

National Association of Federal Retirees

March Newsletter 2025



Mid-Island & Pacific Rim Branch federalretirees-midisland.ca
PO Box 485, Lantzville, BC V0R 2H0

Telephone: (250) 248- 7171



November 28, 2024, General Meeting held at Tigh Na Mara

Next Meeting – Annual General Meeting.

Date/Time: Thursday, April 3, 2025.
Doors open 10:00 AM, Meeting starts 11:00 AM
Coffee available at 10:00 AM

Location: Lantzville Legion, 7227 Lantzville Road, Lantzville.

Business Meeting: 11:00-12:00

Presentation: Rick Roberts

Lunch: Roast Beef dinner, dessert, Coffee or Tea. Cost is \$35

In-House-Draw: Tickets \$2 or 3 for \$5. All proceeds to charity.

We are also collecting non-perishable food or cash for the local food banks.

Reservations: If you are planning to attend, please use this link.

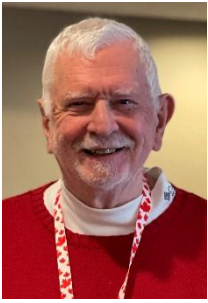
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/nafr-mid-island-pacific-rim-branch-annual-general-meeting-tickets-1261732298269?aff=oddtcreator> Please register for each individual attending.

Your local Federal Retirees volunteer will still phone those who prefer contact by phone to ask whether you plan to attend the lunch.

NOTE – If you are reluctant to click on the Eventbrite registration link from the website, please phone Jim Gahr, 250-760-2894 or Carol Gregson, 250 228-3510 if you plan to attend and state whether meeting only or meeting and meal.

Cancellations: The last date for meal cancellation to avoid being charged is Saturday, March 29, 2025. To cancel, please call Jim Gahr, 250 760-2894 or Carol Gregson, 250-228-3510. If you decide to attend on the day of the meeting, you are welcome to come and register at the door.

Name Tags will be available at the door for all members attending the April AGM.



President's Report - Spring Newsletter 2025

I used to joke with the Executive at the beginning when first became President (some 8 years ago!) that they should keep my reports

and letters as they may become collector items. Fast forward to today, as this will be my last newsletter report as your President, this may indeed become a collector item!

As some of you may be aware, I will not be putting my name forward for election at our AGM in April.

Bittersweet decision but I think it is time to turn over the reins to my Vice President Christine Walker. It has been my pleasure to lead a dedicated group of folks on the Executive who have worked very hard on behalf of all our members. However, I am not going away quietly, I have asked to be the speaker at our AGM to talk a little about my experiences over the last number of years in a presentation I am calling "Back to the Future" (with a little bit about the present) ...My remarks are sure to be scintillating so please come along to the meeting on April 3 and join me in welcoming our new Executive. Meeting details later on in this Newsletter.

The Advocacy Committee has been working extremely hard in preparation for the next Federal Election which will be happening sooner than later. In conjunction with Duncan and North Island Branches (as we share Federal ridings), letters have been prepared for all nominated candidates introducing them to our Association and requesting a meeting so we can outline our priorities. And as the North Island lacks an Advocacy person (the work is presently being done by its President), we have also volunteered to fill

some of their advocacy gaps when needed.

Spring is also the time of our Association's District (B.C.) meeting in May where 3 Executive members will attend led by Christine and the Associations All Member Meeting (AMM) in June in Gatineau Quebec where we will be represented by Christine. The AMM will be particularly important this year as our new national strategic plan will be presented for approval and the results of a year-long restructuring study will be presented. Significant results of these two meetings will be reported out at our September General Meeting.

I know I sound like a broken record when I say once again that your Executive needs more help. Please consider this service opportunity and maybe let your name stand for a Director at our AGM...the Executive is a good group to work with, we actually have some fun on occasion and we also throw in a Tim Bit or two. Please talk to me or any other Executive member if at all interested. And my thanks to the present Executive members who have once again let their name stand for election.

