

BRANCH REPORT

ON33 | Algonquin Valley Branch

President's message

I have to say that I find it very difficult to believe that I'm writing the spring insert of Sage. Where has the year gone!

We've had several in-person events since our BAM in April, which is very exciting. We had our annual picnic in August (please see the article further down), a Lunch and Learn in November, and an Advocacy information night in December. By the time you read this, we will hopefully have had another Lunch and Learn in February.

We will be having more in-person events in 2023: our BAM in April, another Lunch and Learn in May, and our annual picnic at the end of the summer. These will all be announced in advance, so please stay tuned. And if you have any suggestions, please let one of our Executive members know, or drop us a line at avb.on33@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you!


Vickie Hulley

Branch Executive: - The current AVB Executive as of 2022 December:

President:	Vickie Hulley	Past-President:	Ken McDonald
Vice-President:	vacant		
Treasurer:	Julie Mallory	Directors:	Nancy Gleason
Secretary:	Ela McDonald		Bill Turner
Membership Secretary:	Mary ter Huurne		

Steps to Take When a Pensioner Dies

With each quarterly Branch report that is submitted and accompanied by your SAGE publication, the Algonquin Valley Branch requests that you send us a death notification of the pensioner or their spouse. When we receive such notices the Branch sends out a pamphlet entitled STEPS TO BE TAKEN WHEN A PENSIONER DIES. Here are the essential steps to prevent delay receiving allowances and death benefits:



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1. Contact Service Canada toll-free at 1-800-622-6232 – to advise of the death, to stop CPP and OAS payments and to receive survivor benefits of a one-time CPP lump sum death benefit and a CPP survivor allowance.
2. Contact the following to receive survivor benefits of a survivor allowance and possibly a supplementary death benefit:
 - a. For public service pensioners - Public Services and Procurement Canada 1-800-561-7930
 - b. For CAF pensioners – Canadian Forces Pension Office 1-800-267-0325
 - c. For RCMP pensioners – RCMP Pension Office 1-855-502-7090
3. Contact the pension offices if you as a survivor do not receive forms for continued coverage of the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) and if you so choose to receive coverage under the Pensioner's Dental Service Plan. Coverage is not automatic and if you do not apply for PSHCP coverage with 60 days, there is a further three-month waiting period in which no benefits are given.

Lunch and Learn Sessions

In our last Sage insert, we pointed you to a survey on our local web page. Unfortunately, the survey never actually got published. Our sincere apologies about that. The survey has been created and we would ask that you complete it using the link below. The questions the Branch Executive would like to have answers to include:

1. What time of the day is best, morning, early afternoon, evening?
2. What topics are members interested in?
 - (1) My Health
 - (2) My Home
 - (3) My Transportation
 - (4) My Finances
 - (5) My Connections
 - (6) My Safety
 - (7) My Supports and Services
 - (8) My Community
 - (9) My Partner and I
3. Where should they be held - Deep River, Petawawa, Pembroke, Renfrew, or?

Please respond to the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PVBQ3NC>

We sincerely apologize for the mix-up and thank you for your patience.

Algonquin Valley Branch Annual Picnic

Last August 28th, after two years of keeping close to home and avoiding people as much as possible, we returned to the Jubilee Lodge, at Petawawa, for our annual branch picnic. The weather was perfect and the picnic lunch that The Kitchen Eatery and Catering Company (The Kitchen) prepared for our enjoyment was just what we needed to help forget the gloom of the past two years. Of course, the cash bar helped as well.



After a brief report from the executive on some of the workings of the branch most of us lingered to continue our visiting while enjoying the fine weather and the beautiful view from the deck of the lodge. With about sixty members in attendance, it was a great time to reconnect with fellow retirees. If you have any comments or suggestion for improvements, please contact us at avb.on33@gmail.com. If you do not wish to miss this coming year's picnic (2023), please mark August 27th on/in your calendar when we plan to return to the Jubilee Lodge which undoubtedly will be another enjoyable afternoon with you there!

