

FSNA Algonquin Valley Branch (ON33) Report

2013 Summer

Branch Annual General Meeting

My name is Paul Ballantyne, and I am the new President of the Algonquin Valley Branch (AVB).

This year the Branch held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the Petawawa Legion hall on February 24th. A new Board of Directors (BOD) was elected by the 29 members in attendance. We had a great lunch of soup, sandwiches and dessert provided by the Ladies of the Legion that was enjoyed by all.

Following the AGM and lunch, **Deputy Leslie Wirth**, Deputy Chief of the County of Renfrew Community Emergency Management Centre, gave a thought-provoking presentation on Emergency Management in Renfrew County.

The best news that came out of this AGM was that there was a very positive response to our request for members to step forward and volunteer to work on our new committees. Now we can implement several initiatives to improve the programs for and services to our branch members.

We purposely hold the AGM in different areas of the membership area. Last year's meeting was in Deep River, and who knows where we will hold it in 2014. If you have ideas about where we should hold the 2014 AGM and what you would like to see as part of the Branch program, please let a BOD member know, or email the Branch at fsnaavbon33@gmail.com.

Members of the AVB Board of Directors for 2013-14

The following are the members of the AVB Board of Directors for 2013-14:

President – Paul Ballantyne
Past-President – Barrie Hallett
Vice-President – Ken Philipose
Treasurer – Judith Cloutier
Secretary – Michael Stephens
Membership – Tom Alburger
Director – John Allen (Health Benefits)
Director – Lawrence Lupton (AECL liaison)
Director – Ursula Matchett (CFB Petawawa liaison)
Director – Ken McDonald
Director – Art Plume
Director – Sham Sunder

A recent photo of most of the members of the new BOD is at the bottom of this page.

At the close of the AGM I reminded the members of the principal objectives of FSNA (*see below*). Our current Branch strategies are to continue focussing on improving liaison with CFB Petawawa, AECL, and seniors' organizations in the AVB area. We also need to work on improving communications with our members. A key initiative is to implement a branch webpage.

If you wish to provide ideas or feedback please contact me at fsnaavbon33@gmail.com or 613 687-2259.

Paul Ballantyne,
President, Algonquin Valley Branch
2013 May 3



The Algonquin Valley Branch FSNA board of Directors for 2013-14. Front (l-r) are Paul Ballantyne, Ursula Matchett, Ken Philipose, and Tom Alburger. Back (l-r) are Art Plume, Ken McDonald, Sham Sunder, Barrie Hallett and Michael Stephens. (Missing from the picture are Judith Cloutier, John Allen and Lawrence Lupton.)

Branch Committees

The BOD has established six committees to work on the objectives of the Branch and provide services to its members. A short description of each committee's objectives is provided below. If you would like to help your Branch in any of these areas, please contact a member of the BOD, or send an e-mail to the branch at fsnaavbon33@gmail.com.

- 1. Communications Committee**
Prepare Branch quarterly reports, newsletters and newspaper articles, maintain a Branch website, and develop a communication strategy for these items.
- 2. Events Committee**
Plan and manage the AGM, a picnic, coffee mornings, lunchtime talks, and other events.
- 3. Membership and Outreach Committee**
Maintain the Branch membership database with associated reporting; maintain contacts with federal retirees, seniors groups and federal employers (e.g., AECL, CFB Petawawa); and liaise with local politicians.
- 4. Member Services Committee**
Assist members with health benefits questions, survivor questions, affinity programs and other FSNA services.
- 5. Nominations Committee**
Recruit members to serve on the BOD. Normally the Past-President chairs the Nominations Committee and runs the election for the incoming BOD at the AGM.
- 6. Finance Committee**
Audit/review Branch financial records for completeness and accuracy.

The Committees meet as necessary to achieve their mandate, and report their progress and recommendations to the BOD. Committee requests for financial support to carry out their mandate or projects do require a motion approved by the BOD

Communications Committee Update

The Communications Committee, consisting of Ken Philipose, Chair, Ken McDonald and Michael Stephens, held their first meeting on April 29. The Committee saw its primary goal as informing Branch members of available services and benefits, upcoming events and changes, and useful sources of information. The Committee reviewed and endorsed their mandate: Prepare Branch quarterly reports, newsletters and newspaper articles, maintain a branch website, and develop a communication strategy for these items.

The Committee started working towards establishing a Branch webpage. We are looking to create a site similar to the style and content of the websites of the Ottawa and Ottawa Valley Branches that are linked to the national FSNA website (www.fsna.com). Since we

have had problems getting a volunteer to develop and maintain the website in the past, the Committee will identify a local service provider to maintain the website. If you have any feedback on this project please forward your comments to fsnaavbon33@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Annual Branch Picnic

Once again we will be holding our annual Branch picnic. The BOD has discussed potential dates and thought that we should move the event away from the traditional Sunday of the September long weekend. Other dates were found to be unavailable when we went to book the preferred venue. We would welcome feedback on the question of date, especially from members who do not attend the picnics because of the date.

