



## BRANCH REPORT

### MB91 | Eastern Manitoba Branch

#### President's message

##### Chuck Vandergraaf

It is not very often that I am able to start a newsletter with good news. This time around, I do have some exciting news: a few weeks ago, Alanna Wilcox, who had volunteered to be our HBO (Health Benefit Officer) expressed an interest in taking over from me as president of our Eastern Manitoba Branch. The board agreed to unanimously vote her in as vice-president at its August 13 meeting. Alanna will remain our HBO and has agreed to let her name stand for the president's position at our 2025 Branch Annual Meeting (also known as our BAM) in April. I had started to refer to myself as "president for life". Hopefully, I will now outlive my presidency.

Bob McCamis, our webmaster, has agreed to take on the position of treasurer, replacing Wendy Berry, who has valiantly served in that position for six years. This brings our board up to six members. We are still looking at members from the Lac du Bonnet and Beausejour areas to serve on the board as members-at-large and who could help us on special projects such as organizing satellite meetings in those communities. We try to limit our board meetings to four or five per year and board members that live outside Pinawa are allowed to charge travel costs to attend these meetings. All it takes is a few hours periodically to keep our Branch viable and growing! I strongly encourage you to give some thought to volunteering on the branch board. You can make a difference!

Although the membership in the Association appears to have recovered from the Covid pandemic and now stands at close to 170,000, the level of volunteerism has not. Many branches are suffering from a dearth of volunteers to operate a branch. For this reason, a "Special

Committee on Association Structure" has been struck to consider services expected by members, branch size and the district concept. We look forward to its report next spring and how it will impact our branch and other Manitoba branches.

Alanna, George Montgomery, Evelyn Vandergraaf, and I attended the Prairie District meeting in Saskatoon in May. Alanna, Evelyn, and I attended the Annual Members Meeting (AMM) in Gatineau in June. Both meetings were informative and provided networking opportunities.

#### Scams

There seems to be no end in the variety of scams, from emails informing the recipient of an "undeliverable parcel" to messages that one's MTS email address needs to be updated. Glenn Armstrong, our provincial Advocacy Program Officer, alerted me to a scam recently making the round in the Lac du Bonnet area, that people were getting phone calls with a recorded message "that their Social Security Number has been suspended". An eagle eye would have noticed that most of us have Social Insurance Numbers, so the scam clearly originated in the USA. There is also an interesting article on the Association's website on digital protection that can be found at <https://www.federalretirees.ca/en/news-views/news-listing/august/digital-property-protection>.

#### Communication

Alanna has started to post information about our branch on local community Facebook pages (Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet, Beausejour, & Seven

Sisters) in the hope of raising the profile of the Association in our area.

**Fall General Meeting**

Our 2024 Fall General Meeting (FGM) has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 22 at the Pinawa Alliance Church. There will be the usual buffet lunch at noon, a presentation by Lisa Kroeker, a nurse practitioner, who will speak on *Hope: recent advances in cancer treatment*. This will again be a recruitment meeting. You are invited to bring a guest who is eligible for membership. You will also be asked to approve a revised budget. There is no cost for attending but, because space is limited, we are asking you to register preferably, by email at [nafr-mb91@hotmail.com](mailto:nafr-mb91@hotmail.com) or by phone at 204-753-8402.

You may recall that two \$10 Tim Hortons gift certificates were donated by Collette Travel at the 2024 AGM. Congratulations to Kay and Dave Boyd and Joye and Tom Tabe whose names were drawn.

**Preferred Partners**

Glen Jones, president of the Central Manitoba (Portage la Prairie) branch, has been very active in lining up preferred partners. Most of them are in the Portage la Prairie area (I have already mentioned *Bills Sticky Fingers* (<https://billsstickyfingers.ca/>) for ribs, steaks, and pizza), but Glen has also made an agreement with McMunn & Yates, a building supply store that has an outlet in Beausejour. To take advantage of this agreement, you must show your membership card and ask for the discount, "Account# 39175". No membership card? No problem! Contact the [National Office](#) and they will send one out.

