



## EASTERN MANITOBA Branch Report

### President's Message

*Chuck Vandergraaf*

Well, that was an unexpected development at our recent BAM (Branch Annual Meeting)! For those of you who missed the meeting (and that is the largest fraction our branch members), the meeting reached a sort of an impasse when it came to elect or acclaim the Executive for 2018/9. As Peter Baumgartner, who held the President's position for the last two years, pointed out in the previous newsletter, he could no longer serve as President. Our Vice-President, Wayne Greenlay, only one year in that position, was not ready to take up Peter's mantle either, for reasons also mentioned in the previous newsletter. Both Peter and Bill Merchell, the Branch Services Coordinator for Manitoba and North West Ontario, pointed out that, without a president, the branch would not be able to function. In anticipation of this situation,

the board had proposed a motion that, if passed by the members at the BAM, would allow the board to investigate other options, including the branch becoming a satellite of the Winnipeg and District branch.

After some soul searching and discussions with my wife, Evelyn (one should not make rash decisions!), I volunteered to serve as President for a one-year term. This will allow **Wayne Greenlay**, our Vice-President another year to take over the President's position, if his situation warrants it. **Peter Baumgartner** will stay on the board as Vice-President for a one-year period to provide continuity. We were also fortunate that **Gary Simmons** agreed to serve as secretary, a crucial position on the board that had, until recently, been ably filled by Kay Harvey. **Wendy Berry**, who joined the board as a member-at-large a year ago, has agreed to take on the position of treasurer, allowing **Don Daymond** a well-deserved rest. Again, to provide continuity, Don will remain on the board as a member-at-large.

### National Association of Federal Retirees (Eastern Manitoba Branch)

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**Donna Wuschke** will continue in her role of Health Benefits Officer, providing our members with guidance. **Maureen Macdonald** will remain in charge of Memberships. **George Montgomery, Alf Wikjord** and **Elmer Voelpel** continue as members-at-large, with George coordinating the quarterly Newsletter. We welcome **Frances Pulscher** as a newly minted member-at-large. Our by-law allows for one additional member-at-large and I want to keep that position open for any member who is interested in being monitored for the President's position, hopefully via a one-year stint as Vice-President. If you're interested, contact Gary Simmons or me.

It is clear, however, that our branch is in a precarious position. Our membership is aging, the "supply" of new members is drastically diminished with the exit of Atomic Energy of Canada from the Whiteshell Site, and enticing volunteers to serve on the Executive of the board remains problematic. It is entirely possible that we will find ourselves in the same position next April, with no volunteers to fill the President and Vice-President positions. Considering this, it is important that the resolution that was withdrawn at the April meeting, be brought forward at the Fall General Meeting, now scheduled for Thursday, October 11, at the Alliance Church. The wording of this resolution will read:

*Be it resolved that the Branch Board of Directors shall investigate the potential dissolution of the Eastern Manitoba Branch and amalgamation with the Winnipeg and District Branch if no candidates for Branch Executive, including President, step forward for election.*

So, I am back after a two-year hiatus. One my first duties as President, was to attend the annual Prairie District Meeting in Fort

Saskatchewan in early May. This meeting brings together the Presidents of the Prairie Provinces (including the Lakehead Branch in Thunder Bay), Provincial and Territorial Advocacy Officers, and Provincial Branch Services Coordinators to discuss common challenges and to receive updates from the National Board of Directors. The Organization's finances look good and the membership numbers are holding steady. We discussed the proposals that will be brought to the Annual Members Meeting in Gatineau and suggestions to grow the branches. These district meetings are also valuable for new board members. The Organization funds the attendance of the branch President, but branches are invited to bring Observers. We can find room in our budget to consider sending an observer to the next district meeting, scheduled for Regina in 2019.

By the time you read this issue, I will have attended the Annual Members Meeting in Gatineau, QC "across the river from Ottawa" and hope to report on this in our next newsletter.

Until then, I wish you an enjoyable summer. Nothing beats a Manitoba summer, with its long days, warm beaches, clear lakes, and festivals.