This is the official notice that the **2013 AVB Picnic and General Meeting** will be held at **Jubilee Lodge**, (at the marina), **Garrison Petawawa** (formally Base Petawawa) on **September 1**. Members and a guest are welcome to arrive by **12:30 pm** for 1 pm lunch. A short business meeting will be held after lunch to provide an information exchange and solicit input from members on event planning decisions. Members will be eligible for a few door prizes. To facilitate catering, please contact Ken McDonald (613-584-3242) by August 26. More information will be provided in area newspaper notices closer to the event. (Note: This early notification is provided now since you will receive the next Branch report after September 1, the date of this event.)

Coffee Mornings

Plans are underway to hold coffee mornings in various locations around our membership area. This will provide members the opportunity to drop in for a coffee and cookie and to get answers about pension and benefits, and issues that they may have. Notices will be provided via our e-mail list and through local events notices in area newspapers. If you want to be on our e-mail list send an e-mail to fsnaavbon33@gmail.com.

FSNA 50th Anniversary Celebrations and AGM Ottawa - 2013 June

FSNA is marking its 50th anniversary this year. Celebrations will be held during the FSNA AGM scheduled for Ottawa in June. Normally only the Branch President attends the national AGM. Since the location of this year's meeting is close to our Branch and involves a small travel cost, we plan to send two additional BOD members to assist in our training and succession planning.

Regional Meeting

The four branches of the National Region will be meeting in advance of the FSNA AGM, and AVB will send representatives to this meeting. This helps to identify local issues and positions prior to the national AGM noted above.

AVB Member Statistics (2007-2012)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Retired Members</u>	<u>Associate* Members</u>	<u>Total Members</u>
2007	1940	5	1945
2008	2024	4	2028
2009	2236	4	2240
2010	2253	9	2262
2011	2418	16	2434
2012	2338	27	2365

*Federal workers planning to retire within a few years.

In 2012, 31 members either died or moved (and transferred to other branches). A statistical analysis of our members shows that 74% live in Chalk River, Deep River, Pembroke or Petawawa. This divides into Chalk River and Deep River 28%, Pembroke 28%, and Petawawa 18%. Some members also reside in Cobden, Eganville, Golden Lake, Renfrew, and Westmeath.

Health Benefits Officer

We are fortunate to have a new Health Benefits Officer. John Allen will be pleased to try and point you in the right direction for issues or questions you may have related to coverage or claims. John can be contacted via e-mail at jjallen@nrtco.net.

Current Challenges that FSNA Needs to Watch

- Changing attitudes towards pensions, including the pensions we paid for. Is the government setting the stage to claw some back or to change the indexing formula? Who knows? We have to keep up the watchdog role.
- The operation of, and any proposed changes to the PSHCP (Public Service Health Care Plan) and PSDP (Pensioners' Dental Services Plan).
- Changing federal regulations governing Not-for-profit associations like FSNA. This means maintaining a Branch Administration Manual describing how we meet the FSNA By-laws and comply with new financial reporting requirements.



Are you caring for dependants? Claim the new family caregiver tax credit

A. Did you know?

The new family caregiver amount (FCA) tax credit helps Canadians with the costs of caring for a dependant with a mental or physical impairment.

B. Important facts

Introduced in the 2011 federal budget, the FCA is a 15% non-refundable tax credit on an amount of \$2,000 that provides tax relief for caregivers of dependant relatives who have a mental or physical impairment. This includes, for the first time, spouses, common-law partners, and minor children.

The dependant must be:

- An individual 18 years of age or older and dependant on you because of a physical or mental impairment; or
- A child under 18 years of age, with a physical or mental impairment. The impairment must be prolonged and indefinite, and the child must be dependent on you for assistance in attending to personal needs and care when compared to children of the same age.

You may be asked to provide a signed statement from a medical doctor that provides information on the nature, commencement, and duration of the dependant's impairment. You can claim the family caregiver amount for more than one eligible dependant.

Please note that the maximum amount for eligible dependants age 18 or older already includes the additional amount of \$2,000 for the family caregiver amount.

For more information, go to www.cra.gc.ca/familycaregiver.

What Does the Branch BOD Do?

