



The Victoria-Fred Whitehouse Branch Report

CONGRESS 08

A Message from your B.C. Representatives

Congress 08, held in Ottawa Jul 7-9, has ushered in a new governance and administrative model that will better serve the needs of FSNA members both now and into the future. British Columbia is now represented by a National Director, BC, Julie Spencer, on the National Board of Directors (NBOD). Her responsibility will be to represent the needs of all members at the national level and will focus on policy and advocacy issues. As well, BC is represented by three Regional Service Officers who will be responsible for administrative and operational issues and who will represent their respective branches by working closely with the National Office, reporting to the Branch Co-ordination Committee of the NBOD. John Finn is the RSO for the BC Coastal Islands region and will be working closely with the five Island branches. On the provincial front, Jim Cotter continues in his role as the Provincial Advocacy Officer (PAO) for BC and faces the many challenges brought on by an upcoming election.

The Congress emphasized that the primary function of the FSNA is in an advocacy role in order to provide a strong voice on behalf of its members, and seniors in general, at both the federal and provincial levels. The FSNA, through its staff and elected officials, sits on many governmental committees and influences policy in the area of federal pensions, health and dental plans, provincial and federal health care systems as well as public pensions (CPP/QPP) and income assistance (OAS and GIS), and income tax and other senior issues. It was also highlighted that in the current and future climate of increased costs for health care services, we must “Establish an equitable balance between member expectations and the reasonable capacity of the FSNA to pursue those expectations.” Governments are not looking to provide more benefits but in some cases reduce what we have. Part of the mandate of the FSNA is to ensure that the needs of members and seniors in general are taken into consideration in future plan development by our governments.

In summary, the deliberations during Congress 08 have provided a firm basis upon which the FSNA can move forward. We look forward to serving you through our terms of office and hope to meet as many of you as possible over the next year.

Julie Spencer, National Director
British Columbia

John Finn, Regional Services Officer
BC Coastal Islands

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

The Branch Membership Committee would like to thank all those members who have switched from paying dues annually by cheque to automatically paying monthly by Dues Deduction at Source (DDS) directly from their pension. This year's response, including those that have mailed their authorization form to start DDS in January 2009, has been terrific. It simplifies everyone's life; reduces postal costs / Treasurer's accounting load / Membership Committee work. Thank you! Thank you!

If there are others that have not yet authorized payment of dues by DDS and would like to help reduce the workload of your Branch volunteers, please contact Bill Rowbotham 250-370-2567, email drumbeg@shaw.ca. Information, authorization forms and assistance to complete the form are available. For DDS dues payment to start in Jan 2009, authorization forms must reach National Office by mid-Nov 08.

(DDS is not available to Associate members, those in receipt of an RCMP survivor allowance and Federal Judges or their survivors.)

VETERANS AFFAIRS – POLICY REVISION ON HEARING DISABILITY

A note for CF and RCMP veterans in case you haven't heard:

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has made a policy revision concerning hearing disability. Tenitis (constant ringing in the ears) is now a recognized disability and the standards by which hearing disability claims are awarded have been altered so that many who have been denied disability in the past now may be entitled to it. If this applies to you, you can contact your local VAC office or a Royal Canadian Legion Services Officer to get the process started. You can also visit the VAC website at <http://www.vac.gc.ca> on the Internet. A downloadable brochure and further information on the Veterans Review and Appeal Board is available on the web at <http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/Documents/VRAB%20Brochure.htm>.

BC Seniors' Guide – 9th Edition

The province offers a very useful and comprehensive publication for the information of all seniors in BC. The 9th updated edition of the guide is expected to be available in October 2008. Unfortunately the 8th edition is out-of-print but can still be accessed on the Internet at the BC Seniors' website, which is www.gov.bc.ca/seniors.

The topics covered in the Guide are extensive and include:

- Health Services
- Housing
- Transportation
- Finances
- Lifestyles
- Personal Security
- Other Govt. Services

A second guide, Healthy Eating for Seniors, is currently available in print.

To obtain further information and a personal copy of either guide (when available), you can call the toll free BC Seniors' Line at 1 800 465-4911 or 250 952-1742 in Victoria.