With the world seemingly tumbling uncontrollably right now, it is critical for us to be unified in supporting all Canadian seniors and specifically our Pensions and Benefits. In working with another not-for-profit organization in the past, I used the term "Together we're better" and indeed we are ...together we can protect our future and make life better for us all. More about that at our AGM. Hope to see many of you there!

"It's time to say goodbye, but I think goodbyes are sad, and I'd much rather say hello. Hello to a new adventure." — Ernie Harwell

Minutes of November 28, 2024 General Meeting

The General Meeting (GM) of the Mid-Island and Pacific Rim Branch (BC05) took place at Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre, Parksville, B.C., on Thursday, November 28, 2024.

BC05 Branch President Rick Roberts called the meeting to order at 11:10 am.

Marg Smith acted as secretary.

Rick asked the new members present to stand and introduce themselves.

The September 26, 2024, General Meeting minutes were displayed on the overhead screen for review and approval. The President called for a motion to approve the Minutes.

Pat Benton moved that the September 2024 General Meeting Minutes be approved, seconded by Penny Kanigan. Motion carried.

REPORTS from November GM

President- Rick Roberts

Rick thanked the Advocacy Committee for its work on the 2024 B.C. Provincial Election.

Rick informed the attendees that the BC Seniors Advocate scheduled to speak at the GM cancelled on short notice. Rick apologized for the cancellation. The Branch will communicate with the Office of the Seniors Advocate to reschedule.

Rick noted that the number of attendees at the GM was smaller than usual. The

Eventbrite meeting registration system is not working as hoped. Attendance numbers at general meetings are down when compared to past years. The system for informing and contacting members

about attending general meetings will be reviewed.

The Secretary and Communications positions on the Branch Executive are currently vacant. Rick asked anyone interested in these positions and other volunteer opportunities with the Branch to sign the volunteer sheet at each table.

BC05 Branch will be working with the North Island-John Finn Branch to assist them with advocacy.

Rick noted that the Mega Recruitment Drive is underway to attract new members to the Association.

Rick reported that the Branch made a financial donation to seven local Legion Branches to commemorate Remembrance Day.

Treasurer – Penny Kanigan

The Branch currently has \$28,563.15 in assets comprised of cash in a chequing account (\$15,670.06) and two GICs totaling \$12,893.09.

Rick asked for two members to volunteer to review the year-end financial statements.

Pat Benton and Bob Benton volunteered.

Membership- Pat Benton

The Branch has a total of 1694 members. A list of transfers in and out and membership cancellations were shown. The names of members who had passed away since the last general meeting were read, and a minute of silence was observed.

Health and Benefits – Andy Gilman

Andy reminded members that copies of the You and Your Survivors Workbook are available for those who wish to have one.

He noted that on November 1, 2024, the Pensioners' Dental Plan administration was transferred to Canada Life.

Andy mentioned that there have been scam emails about adding information to Canada Life accounts. Other scams were also mentioned.

Advocacy – Marg Smith

Marg thanked the members of the Branch Advocacy Committee - Larry Biccum, Charles Scrivener, and Christine Walker for their advocacy efforts associated with the B.C. Provincial Election.

She mentioned the MLAs elected in the four ridings within our Branch boundaries and their respective roles.

Guest Speaker

Rita Innamorati, the Executive Director of Volunteer Nanaimo, spoke about the organization's programs and services. Volunteer Nanaimo is a non-profit charity that has operated and delivered services since 1979. It plays a vital role in developing volunteerism in the Nanaimo region.

She discussed the importance and rewards of volunteering and the positive outcomes it has brought to her life.

Volunteer Nanaimo provides a range of programs, including:

- Community Volunteer Income Tax Program: Volunteers prepare income tax returns for low-income clients in Nanaimo and the surrounding areas and help with GIS, SAFER, and CPP applications.
- A computer tech program where volunteers repair and refurbish computers, laptops, phones and tablets.
- Youth programs.

