

BRANCH REPORT

ON43 | Ottawa

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OTTAWA BRANCH
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MEMBERSHIP

OTTAWA BRANCH has over 34,000 members in the City of Ottawa. Our main mission is to advocate for the protection of our members' pensions and retirement benefits.

Learn more about Ottawa Branch activities at our combined **2020 & 2021 AGM** which will be held on **May 6, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.** You can visit our website or call 613-737-2199 to learn how to register and participate.

We are soliciting nominations for the Board of Directors. Submit nominations by surface mail or email (see addresses above) before 5:00 p.m. EST April 22, 2021. See: <https://nafrottawa.com/board-of-directors/> or call the Branch for application form.

President's message

2020 marks my fourth year as your president. It has been a year of significant challenge and our hearts go out to everyone in the community as we all cope with the pandemic and the isolation it brings. I am pleased to report that Ottawa Branch has successfully found ways to keep our volunteers and members safe, while still delivering meaningful services.

From March onward, we cancelled in-person events, closed the office and began working and volunteering from home. We learned how to use Zoom and conduct webinars and many of you learned to Zoom with us. If you feel ready to learn to Zoom, please visit our website or email us.

This fall, we re-started financial literacy programming and added new healthy aging programming and delivered 12 webinars to 843 members and their guests. Please read further to learn about our 2020 activities.

We hope too that you will be proud to hear that Ottawa Branch received the National Association's 2020 **Branch Excellence Award** (for large branches) based on exemplary achievement in attracting, recruiting and engaging members; supporting volunteers; and advocacy.

It has been quite a year and I want to express my sincere thanks to our dedicated **Board of Directors** and **volunteers** and our terrific Branch office team led by **Linda Barber** with **Sarah Campbell** and **Ramin Akhavan**, our 2020 summer student.



Sincerely,

Robert Giroux
Branch President



Save 25%
on your annual membership
dues by switching to the
DDS payment option!

For a limited time only, we are offering a one-time 25 per cent discount on annual membership dues for every member who switches to the Dues Deduction at Source (DDS) payment option.

Complete a DDS registration form and return it to the Association's national office to make the switch today. Visit federalretirees.ca/DDS for more information.



National Association
of Federal Retirees
Association nationale
des retraités fédéraux

Ottawa Branch Annual Report - 2020

As many of you did, we started 2020 with ambitious plans and activities. In January, we offered two sold-out workshops on *European River Cruising* with **Nicole Foote** of **Carlson-Wagonlit Travel**, who has been helping our members travel since 1992. We also participated in a *Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN)* seminar for the Canadian Armed Forces. In February, our Board Directors got together for a retreat to consider new plans and strategies to offer you more valuable services and experiences.

And then in March, with the pandemic and public health concerns, suddenly we had to notify over 250 members that all five of March and April workshops (*Europe on a Budget* with **Bob Lyman**, *Tax Clinics*) were cancelled. Keeping our volunteers and members safe was key. So we closed the office and began working and volunteering from home.

Ottawa Branch was able to adapt – Webinars-R-us

Ottawa Branch was not daunted. Our volunteers began to get familiar with online events and Zoom technology and we started moving into the virtual world. Our first step was a collaborative effort with the **Council on Aging of Ottawa** and the City of Ottawa, that saw over 1,000 local seniors log onto the internet to hear **Dr. Vera Etches**, **Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health** give a COVID-19 update. Fortunately, the City handled all the technical aspects on YouTube and Facebook Live.

To help the Branch rise to the challenge of virtually connecting with members, **Linda Barber**, our Branch Manager brought in new talent and expertise thanks to the funding received from the Government of Canada. Volunteer **Anna Blauveldt** did a great job on our summer student application and we are also very grateful to our local MP **David McGuinty**, who gave us his full support and to **Jenny Hooper** in Mr. McGuinty's office, who gave us able assistance. As a result, we thoroughly enjoyed this summer working with **Ramin Akhavan**, a local Ashbury graduate, who is now back at McGill finishing his second year of Computer Science. And, this fall-winter, our hopes for a webinar program became a reality, when **Sarah Campbell** joined us thanks to the funding received from the Government of Canada – New Horizons for Seniors Program. Sarah is an Ottawa native and McGill graduate, who has worked overseas and just completed her master's degree. Also supporting our webinar program is new volunteer, **Frank Schilder** who really knows his way around Zoom.

With this help, and with the guidance of **Alain Corriveau**, Chair of **Membership and Services**, and Board Directors, **Darlene Boileau** and **Patricia Walsh**, we started offering our members learning experiences this fall via Zoom webinars. **Michael Fine**, Branch Member and MBA, developed six new financial literacy topics which have proved just as popular as his previous seminars. And Patricia and Darlene have sourced healthy aging topics with Linda that have also been very well-received. Since September 2020, Ottawa Branch offered 12 Zoom webinars that were attended by over 843 members and their guests.

We also postponed our Annual General Meeting (AGM) first from May to November and then we cancelled it altogether. On May 6, 2021 we will hold a combined AGM for 2020 and 2021 and current plans are to hold it via Zoom. Information on how to register is on our website at: <https://nafrottawa.com/>. Don't forget you can find Zoom training from the National Office and register for our webinars on our website too.