## **Benefits Corner**

*Donna Wuschke*  
*Branch Health Benefits Officer*

### **Spousal Membership in MEDOC**

It has recently been pointed out that Johnson Insurance Inc. is paying close attention to whether a deceased member of the NAFR maintained a family membership or an individual membership. If the

deceased's membership was family, the survivor is eligible to continue as a MEDOC member. If the deceased's membership was single, the survivor may not be eligible to be a member of MEDOC.

## Things That You Can Do to Increase the Likelihood of Success of a MEDOC CLAIM

In the Spring 2018 issue of SAGE (volume 17, page 27), Johnson Inc. discussed things that you can do to increase the likelihood of a claim on your travel and travel health being settled to your satisfaction. Some points they discussed include

- be candid in your application;
- be familiar with your policy (i.e. read your policy carefully);
- have the insurer's contact information readily available;
- keep all your receipts, tickets and documentation to support a possible future claim;
- should something happen while you are travelling, call your insurer immediately for medical assistance, and alert local authorities immediately of lost or stolen items;
- when submitting a claim follow the claim instructions and submit documentation promptly.

## Help for Caregivers

Increasing numbers of us, as we age, find ourselves caregivers for our spouse or other family member. This can be a lonely task, but, happily, a lot of help is available.

Those of us living in the north Eastman region are particularly fortunate in having many support services available through the Two Rivers Support Services for Seniors. Many other communities have similar

services. If you are not able to find one, contact one of the social workers at your Regional Health Authority.

Services co-ordinated by Two Rivers are provided by volunteers and fee-for-service workers who have had a criminal check. Fees are regulated by Two Rivers, and all client information is confidential. Some of the services provided are:

- transportation to medical appointments, recreational events or shopping (or anything else), locally or in Winnipeg,
- congregate meals in Pinawa and Lac du Bonnet, and meals on wheels,
- friendly phone calls and visiting,
- handy helper services for household chores and yard work,
- delivery services of groceries and pharmaceuticals,
- help with completion of forms, and volunteer income tax preparation,
- Lifeline Personal Response Service. The Lifeline will summon emergency help if a button is pushed or if a fall is detected. This can be enormously helpful in providing peace of mind for an absent caregiver.

If a more comprehensive level of care is required, this can be obtained through your Regional Health Authority. Some of the services they provide are:

- an Adult Day Program,
- home care, which includes workers to assist with personal care, meals and family relief,
- respite help for caregivers for either an occasional break or a vacation,
- in-home nursing services, palliative care, cancer care and navigation services,
- mental health evaluation services and a crisis line.

Besides the local assistance listed above, there are many national associations providing help for those with specific illnesses and disabilities, such as the Alzheimer’s Society, the Diabetes Association and the Kidney Foundation. If you contact one of these associations, you are likely to be agreeably surprised by the comprehensiveness of the assistance they are able to provide.

Finally, there is some financial help available through income tax benefits. The Manitoba Primary Caregiver Tax Credit is a refundable tax credit for the caregiver (<https://tinyurl.com/mbpctc16>). The federal Disability Tax Credit is usually claimed by the patient but may be claimed by the caregiver under certain circumstances

(<https://tinyurl.com/yayd5jx3>). Both require a medical evaluation of the patient and an application must be made.

As well, many household or other expenses incurred as a result of a disability may be claimed as a medical expense by the patient, including attendant care, ambulance fees, travel expenses for medical appointments, and alterations to your home. The list of claimable expenses is voluminous, and complex, and we suggest a careful examination to find what may apply to your situation. (<https://tinyurl.com/claim-expense>).

*Our Branch Health Benefit's Officer: Donna Wuschke, 204-753-2706 or E-mail: [wuschkee@mymts.net](mailto:wuschkee@mymts.net)*

## **Membership News**

*Maureen Macdonald  
Branch Membership Secretary*

### **Membership (on record as June 2018):**

	2018-03	2018-06
Total Double Households	257	255
Total Single Households	171	173
Total Regular Households	428	428
Total Non-DDS* Households	35	36
Total DDS* Households	393	392
Total Active Members	684	683

\*Direct Deduction from Source

Note: Some numbers may not add up. We get our data from the CRM database, NAFR Head Office inputs the new and recently deceased membership numbers; there are some time-differences when we generate our reports

### **Members or spouses deceased since last General Meeting:**

- John “Jock” Guthrie
- Constance Fundytus