- The Angel Network provides community assistance, and the Christmas Angels program matches community members to those in need. The Helping Hands program assists seniors and others who are challenged and need minor assistance on a one-off basis.

Rick thanked Rita for her remarks.

50/50 Draw

The total raised was \$280.00, of which \$140.00 went into the Branch Charity Account for distribution to the Parksville Food Bank. Two \$70 prizes were awarded: one to ticket winner Robert Benton (Ticket #2276365); the other to ticket winner Gayle Collins (Ticket #2276373). Both winners kindly donated their winnings to the Parksville Food Bank.



Did you know?

On Nov. 25, 2024, a non-permitted surplus in the Public Service Pension Fund was revealed in a statement by Treasury Board President Anita Anand. As a result, the federal government moved approximately \$1.9 billion from the Public Service Pension Fund to the Consolidated Revenue Fund - effectively taking the surplus and moving it to the federal government's central account at the Bank of Canada. Learn more by reading about the [Funding of the public service pension plan](#).

SPRING 2025 REPORTS

BRANCH ADVOCACY

Marg Smith, Branch Advocacy Liaison

Best wishes from your Branch Advocacy Committee: Christine Walker, Charles Scrivener, Larry Biccum and Marg Smith.

We are pleased to report on our Branch's advocacy activities and other developments on issues relevant to our advocacy efforts.

Preparing for the 2025 Federal Election

The year 2025 is pivotal as Canadians will head to the polls in a federal general election no later than October 20, 2025. Even though October 20 is the fixed election date, we all expect the federal election will be held much earlier.

Much has changed in the political landscape. Parliament was prorogued until March 24, and the Liberal Party is in the throes of choosing a new leader who will become the next Prime Minister. To add to the level of uncertainty, new tariffs levied on Canadian goods by the United States will have a chilling effect on the Canadian economy.

Advocating on your behalf in these uncertain times can be challenging, but be assured, that the advocacy teams at the Federal Retirees national office, our provincial Advocacy Program officers and your local branches are continuing with their work. It is now more important than ever to work together to deliver our message to all candidates and parties.

The branch advocacy committee has already begun preparing for the election.

Two federal ridings fall within our branch boundaries: Courtenay-Alberni and Nanaimo-Ladysmith. We are tracking

candidate nominations in both ridings. The candidates nominated to date are listed alphabetically by party below.

Courtenay-Alberni

- Animal Protection: Teresa Knight
- Conservative: Kris McNichol
- Green: Chris Markevich
- NDP: Gord Johns (Incumbent)
- PPC: Thomas Gamble

Nanaimo-Ladysmith

- Conservative: Tamara Kronis
- NDP: Lisa Marie Barron (Incumbent)
- PPC: Stephen Welton

We are joining with our neighbouring branches to reach out to candidates. In January, we met with the Duncan and District Branch, whose branch boundaries, along with ours, partially fall within the Nanaimo-Ladysmith riding and the North Island-John Finn Branch, with which we share the Courtenay-Alberni riding, and BC Advocacy Program Officer, Renate Sutherland.

Joint letters from the relevant branches are being sent to candidates. We are asking each candidate to meet with us to discuss our priorities.

We anticipate there will be other opportunities to work with our neighbouring branches to bring our message to candidates.

Know Your Constituency Boundaries

The forthcoming federal election will use a new electoral map based on the 2021 Canadian census. The 45th Parliament will have 343 seats (up from 338). The recent redistribution has changed many riding boundaries, including the Courtenay-Alberni and Nanaimo-Ladysmith ridings.

You can find what riding you live in and check electoral district maps on the Elections Canada website.

Advocacy Information on the Federal Retirees Website

The Federal Retirees website contains a wealth of information on the Association's advocacy priorities and actions. Please check the website regularly to see what's new and how to become involved.

As the federal election approaches, the website will offer easy-to-use tools for contacting the candidates in your riding. We urge you to use these tools to make your voices heard.

New and Noteworthy Reports and Studies

A recent study by the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)**, *The Power of Pensions*, clearly shows the importance of pensions to pensioners, governments, and communities.