Locally, Alanna and I have started to contact local and regional vendors. It is a slow process and a bit too early to be able to mention vendors who have agreed to be a Preferred Partner. Let us know if there is a vendor that may be of interest to you as a Preferred Partner.

Of course, there is always a *caveat* that the price offered by a Preferred Partner is not as low as offered by other vendors.

**Membership Report**

**Evelyn Vandergraaf**

As of 2024 Aug 13, the status of our membership was as follows:

	2024 Aug. 13	2024 March 25
Total Double Households	210	219
Total Single Households	153	155
Total Regular Households	363	374
Total Active Members	573	593
Total Non-DDS* Households	33	36
Total DDS Households	330	338

\*DDS: Deducted from Source

Any existing member who makes [the switch to DDS](#), or new member paying by DDS, will receive a one-time special offer of three free months of membership (\$4.66 per month for a single membership, or \$6.05 per month for a double). That's a savings of 25 per cent!

We saw an overall decrease of 21 members over a five-month period. Most of the decrease is due to members moving out of our catchment area. If you are moving away and want to keep your membership in our branch, please notify us and we will convey that information to the National Office. Once you have moved we are unable to follow up with you as we no longer have access to your contact information.



## Advocacy – Did You Know?

Alanna Wilcox

The National Association of Federal Retirees was established in 1963. It is the largest national advocacy organization representing active and retired members of the federal public service, Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, and their partners and survivors. The Association has strong smart advocacy campaigns to protect members' earned pensions and benefits, and to support good policy that improve the lives of all Canadians in retirement.

In the Association's federal government's pre-budget submission, the Federal Retirees will be advocating on many issues, among them addressing federal retiree benefits, protecting the rights of older persons, seeking the government's commitment to implement long-term care standards and a national seniors' strategy, acting on equitable outcomes for veterans and securing a seat at the Public Service Pension Investment Board.

### Why Advocacy Matters: New Brunswick's Cautionary tale

In November 2023, the New Brunswick government pushed through Bill 17, a shared risk pension plan legislation. This legislation transformed their defined benefit pensions to "shared-risk" (or target benefit) pensions. The National Association of Federal Retirees advocates to ensure protection from similar actions to member's pensions. See the full article in the [Summer 2024 issue of Sage Magazine](#) on Page 28.

## Health Benefits Officer

Alanna Wilcox

### Preparing For the PDSP Transition to Canada Life

The transition of the Pensioners' Dental Services Plan (PDSP) to Canada Life is set to take place Nov. 1, 2024.

The PDSP transition, similar to the PSHCP to Canada Life, requires a positive enrolment process. Positive enrolment is how plan members provide their personal information and give consent for Canada Life to use personal information to process benefits and manage their dental plan.

Learning from the transition of the Public Service Health Care plan, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) has advised that Canada Life will complete the initial positive enrolment for as many PDSP members as possible.

In mid-June, Canada Life began sending information to members on completing positive enrolment on members' behalf. If a PDSP member hasn't received information by mid-September, it means that Canada Life couldn't complete positive enrolment for that member.

In that case, the member must complete positive enrolment manually online. Members who prefer to complete positive enrolment by paper form can download a copy from the [Canada Life PDSP member services website](#) or contact Canada Life (1-855-415-4414) to request a paper copy.

Read "[Preparing for the PDSP Transition to Canada Life](#)" for more information.

## MEDOC

Note that the information on MEDOC travel insurance has been mailed out and members who have enrolled in this program should have received the new policy. One member has pointed out some increased benefits including one that *if your flight is delayed for 3 hours you get up to a \$100 credit for a lounge pass*. Check the policy for this and other benefits.





National Association  
of Federal Retirees

Association nationale  
des retraités fédéraux

## **BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**



### **Advocacy**

You have a voice



### **Preferred Partners**

Exclusive savings and discounts



### **Information**

Your source for answers



### **Publications**

Stay engaged and informed



### **Volunteer**

Get involved and make  
a difference

**[federalretirees.ca](http://federalretirees.ca)**

