Hardie) and one Conservative (Dalton). We are looking forward to seeing where our priorities place in the government’s budget. Our meetings have more impact when some of our members who are on the voters’ list in an MP’s riding are at the table and we thank those members who have joined us in those conversations.

**Ian Spence**, Advocacy Director

• **Health & Benefits**

The role of the HBO is to provide information and respond to members regarding aspects of the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) and the Pensioners Dental Service Plan (PDSP) including eligibility, coverage and how to submit their claim or appeal.

I act as a liaison to refer members to the appropriate department for problem resolution or specific information. Since the last AGM I have assisted Association members by guiding them to resources that deal with specific requests and/or problems. Occasionally contacts are reporting a personal or confidential matter that must be addressed by another party or organization.

Some examples of referrals made were to Veterans Affairs Canada, Royal Canadian Legion, PSAC, RCMP Veterans, and Johnson Insurance (MEDOC).

Respectfully submitted,  
**Glen (Rocky) Rockwell**, Health & Benefits Director

• **Membership Administration**

In 2020 we had 120 new members join our branch, which has resulted in a net decrease in membership of 131, after accounting for those of our members who have left for other areas or passed on.

Our Branch currently has a total active membership of 2,145, which ranks us as 12<sup>th</sup> largest of 79 Branches in Canada and 3<sup>rd</sup> largest of 15 branches in BC.

The Fraser Valley West Branch encompasses an area from White Rock to Maple Ridge, with our members spread out accordingly in the following areas:

- Surrey-----1,203;
- Langley-----535;
- White Rock-----158;
- Maple Ridge/ Mission/ Pitt Meadows-----115;
- Delta-----27;
- Other outside of our Branch Boundaries-----107.

Our membership backgrounds come from 3 different areas of the Federal Government services:

Public Service - 871; RCMP - 383; Canadian Forces – 153; with the balance of our members being spouses/partners.

*Steve Sawchuk*, Director Membership Administration

## • **Membership Marketing & Recruitment**

COVID put a damper on my recruiting activities in the last year. I did manage to attend an area council meeting early in 2020 and distributed materials at that meeting to 3 components and 6 large union locals in the Western Fraser valley. I also dropped our materials at the PSAC office in Vancouver.

I had intended to attend local meetings at the PSAC but all in person meetings were cancelled and the PSAC office is closed for the duration. As I heard about people retiring, I'd drop off info packages from NAFR for them and will drop off a box of info at some of the larger worksites once travel restrictions are lifted.

Until more of us get our vaccines and we reach herd immunity, in-person presentations and meetings must be postponed. My intent is to schedule attendance at meetings and conduct the PowerPoint recruiting presentation that was developed at National Office. I am certain that this will happen at some point in 2021. Maybe our first event will be the labour day celebrations in September.

Facebook has been handy to stay in touch with many of my previous colleagues throughout the province although I tend to focus on BC04 area.

**Joy Hennen**, Director Membership Marketing & Recruitment

## • **Branch Communications Report**

2020-2021 - Our Website, [www.nafrfraservalleywest.ca](http://www.nafrfraservalleywest.ca) is functioning well and is updated as often as possible. Further to last year's report, the Branch is still investigating modernizing our local site and/or the use of the National site, if functionality can be improved: <https://www.federalretirees.ca/en/branches/british-columbia/fraser-valley-west-branch> . Stay tuned for these developments. All Monthly updates and Quarterly Bulletins can be found on both sites in addition to Useful Information for members, Branch events and Contact details.

The National mailing of Branch information to members is working well. We still have our Mailchimp email capability available if required to be used to supplement the National mailings. If members have concerns with any Electronic mailings, they can contact the Branch at [info@nafrfraservalleywest.ca](mailto:info@nafrfraservalleywest.ca) with their concerns and I will address them. Furthermore, members may request to be added to the distribution list at any time by sending an e-mail to [info@nafrfraservalleywest.ca](mailto:info@nafrfraservalleywest.ca)

**Stuart Wilson**, Director Branch Communications

## • **Branch Events**

I am happy to provide a very brief report to you the members my annual report on your social event and activities for the calendar year 2020.

As you are all too aware, 2020 was a very different year. Events were planned then cancelled in the hopes that they would eventually take place. The only event that took place just under the wire for restriction was the AGM held in March. As per the restrictions and ongoing facilities closures the AGM and BBQ for 2021 have been cancelled. We are hopeful that the annual GM and Christmas luncheon will proceed, and a reservation has been made.

- **AGM (March)**

We began the 2020 year with the Annual General Meeting/Luncheon in March. The event was held at the beautiful Newlands Golf & Country Club. Members and guests were presented with vital information on branch activities. The meeting ended with a fabulous luncheon buffet as only Newlands can do it.

**Katherine Kettler**, Director Branch Events

- **Volunteer Engagement**

Attracting & supporting our Branch Volunteers continues to be challenging.

- In the past I have spoken at some of our events about the need to identify more Branch Volunteers who may want to merely participate in short-term Branch activities, such as Recruitment at local Federal offices, or Advocacy at an election event, or other brief NAFR actions such as working the registration desk at a meeting.
- I am open to your ideas, comments in this area on how to engage members in various volunteer opportunities.
- If interested, please contact me and we can chat about Branch events and activities that are in need of volunteer participants. Thank you to all those who have volunteered in the past year.

**Katherine Kettler**, Volunteer Engagement Director