You can find the study on the CCPA website at <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/the-power-of-pensions/>

In December 2024, the **Office of the B.C. Seniors Advocate** released the report *Monitoring Seniors Services 2024*. This report is based on 2023/24 data.

Among other things, new data in the 2024 monitoring report found that over the past five years:

- The percentage of the population 85+ increased 10%, and 65+ rose 15%.
- For people 65+, there were slight decreases in hospitalization and emergency department visits, and the percentage of people with dementia remained the same.

- 6,500 people were waiting for a publicly subsidized long-term care (LTC) bed in 2023/24, a 150% increase from five years ago (2,600).
- In 2023/24, the average wait time for someone admitted to LTC from the hospital was 36 days, compared to 225 days for someone assessed as eligible but not urgent from the community.
- The number of publicly subsidized home support clients increased by 11%, while the rate of clients per 1,000 seniors decreased by 7%.
- The number of applications for seniors subsidized housing was almost 14,000 in 2023/24, a 59% increase over five years; just 6% of total applicants received a unit last year.
- The number of seniors receiving the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) subsidy decreased by 8%, and the number of clients per 1,000 seniors decreased by 18%.

You can find the report on the website of the Office of the Seniors Advocate at:

<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/monitoring-seniors-services/>

The Importance of Voting

This report concludes with a reminder and appeal to our members to vote in the forthcoming federal election. Federal Retirees Executive Director Anthony Pizzino recently noted that voter turnout is declining in many democracies; however, in Canada, seniors vote in large numbers. In the 65-to-74 age group, voter turnout has consistently been around 80 percent in the last two general elections.

Canadian seniors can influence policy. Let's make our voices heard!

Financial Report February 2025 -

Penny Kanigan

Working Balance \$16,677.35

GIC investments X 2 \$12,893.09

Total \$29,570.44

MEMBERSHIP REPORT FEB 2025

MEMBER NUMBER COUNT

As of February 24, 2025, Mid-Island and Pacific Rim Branch has 1704 members.

NEW MEMBERS (23)

Diane Abraham, Qualicum Beach

Janice Bligh, Qualicum Beach

Cynthia Bogard, Nanaimo

Nona Brack, Nanaimo

Barbara Brittain, Ucluelet

Anjali Chawla, Nanaimo

Rodney Franklin, Nanaimo

David Hvid, Port Alberni

Joseph & Sandra Lamoureux, Port Alberni

Catherine & Scott Manson, Nanaimo

John & Sylvie May, Parksville

Jennifer & Jamie Mollins, Nanaimo

Noreen Rasmussen, Victoria

Theodore Riecken, Nanaimo

Michael & Brenda Spence, Parksville

Colin Stevensen, Nanaimo

Victoria Sutherland, Nanaimo

Linda Teng, Qualicum Beach

TRANSFERRED IN (0)

TRANSFERRED OUT (0)

In Memoriam (11)

Gone but not forgotten

Ian R Arklie, Port Alberni, survived by Karen

Adeline H. Banks, Nanaimo

Godfrey J. Cotton, Nanaimo, survived by Jean

Garnet R. Currie, Nanaimo

Kenneth Handy, Parksville, survived by Krystyna

Robert Hargreaves, Nanaimo, survived by Catherine

Donald Levesque, Parksville, survived by Gwen

William A Parker, Parksville

Michael Rabiza, Nanaimo, survived by Joyce

Earle A. Thomas, Port Alberni

John Townesend, Nanaimo, survived by Annen

Benefits & Entitlements

There are many reasons to join the National Association of Federal Retirees, for all federal government service members, one of them is:

Improvements and changes to the Public Service Health Care Plan

The purchase or rental of some medically necessary durable equipment is eligible for reimbursement under the PSHCP Miscellaneous Expense Benefit. Eligible equipment is covered at 80% of the reasonable and customary amount of the purchase or rental cost.



