



## The Ottawa Branch Report

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS  
FSNA OTTAWA BRANCH  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUBMISSIONS DUE:  
January 9, 2012

### THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Winter 2011



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Over the last several months your Board of Directors has moved forward on many fronts to identify specific projects that respond to our Strategic Plan and Members' Survey Results. The work being done by the Committees of the Board is exciting for all of us and is definitely helping us to move forward on one of our key goals—that of engaging and continuing to be relevant to current and future members. As this work progresses we are also looking at how we *communicate* with members as communication is essential to keep an organization open and forward looking.

We were extremely pleased to see that the majority of respondents to our Members' Survey found that the Branch Report is popular and considered very useful. While we have 9,000 email addresses to which we send periodic "eblasts", the Branch Report is the only document that goes directly to every member, four times a year, and is therefore our major communication tool.

The Communications Committee and the editors of the Branch Report are now working on enhancing the content and format of this document. As they move forward with this work they will be soliciting input from you to help them in their task and we hope that you will take this opportunity to *communicate* with us.

By the time you receive this document, the report on the results of the Member's Survey will be available on our website. Members who attended the Fall Meeting were provided with a copy of the report. If you would like to receive a copy of the report please call the office and one will be sent to you. Once again, I want to thank the Membership and Services Committee and the Information Technology Committee for this work.

With the election of our former Board member David Jones to the National Board, the vacancy which he left on our Board has been filled by Rebecca Belanger. Rebecca is a member of the Membership and Services Committee and has agreed to fill the vacancy until April 2012 when our Board elections take place.

You will see in this report that the call for Nominations for Board of Directors for 2012 has been made. A number of our Directors have served the maximum of six years on the Board and so a number of vacancies are occurring. We are always looking for volunteers for our organization and we hope that some of you will seriously consider putting your name forward to serve on the Board. New volunteers are invaluable as they bring new perspectives to our work and provide us with a *communication* link to their circle of retirees and the issues and concerns that are important to them. If you are not able to let your name stand for the Board please consider volunteering to work on one of our committees.

We trust that those members who attended our Fall Meeting enjoyed the presentations and the Infomart. We also want to thank our speakers who give so generously of their time in preparing and are so gracious in accepting our invitations to *communicate* with FSNA members. For those who could not attend the meeting, the sessions were taped and are available on our website.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you Season's Greetings from the Board of Directors, the staff of the Ottawa Branch and myself.

*Robert (Bob) Richer*  
*President*  
*FSNA Ottawa Branch*

**Ottawa Branch Reports are produced in both official languages. If you are not receiving them in the language of your choice, please contact the FSNA Ottawa Branch**



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## **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS – FSNA OTTAWA BRANCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Members who are elected to the Board of Directors serve a two-year term. Each year, one-half of the twelve members of the Ottawa Branch Board of Directors reach the end of their two-year term. Board Members can let their name stand for re-election to a maximum of three consecutive terms on the Board. There are currently two Board members who will complete their six years of service on the Board by next spring. Elections are held to fill the Board vacancies during the Annual General Meeting (AGM), usually held in April.

The Ottawa Branch By-Laws call for the establishment of a Nominations Committee, a written Call for Nominations and circulation to Branch members of the list of nominees not later than ten days before the AGM. To ensure transparency in the process, the call for nominations is provided to our members through this Branch Report. This allows sufficient time for the list of nominees and their CVs to be compiled and included in the next Branch Report, which will be available to members at the end of March.

Every Branch member in good standing is eligible to nominate or stand as a candidate. The nomination form can be obtained by calling the Branch Office (613-737-2199), or by visiting the Branch website at [www.fsnaottawa.com](http://www.fsnaottawa.com). The completed nomination form should be accompanied by a short C.V. or summary of qualifications (maximum 200 words).

**Completed nomination forms and accompanying CVs must be received in the Branch Office by January 9, 2012. They may be sent by surface mail or fax, or as an e-mail attachment. Please mark the material for the attention of the Nominations Committee.**

Greville Price, Past President of the Ottawa Branch, has been appointed Chair of the Nominations Committee. Other members of the Committee are selected from both current and former members of the Board of Directors.

While the names of the individuals appointed to the Committee were not available at the time this report was prepared, the full composition of the Committee will be posted on the Branch website. This information will also be available by calling the Branch Office.

## **APPROACHING MARKET VOLATILITY CALMLY**

Volatility has defined stock markets for much of 2011. The year seemed to start well, with the TSX increasing over 6% until April, then reversing to be down 15% as of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Some periods were characterized by daily ups and downs of over 4%. These swings are unsettling but significantly easier than October 1987, when the Dow-Jones index declined over 20% in one day. Nonetheless, this has been hard on financial professionals as well as people holding equity stocks or funds.

With a federal pension, most FSNA members are sufficiently protected from these 'economic storms'. If you hope to complement your pension with income drawn from investments, or intend your savings to grow for your children or grandchildren, it is unsettling if you have equity investments. Likely you will have winced at their recent valuations compared to January 1, or at Easter 2011.

