

General Meeting
Oakwood Inn, Grand Bend
October 19, 2016

Branch web site www.federalretirees.ca/en/Branches/Ontario/Bluewater

Present -

- President - Gloria Cayea
- Vice-President - Bob Jackson
- Treasurer - Diane Kerr
- Director of Membership - Bill Mason
- Program Coordinator - Mary Ann Burgess
- Outreach Coordinator - Pat Mason
- IT and Web Site Coordinator - Doug Kerr
- Health Benefits Officer - Earnie MacDougall
- Member at Large - Diana Wright

Absent -

- Member at Large - Murray Lester
- Member at Large - Georgina MacIssac

Gloria opened the meeting. Members were reminded that membership fees will increase in 2017. This will be noticed more by individuals paying their membership by personal cheque than by those paying by monthly deductions from their pension cheque. The increase is meant to help ease NAFR's national deficit; to help fund the organization's administration and new headquarters building; and to fund the Strategic Plan. Gloria pointed out NAFR is the only retirees association that advocates on behalf of federal retirees and to continue to do so it must have its fiscal house in order. Gloria expressed her regret that SAGE magazine didn't offer a more complete explanation for the fee increase. In the meantime, both National and our own Bluewater Branch will continue to seek and apply cost cutting measures to be as efficient as possible.

Diane presented the Treasurer's report. She reported that the Branch is operating within its budget even while we subsidize lunches such as the one today at Grand Bend. On the topic of the fee increase, Diane pointed out that the Branch will only receive 12 cents from the fee increase collected from single memberships, and 16 cents from double memberships. The remainder of the increase will be directed towards the National objectives outlined by Gloria, namely National organizational needs, the Strategic Plan and NAFR's Reserve Fund. Next year's fees will be \$47.76 for a single membership and \$62.04 for a double.

Bill pointed out that unlike past practice, this winter's SAGE magazine will not contain a date sticker for members to place on their membership cards. Member's cards will now be considered valid without having an up-to-date sticker and our Preferred Partners have been advised of this change. Reportedly the lack of an up-to-date sticker should not be an issue when members apply for a Partners discount. According to National, this should realize a savings of ~\$100K.

Pat distributed new contact lists for the callers at the meeting. She stated that all Branch members should now be on either the e-mail or the caller lists for meeting and event notifications.

Earnie stated that as Health Benefits Officer he is required to have a police background check, including finger printing. However the process is going slowly, frustratingly so! On a more serious note, Earnie pointed out flu season is already upon us and fresh cases have been reported this month. Earnie reminded members to get their flu shots and also noted that a vaccine for pneumonia is available. Earnie also mentioned that some jurisdictions are dropping the requirement for advanced paramedics in ambulances, so depending on how far it is to the local hospital a desperately sick person may be on their own for a considerable period. In short, members are strongly encouraged to get their shots as soon as they are available.

As chair of the Bluewater Branch Volunteer Award committee, Earnie reminded members to submit names of deserving individuals along with a brief description of their contribution. Priority will be given to members who contribute to NAFR objectives, although other volunteer activities can be considered for recognition. Members requiring more info or wishing to make a nomination can contact Earnie directly in person or via e-mail (enmacdougall@hurontel.on.ca) or visit the Branch web site www.federalretirees.ca/en/Branches/Ontario/Bluewater Final selection of the nominees will done by committee.

Bluewater Branch Volunteer Awards were presented to Jean and Gord Webb and Flo Kettle. Jean and Gord were recognized for their long term volunteer work organizing and maintaining the Branch callers and caller lists. In addition, over the years they've played a strong role in the Branch's Wallaceburg AGMs. For her part, Flo has been a long time volunteer within Bluewater Branch, and in particular has been instrumental in organizing the annual Christmas meetings held at the Sarnia Navy Club.

Doug invited members to visit and use the Branch website. Anyone needing help to navigate the site, or having questions concerning the site are invited to approach Doug directly at our meetings or via e-mail at nafr.bluewater.kerr@cogeco.ca

In a general discussion Gloria noted that staffers of federal MP offices are eligible to join NAFR. Gloria also noted the Bluewater Executive is looking for ways to cut Branch costs. She encouraged members to offer suggestions while noting that she personally would not like to see the number of meetings reduced, and given our large area (Tobermory to Wallaceburg) she doesn't believe having all meetings in just one location is viable. Nonetheless, she is but one voice and the entire Executive is willing to consider any and all proposals the membership may bring forward.

Mary Ann called for a moment of silence for departed members followed by grace. Mary Ann noted that this year's Christmas meeting will be held at the Navy Club, Sarnia, on November 23. Cost for members is \$10 each, payable in advance or at the door. Plans are being made for a bus trip to take place on June 14, 2017. This will be to Windsor to take part in the Rum Runners Tour. Details of the tour can be found here: www.rumrunnerstour.com Cost is anticipated to be \$105 per person, and this includes the bus, the tour, rum tasting and gratuities. The tour comes highly recommended by those members who have already taken it. Further details will be forthcoming. The Branch is also considering holding a fun bowling event this winter in late January. This event is meant to complement the summer Golf Tournament and give members a break from winter blahs. Mary Ann reminded members that future meeting dates and details are posted on the web site. She mentioned that next year's October meeting might be held at MacPhersons Restaurant, Port Franks, rather than at Oakwood. Details will be provided as plans are finalized.

After lunch Mary Ann introduced our guest speaker, Nicole Rogers. Ms Rogers spoke eloquently of the challenges, the highs and lows of being the parent of a child with cancer. Besides speaking touchingly of her own direct experiences, she also gave vignettes of other parents dealing with childhood cancer. In particular Ms Rogers' presentation drew attention to the good work being provided by two charitable organizations and her own foundation, namely Childcan, Make-a-Wish foundation and The Cupcake and Confetti Crew, respectively. More info on these organizations can be found here:

www.childcan.com/

www.makeawishwo.ca/

www.facebook.com/thecupcakesandconfetticrew

The 50-50 draw was \$32 and there were 3 door prizes. Of special note the winner of the 50-50 draw, Diana Wright, donated her winnings to guest speaker Nicole Rogers for The Cupcakes and Confetti Crew.

Members were reminded the next meeting will be held at the Navy Club, Sarnia on November 23.

Meeting adjourned.