BC HealthGuide Handbook

Another free provincial publication of interest to seniors is the BC HealthGuide Handbook. Here are some tips on how you can obtain your own copy:

Read the BC HealthGuide handbook for information on how to recognize and cope with common health concerns. Learn about how to prevent illness, home treatment and care options, and when you should see a health professional. You can find topics relevant to older adults throughout the handbook.

Get your free BC HealthGuide handbook at these locations:

- English handbooks are available at your local pharmacy or Government Agent's Office.
- Chinese or Punjabi handbooks are available at many community or multicultural organizations, temples or English Language Services for Adults providers.
- French handbooks are available through your local francophone organization.

If you need more information on how to get your free BC HealthGuide, contact:

- Health and Senior's Information Line - Call 1-800-465-4911 or e-mail HLTH.health@gov.bc.ca
- BC NurseLine - Call 1-866-215-4700 in BC or 604-215-4700 in Greater Vancouver.

BC HealthGuide handbooks are available free of charge only to British Columbia residents and organizations helping to distribute these in their community.

2008 SCHEDULE & SPEAKERS

October 14

Rosemarie Clark from First Memorial Funeral Services

(<http://www.firstmemorial.ca/victoria/vc-aboutus.html>)

November – no meeting

December 09

Annual Christmas Party

This year the event will be held at the Trafalgar-Pro Patria Branch of the Legion starting at 10:00 AM (see following General Information for location details). We hope to have Brian Tetlow and his group "The Gypsy Rovers" back again this year for entertainment.

Lunch will follow a brief business meeting and the entertainment.

General Information

The Victoria-Fred Whitehouse Branch of FSNA is an organization led by a volunteer executive and does not maintain an office. For FSNA related information or assistance with pension or benefit matters, contact our voice-mail at 250-385-3393 or any of the executives listed here. Our mail address is 1728 Douglas St, Victoria, BC, V8W 2G7.

Assistance with re-establishing survivor allowances and benefits upon the death of a pensioner is available by calling any of the above sources.

Branch meetings are held at The Trafalgar-Pro Patria Branch #292 of the Royal Canadian Legion, 411 Gorge Rd East, Victoria BC. Meetings commence at 10:00 AM on the second Tuesday of the months of January, March, June, October and December. The Legion can comfortably accommodate 180+ persons in the second floor meeting room; (elevator is available). FSNA members have been extended a welcome to use the Legion facilities for lunch (snack bar or lounge) following the meetings. City bus service and free parking are available at this location. Our May meeting is our annual "Luncheon" with details published in the "Spring" On Guard Branch Report. You are welcome and encouraged to attend all meetings and events.

VICTORIA - FRED WHITEHOUSE BRANCH - 2008 OFFICERS

President **Richard Acton** (LTCL, MEDOC) 479-1799; richmarj@shaw.ca
Past Pres. **Tom Stark** (LTCL, MEDOC, pensions) 721-3917
1st VP **Diane McIntyre** (PSHCP, PDSP, Membership Committee); long distance - 250-743-6084; elhefe@telus.net
2nd VP **Neil Bright** (PSHCP, PDSP, Newsletter, Membership Committee) 478-0459; thebrightsare@shaw.ca

Treasurer **Genno Pereira** (Membership Committee) 727-0391
superannuate@shaw.ca
Secretary **Inez Walker** 418-8726;
Inezwalker@shaw.ca

DIRECTORS

Ray Webber (Membership Info Co-ordinator) 385-7800; mcmewsvic@shaw.ca
Bill Rowbotham (Outside Speakers, Membership Committee) 370-2567; drumbeg@shaw.ca
Howie Logan (Publicity) 477-6102
Val Kolsun (Archives) 370-9106; jchomyn@shaw.ca
Owen Robertson (Reception & Facilities) 474-3869
George Baker (Inside Speakers) 474-1541; george.baker@shaw.ca
Jim Anderson (Membership Committee) 391-9545; jdandrsn@shaw.ca
Joan Landsky (Director at Large) 388-5090
George Philip (Director at Large) 477-3170
Susan Williams (Director at Large) 656-9176; susworld@shaw.ca
Rick Deans (Director at Large) 370-7403
Rickrdeans@shaw.ca
Shirley Roberts (Director at Large) 381-3241
Gordandshirley@shaw.ca

Voice Mail (leave a message): 385-3393

Our mailing address remains:
FSNA Victoria-Fred Whitehouse Branch
C/O Silver Threads, 1728 Douglas St.,
Victoria BC, V8W 2G7