Employment and
Social Development Canada



Adapting our advocacy and community liaison work

Ottawa Branch had always planned to be very active in 2020 with the National Association’s **Reach 338 Project**. The project was designed to build a strong connected network with MPs across Canada and to sensitize them to our advocacy priorities: retirement income security; a National Seniors’ Strategy; support for veterans and their families; and pharmacare.

Then the pandemic shone a stark light on the intolerable conditions facing residents of long-term care (LTC) facilities. Our Association responded by pressing the government to reform LTC, adopt national standards and improve home care. LTC reform is now a critical element in our call, with other seniors’ groups, for a National Seniors’ Strategy.

Leslie Lawry, our **Advocacy Committee** Chair recruited **Jean-Claude Bouchard** and **Dianne Kanary** as new committee members and promptly refocused the group on connecting virtually with MPs to press for LTC reform. Dianne and **Hélène Buteau** equipped the Committee with MP contact information, letters of introduction and meeting agendas and scripts, customized from National Office models.

After concerted efforts this fall, our volunteers were able to connect virtually with five local MPs and we have firm plans to connect with the rest of our local MPs in 2021. Our volunteers made sure to deliver the message that LTC reform is both urgent and critical.



Branch members can now enjoy a discount on visits to the National Museum of Agriculture and Food.

At the same time, volunteers serving on our **Branch Community Liaison Committee** have strengthened their connections with other seniors’ groups to deepen our understanding of the failures in LTC and options for meaningful reform. We are particularly grateful to **Diane Law** for representing our Branch at the Council on Aging’s **Health Issues Committee** and to **Mary March** for representing us on the **Task Force on Access & Equity for Ethnocultural Seniors**.

New offer

We are happy to announce that Ottawa Branch members now receive a 15% discount on annual membership with **Ingenium**, the crown corporation that manages the [Canada Agriculture and Food Museum](#), the [Canada Aviation and Space Museum](#), and the [Canada Science and Technology Museum](#).

An Ingenium membership enables you to enjoy all the exhibitions and activities at all three museums. There is even a special **grandparent membership** that includes two named grandparents and grandchildren (age 17 and under). To purchase a membership, you need to go on-line to the [Ingenium website](#) and use the discount code: **2021NAFR**.



Branch members can now enjoy a discount on visits to the National Museum of Aviation and Space.

Ingenium is working closely with local public health officials on COVID-19 protocols designed to keep visitors safe. Advance tickets are required before you visit a particular museum. Please go to the museum’s website or call ahead to learn about their COVID-19 procedures.



Branch members can now enjoy a discount on visits to the National Museum of Science and Technology.

In memoriam

We are very grateful to **Diane Law** who has volunteered to coordinate the Ottawa Branch in memoriam column in *Sage*. If you would like to honour a past branch member by having her or his name included in the Ottawa Branch in memoriam section, please email Diane at inmemoriamOttawaON43@gmail.com.

Staying strong

Maintaining and growing our membership base is key to the strength of our voice as your advocates and to funding the services and benefits you enjoy as members. So, when we

noticed a sizeable group of members not renewing their memberships this summer, a team of 20 volunteers (including our president and six board directors) reached out and called 400 of them. Many were unaware that their membership had lapsed and 40% rejoined us. The National Office is working on strategies to prevent future similar lapses. In the meantime, you can help us by spreading the word (safely) about the value of the Association. If every Ottawa Branch member could each recruit one new member each this year, we would double in size. Please help us stay strong and grow.

2020 Stephen Troy Volunteer of the Year Awards

The 2020 Ottawa Branch **Stephen Troy Volunteer of the Year Award** co-recipients are: **Hélène Buteau** and **Shelagh Tuddenham**.



Hélène Buteau retired from Service Canada in 2011 and joined the Association the next year. She became an active volunteer with Ottawa Branch after participating in one of our 2018 financial literacy workshops. Hélène is the official recorder at our board meetings and serves on our Advocacy Committee (as co-vice-president) and our Membership and Services Committee. Hélène has been a Toastmaster since 1989 and she achieved the level of **Distinguished Toastmaster** in 2014.

Hélène Buteau co-recipient, 2020 Ottawa Branch Stephen Troy Volunteer of the Year Award.

Shelagh Tuddenham joined us in 2009, the same year she retired from the Public Service. In 2013, she began volunteering with our Branch Community Liaison Committee that forges strong connections with local seniors' organizations. She is the Branch Coordinator of our *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* program. Shelagh was awarded the **Celebrating Seniors Award** in 2018 by the Council on Aging of Ottawa for her contributions to improving the lives of seniors.



Shelagh Tuddenham co-recipient, 2020 Ottawa Branch Stephen Troy Volunteer of the Year Award.

For the full story on our two award recipients and more news and updates, please visit the Ottawa Branch website at www.nafrottawa.com/.

*Finally, our sincere thanks go to our volunteer translators, **André Deschênes** and **Patrice Lemyre**, who have worked diligently every month translating our electronic newsletters, and **Jennifer Pouliot**, who prepares the French versions of our AGM minutes and major reports, including this one.*