Advocacy

Algonquin Valley Branch hosted an Advocacy Information Night on December 1, 2022 at the Best Western in Pembroke. Our guest speaker, Amy Baldry, from the National Office presented an excellent overview of our organization's advocacy initiatives. While it was hoped more members and non-members were present, the information was rich in content, specifically addressing the 4 priorities of advocacy. These priorities are: Retirement Income Security, Pharmacare, National Seniors Strategy and Veteran Well-Being. Our organization is the largest national advocacy organization representing active and retired members of the federal public service, Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP and retired federally appointed judges. It is important to also know that our organization is 1 of the 3 members who negotiate with the Treasury Board changes to our Public Service Health Care Plan. Advocacy is what we do. Membership is who we are. The stronger our membership ... the stronger our advocacy.

More to follow in the months to come.

Branch Membership Drive

Our Association is always looking for members. One way is for you to ask a friend or neighbour if they are a current member of the National Association of Federal Retirees. If they are not, you can explain to them that we carry on a tradition of strong, smart advocacy campaigns to protect our members' earned pensions and benefits, and to build a better retirement for all Canadians.

You can let your friends or neighbours know that they can begin enjoying the benefits of membership. They will become part of one of the 79 branches across the country that has become a team of passionate volunteers who are there for them – connecting with MPs, organizing events, answering questions and so much more. As well, there are savings and perks with the preferred partner program. The program offers terrific savings and exclusive discounts to Association members in the realms of health, technology, home and auto insurance, financial advice and travel.

Your friends and neighbours can even join if they are not retired! Membership is open to anyone paying into or receiving a pension from Canada's Public Service, the RCMP or the Canadian Armed Forces, federally appointed judges and to honourably discharged non-pensioned veterans. Anyone receiving a survivor benefit from the pensions mentioned above is also eligible.

Membership costs just \$52.56 per year for an individual and \$68.28 per year for a couple (as of December 2022). That's like a couple of large takeout coffees each month! The fee amount helps support Federal Retirees' work for better pensions for all Canadians and provides full access to all benefits.

The double membership option for a couple doubles their impact and provides membership to a spouse or partner! Both become eligible for all member benefits, including the exceptional rates on MEDOC travel insurance, access to our knowledgeable research staff, four high-quality issues of Sage magazine each year and informative reports and updates from the Association's advocacy team.

If your friends or neighbours are interested in joining, it's easy. They can call the National Office toll-free at 1-855-304-4700 or they can sign up online at www.federalretirees.ca/join. Either way they get instant access. Payment can be made by credit card, or the more popular way by monthly withdrawal from their pension.

2023 Branch Annual Meeting – Save the Date

The date and location have been set for next year's Branch Annual Meeting, so please save the date.

Date: April 13, 2023

Time: 11:30 am – 3:00 pm

Location: Petawawa Legion

More details will follow.

If you'd like to help our seniors' community, please think about volunteering for a position on our local Executive Board. If you have any questions, please contact us at avb.on33@gmail.com.

We hope to see you there.

Do we have your email address and telephone number? – The Association and AVB Executive Committee do not have email addresses and/or telephone numbers for a substantial number of our members. AVB covers a vast area (essentially all of Renfrew County except Arnprior), and sending information to all members by post is expensive. If the Branch can send information to you by email or contact you by telephone from time to time, it makes it possible for us to give you much more timely details on upcoming events and to resolve any issues.

The National Office does circulate occasional news updates, useful information and requests for feedback on issues by email. If you haven't already provided your email address to the Association, please consider doing so – you can always opt out if it does not work out. It's best to email the Association's National Office at service@federalretirees.ca to update this info.

Are you moving, or changing your phone or email? -- Let us know so we can keep you informed: Are you moving to a retirement home or another location? If you don't let the Association know, you won't continue to receive SAGE and you risk losing your membership and its benefits. 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 except Arnprior) 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.