Your 2024 Mid-Island and Pacific Rim Executive

- Back row left to right: Andy Gilman, Larry Biccum, Jim Gahr, Robert Benton, Rick Roberts, Charles Scrivener and Ian Williams
- Front row: Marg Smith Christine Walker, Carol Gregson, Pat Benton, Penny Kanigan and Fran Graham

Recruitment & Volunteering

- Who can become a member?
- 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. Their spouses and survivors are also eligible to join Federal Retirees.

This is where you come in.

Having served before or not having served at all, your Mid-Island and Pacific Rim branch would like to ask you to take a few moments and reflect on what your executive members have given of themselves for you. Consider taking the burden off others, at least for a short while, and volunteer your time, expertise and dedication to serve on the branch executive. Without members' giving of themselves to support an important cause, which benefits exclusively themselves, we will be left defenseless against the forces of political needs and expediencies.

Help Us Grow Did you know that 70% of our members say that they heard about the Association by word of mouth? You are a tremendously important member of our recruitment team! We hope you will talk to your friends and neighbours about the benefits of joining. They don't have to be retired to join. Encourage them to:

- Call the National Association at 1.855.304.4700 or one of the Executive.
- Visit the National website at <https://www.federalretirees.ca/en>

Fraud prevention:

Financial scams and fraud come in many different forms. Sometimes they arrive in the form of a text message, email, or phone call, and often are designed to look like they are coming from your bank. One of the best ways to protect yourself from these kinds of scams is to learn what your bank would never ask you to do.

Eight things your bank would never ask you.

- Your bank would never call you and ask for personal information. (If you call them, they may ask some personal questions to confirm your identity).
- Your bank would never ask you to keep a secret or be dishonest.
- Your bank would never threaten to cancel your services and ask for remote access into your device.
- Your bank would never try to rush you into doing something.
- Your bank would never ask you to help with an investigation.
- Your bank would never ask you to purchase gift cards or cryptocurrency.
- Your bank would never ask you to transfer money as part of an investigation.
- Your bank would never request access to your computer.

National Association of Federal Retirees
Mid-Island and Pacific Rim Branch Executive, Directors & Volunteers 2024

Class	Position	Name	Phone	Email
Executive			Most 250	
Executive	President	Rick Roberts	248-7171	rick.roberts@shaw.ca
Executive	Vice - President	Christine Walker	754-4031	walkershomeemail@gmail.com
Executive	Secretary	Vacant		
Executive	Treasurer	Penny Kanigan	760-0929	pennykanigan@shaw.ca
Executive	Past President	Vacant		
Directors				
Director	Membership / Database	Pat Benton	780-242-9220	bentonpb1@gmail.com
Director	Health & Benefits	Andy Gilman	248-8595	andygilman48@gmail.com
Director	Advocacy	Marg Smith	586-8690	mrgtsmith80@gmail.com
Director	Editor / Web	Ian Williams	758-0954	ianv.will@gmail.com
Director	Awards/Historian	Charles Scrivener	758-2240	scrivenercharles59@gmail.com
Director	Registration	Jim Gahr	760-2894	heidleberghound@shaw.ca
Director	Program / Speakers	Fran Graham	585-8227	fran41@telus.net
Director	Newsletter/ Communications	Robert Benton	780-242-4623	bentonpb1@gmail.com
Director	At- Large	Larry Biccum	752-3485	lbiccum@hotmail.com
Director	At- Large	Carol Gregson	228-3510	cmgregsonbc@gmail.com
Coordinators				
Cards	Nanaimo	Sheila Wilson		mesheshe@shaw.ca
Cards	Parksville/Qualicum			
Cards	Port Alberni			
Nominations	Committee Chair	vacant		
Phone Captain	Nanaimo	Fran Graham		fran41@telus.net
Phone Captain	Nanaimo	Maureen Shakespeare		lmshakes@shaw.ca
Phone Captain	Parksville/Qualicum	Judy Southern		njsouthern@shaw.ca
Phone Captain	Port Alberni	Wendy Stander		wendy.tony@shaw.ca