- Manage the Branch's membership records, using the FSNA WMS (Web-based Membership System). We continually urge members to pay their FSNA membership dues by DDS (Deduction of Dues at Source), that is, a deduction from their pension payment. About 10% of our members still pay by cheque. This costs the Branch about \$3 per membership for printing and postage alone (a total of \$600 to \$800 per year), not to mention the significant additional time demands on the membership chair and treasurer.
- Manage the Branch's financial records and prepare year-end financial reports for our membership (with copies forwarded to National Office).
- Manage the Branch's communications and meetings records (especially policy and budget decisions made by the Branch BOD and members at the Branch AGM and any Special General Meetings).
- Communicate with our members through Branch reports and social events, and be open to questions and feedback from members. These are dealt with directly, or with help from FSNA National Office. NOTE: The FSNA website is the best place to get up-to-date information about your pension and benefits.
- Recruit new members. We participate in the Canadian Armed Forces SCAN (Second Career Assistance Network) program for retiring military personnel. We also increase our profile by participating in local trade shows (like the Petawawa Showcase).

There are other initiatives we would like to pursue, but their implementation depends on how many volunteers we can attract to the Branch BOD or to become members of committees.

The Branch has prepared an Administrative Manual, including supporting checklists and procedures. The manual provides a reference as to how we manage the Branch in accordance with 2011 FSNA By-laws. It will be updated to meet the requirements of the new FSNA By-laws when they are approved. Above all, the Branch must always be in a position to react vigorously to any issues that may impact negatively on our pensions and benefits.

Use of E-mail to Communicate with AVB Members

Some of you have supplied the Branch with your E-mail address, and occasionally people ask to be removed from that list.

I (as Branch President) have, occasionally, sent out e-mailings. I restrict these to:

- Communicating updates on AVB events (including dates and times including AGM, Picnic and talks).
- Providing advanced notices of changes to pensions and benefits.
- Providing updates on news affecting your retirement or lifestyle.

You eventually receive most of this information through branch reports or in ON GUARD but with a delay.

E-mail the Branch at fsnaavbon33@gmail.com to be added to or removed from our e-mail list. In addition, feel free to tell us what kind of information, if any, you would like to receive, bearing in mind that a lot of timely information is available at "Some Useful Internet Links" below.

We will start to use www.fsna.com as a place to advertise upcoming events and to link to our future branch website. We are working to have this soon!

Some useful Internet links and contact information

- Government Pensions & Benefits www.pensionandbenefits.gc.ca (1-800-561-7930 office hours)
- A great deal of information is available at FSNA www.fsna.com (1-613-745-2559 office hours). E-mail info@fsna.com for general information.
- Contact the Branch by email at fsnaavbon33@gmail.com, or by telephoning a BOD member. The Branch postal address is: P.O. Box 1930, Deep River, Ontario, K0J 1P0
- Veterans and their families can find the Benefits Browser online at www.veterans.gc.ca.

MOVING? LET US KNOW - SO WE CAN KEEP YOU INFORMED

Are you moving to a retirement home or another location? If you don't let FSNA know, you won't get *On Guard*, and risk losing your membership and its benefits. Please use the form below to let AVB know if your address changes. Your spouse's address will be included in the change unless you let us know otherwise. If you move out of the AVB area (i.e., Renfrew County) your membership will be transferred to another branch based on your postal code, unless you indicate that you want to remain in the Algonquin Valley Branch.

If you are moving out of Renfrew County, do you want to remain in the Algonquin Valley Branch? Yes/No (Circle one).

Member's Name: _____

Membership number (from FSNA card): _____

New Address: (No., Street, PO Box) _____

City, Town: _____

Province: _____ Postal code: _____

New telephone no.: _____

E-mail address: _____

Effective date of address change: _____

Mail to Membership Secretary, FSNA AVB, Box 1930, Deep River, ON K0J 1P0

YOUR SURVIVORS NEED TO INFORM FSNA WHEN YOU PASS AWAY (Please keep this form in your copy of the "You and Your Survivors" workbook.)

When you pass away, if your dues are being deducted from your pension payments (i.e., DDS), the government will notify FSNA that it has stopped deducting your FSNA dues. However the Privacy Act prevents the government from notifying FSNA that you have passed away (and deductions may be stopped for other reasons). If National Office sends mail to your address it is simply returned as undeliverable, and it is left to our Branch to make inquiries to find out what has happened. As a result, your survivors need to let FSNA know you have passed away. Please ask your survivors to fill in and mail the form below to the AVB membership secretary.

Notice of Death

To Algonquin Valley Branch: _____

I regret to inform you that _____,

a member of FSNA, died on:

(Date) _____.

Please amend your records accordingly, and inform the FSNA National Office.

Signature: _____

Name (Print) _____

Relationship _____

Phone Number: _____

Mail to Membership Secretary, FSNA AVB, Box 1930, Deep River, ON K0J 1P0