



Algonquin Valley Branch Report

President's Message – Summer 2014



Greetings and best wishes from your branch executive! My name is Paul Ballantyne. As I write this message, I am *still* President of the Algonquin Valley Branch (AVB) of FSNA, the National Association of Federal Retirees having been re-elected at our Branch AGM held Feb. 23, 2014. At the meeting, we elected the new board members as outlined later in this report and on our website. We received an excellent presentation on the *Ins and Outs of MEDOC Travel Insurance*.

Lawrence Lupton had to resign from the board due to increased volunteer commitments for other organizations. We thank him very much for his contribution over the year and wish him the very best in the future. I am sure we will see him and Cathy out to some of our future events.

Many events are taking place related to FSNA and our benefits. By now you know that there was very little negotiation related to the increase in our PSHCP premiums. It was became a matter of *when* and not *how much*. The premium increase gradually over a few years to the 50% level, with some consideration to low income pensioners. You will be able to read more in FSNA communications, including this issue of *Sage*. FSNA's ongoing strategy is to promote good benefits for all Canadian as opposed to the federal approach to lower the retired public service pensioner to the lowest, or lower common denominator. FSNA wants to remain at the negotiating table to keep the communication line open. It is difficult when only one side wants to talk and the other side is rigid and holds the power to legislate the end game of its choosing.

You will have before you the second issue of *Sage*, FSNA's replacement publication for *On Guard*. The new branding will include a clarification of the name of the organization and the selection of a new logo. Some of you may have had the opportunity to vote for the selection, based on how quickly you received the article directing you to the FSNA webpage to vote. The final selection will be made at the FSNA National AGM being held in Montreal in June 2014. This branding will be fully implemented by the September issue of *Sage*. Other programs will then advance, such as the *volunteer recognition program* with pins featuring the new logo.

Email will become more important in member communication in the future. I encourage you to sign up for email through our contact list at our branch website: fsnaalgonquinvalley.com. The national website will provide additional and alternate communication opportunities (fsna.com).

At the same FSNA AGM, Ontario will elect two Directors to the National Board, and adopt new By-laws for our compliance with the federal Not-for-Profit Corporations Act coming into play as of October 2014. Branch By-laws will have to change somewhat, but your board will deal with that as the steps unfold.

We are working to enhance the program for your benefit and encourage all you to participate. I will be hosting a free coffee and sweets hour at a Tim Horton's near you. (See our website for details.) This will be an opportunity to meet and discuss issue and problems with benefits, and *maybe* what we could do about the weather issue. I look forward to meeting with some of you at that time.

I will close for now. Please contact me at fsnaavbon33@gmail.com or at 613-687-2259, to discuss any issues or ideas that you have which your branch can help you with, and vice versa, what you can do for the branch.

Best Regards and Happy Summer
Paul Ballantyne

Report on the Branch Annual General Meeting

The branch Annual General Meeting was held at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall, 50 McElligott Drive, Deep River on Sunday, February 23, 2014. The complete (draft) minutes from the meeting, including the 2013 financial report and 2014

budget, are posted on the branch website: www.fsnaalgonquinvalley.com. The following is a summary of the results of the meeting:

Meeting Summary

Branch President Paul Ballantyne welcomed everyone to the afternoon's proceedings at 1 pm. After lunch was served, the AGM was held from 2 to 2:45 pm. Twenty-nine branch members were present, along with Greville Price, the FSNA Regional Services Officer for Ottawa-St. Lawrence-Nunavut.

Treasurer Judith Cloutier presented the AVB Income Statement for 2013, the Budget for 2014, and the Balance Sheet for the end of 2012 and 2013. A deficit budget was planned for 2014 to put to use some of the funds the branch had accumulated in recent years, when insufficient volunteer effort had been available to carry out a larger program of activities. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

The following members were elected:

President – Paul Ballantyne	Vice-President – Ken Philipose
Treasurer – Judith Cloutier	Secretary – Michael Stephens
Membership – Leo Buckley	Director – John Allen
Director – Ken McDonald	Director – Art Plume
Director – Sham Sunder	Director – Darlene Krueger

Barrie Hallett remains as the Past President.

Following the AGM, Lynn Brownrigg of Johnson Inc. gave an interactive presentation entitled: *The Ins and Outs of Using MEDOC Travel Insurance*, and answered many practical questions on using MEDOC coverage.

The Branch Website is Now in Service!

The AVB website is now in service at www.fsnaalgonquinvalley.com. Amongst other things, it contains news of upcoming branch events, the quarterly branch reports (long before they will reach you by post!), and the minutes of branch Annual General Meetings. It has lists of links to other websites that contain information on federal pensions and health plans, the FSNA affinity programs, and other organizations of interest in the AVB area (Renfrew County plus Bancroft, minus Arnprior). It also helps you quickly and easily let the Branch Executive Committee know by email if you change your address, telephone number or email address. You can also sign up to receive emails from the branch when important information needs to reach you quickly. Finally, there is a page with the start of a history of the

branch, and a table of the past members of the Branch Executive Committee (as best we know them).

The website will always be a work in progress. You are invited to let us know what your impressions are and what improvements we can make. For example, we would like to add more information about the early days of the branch, and photos of branch events and our area. Please email your suggestions and contributions to fsnaavbon33@gmail.com.

Petawawa Showcase

The FSNA, Algonquin Valley Branch held a show case at the Petawawa Civic Centre from Friday, April 25 to Sunday, April 27. The booth was manned by branch executives providing information on our member services, on how to join the organization and answering questions from the public. A new poster was created and placed at the showcase to increase visibility and attract attention.

Membership Expiry

What is the expiry date of your FSNA membership? If you look at the membership card that you received earlier in the year, you will notice March 31 of next year (currently, March 31, 2015). This presents some confusion. FSNA policy was to provide a 90-day grace period for member benefits and this was reflected in your membership. These have been based on a calendar year with this 90-day grace period resulting in a March 31 expiry. Since some new members have joined FSNA on the website with payment by charge card (non DDS memberships), their expiry date will become a rolling 12-month membership with an expiry date a year after they join. If you are a long time calendar-based member, expect your next card to indicate December 31. Just thought you would like to know!

More Volunteers Needed

Approximately 30% of the branch membership comes from the Canadian Forces (CF) and RCMP. We still have a shortage of representation from these groups on our branch executive. We would like to expand our efforts on Veteran's support, but we need additional members familiar with the area and issues to help with this. So, if you have a few hours to spare once in a while, we can certainly use your skills and experience.

Report compiled by K. Philipose