While many companies in the stock market are sound, well capitalized and report record profits, macroeconomic concerns precipitate drops in their stock valuations for no apparent reason.

Complicating matters are the unexpected variations in foreign exchange values. Nervous investors with the memories of 2008 fresh in their mind can be forgiven their caution, as 2008, with a 30% drop in the index that year, was one of the three worst years in the 186 year history of US stock markets. Perhaps that single event overshadows the fact that during those same 186 years there were 25 years with over 30% growth. While US and Canadian stock markets have made respectable gains since 2008 to recover from this significant 'market correction', momentum appears stalled and there is renewed talk of a 'double dip' recession.

Why not sell at the top and buy at the bottom? Few of us can read these signs well. Sometimes they are not evident to professional money managers. For those attempting to time the markets, two historic investor quotes are prudent guides: "be fearful when others are greedy and greedy when others are fearful" (Warren Buffet) and "the four most dangerous words in investing are 'This time it's different.'" (Sir John Templeton).

Studies of investor activity over the past twenty years suggest that impulsive decisions taken from fear are the most corrosive of invested savings. Dalbar Inc., an American performance measurement firm found that "the annualized 20 year return for the average equity investor (period ending 12/31/09) was 3.17% versus 8.20% for the S&P.

This gap is the simple result of mutual fund investors continuing to jump in and out of their funds – and has nothing to do with fund performance.” Their conclusion was that “investment results are more dependent on investor behavior than on fund performance. Mutual fund investors who hold on to their investments are more successful than those who time the market.”

If you are uncertain about your situation, it may be time to review your investment strategy and portfolio with a trusted financial advisor who would be your guide and champion in such an undertaking. He or she can ask if your risk tolerance has changed, or if your investment strategy is still appropriate? Do family responsibilities require more cash from your savings, or allow you to save a bit more? Do you have a new 'big project' in your life? Your advisor may suggest taking advantage of the market dip for tax planning purposes. These are factors in a review of your goals and objectives and setting out or revising your plan of how to achieve them.

Risk is an essential part of investing, but acceptable levels of risk are different for each of us and change over time. Risk can be managed and even diminished with a properly diversified investment portfolio. Whether you have a large and varied range of investments or are a starting investor, your financial advisor can review the basis and timeframe of your investment strategy. You can discuss whether there is a need to rebalance your portfolio.

A financial advisor can put your personal situation in the broader context, suggest alternate ways to achieve objectives and advise on new investment vehicles, tax efficiency and similar considerations.

As an investor, you also have to stay informed. Investment firm websites regularly comment on the economic outlook. Comparison among funds performance by different firms is available from the Globe & Mail (Report on Business or Fund Investor website), Financial Post or at Morningstar.ca. There are also newsletters that give subscribers a more selective and in depth view. But best is to sit down with a trusted individual who has knowledge and experience, and who can answer your questions as you ask them.

***Note:** The facts and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author, Robert Todd; they should not be understood to necessarily reflect the policy or opinion of the FSNA Ottawa Branch.*

*Robert Todd is an FSNA member and a Director of Tradex, an Ottawa-based Member of the Mutual Fund Dealers Association of Canada. Employees of the Departments of Trade and Commerce and of External Affairs established Tradex in 1960. Its services are available exclusively to current and retired public sector employees and their family members. Their web address is [www.tradex.ca](http://www.tradex.ca).*

**REMINDER FOR THOSE WHO PAY BY  
CHEQUE THAT IT'S TIME TO POP ONE  
IN THE MAIL FOR 2012.**

**Administrative Assistance for the  
Bereaved is available  
at the FSNA Ottawa Branch  
by calling  
613-737-2199**

**Spouses are requested to advise FSNA  
when a member passes away.**

**That will alleviate the awkward aspect  
of volunteers at the office having to  
follow up when a member's dues are  
cancelled.**

**Beneficiaries are encouraged to  
contact the office if they want to  
continue the membership or need  
assistance with administrative  
procedures.**

**Please contact the FSNA Ottawa Branch  
by  
calling  
613-737-2199  
or  
e-mailing  
info@fsnaottawa.com**

## **FEEDBACK ON REDISCOVERING GENEALOGY**

Readers may recall that we published an article about genealogy in last summer's Branch Report. We received some interesting and relevant feedback on the article from Mike Moore, Chair of the Ottawa Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society and an FSNA member, about the article. His valuable advice and tips are republished below:

I was very pleased to see your article about researching your roots in the recent newsletter of Ottawa Branch FSNA. You covered the topic very well, providing valuable information to the membership. I would like to add a couple of caveats.

The first is that genealogists must be very cautious of the information found on the Internet. The sites that provide scanned copies of records and documents are a tremendous help but information that has been uploaded by individuals must be assessed for accuracy. Since many of these do not include their sources, it is difficult to determine if they are the result of accurate research or simply flights of fancy. It is too easy, in this electronic age, to simply copy somebody's errors and promulgate them across the Internet.

The other warning has to do with your planned trip to Grey County. Although not as expensive as trips further afield, it is still important to prepare yourself beforehand.

Otherwise, you could find yourself returning home empty handed after an expenditure of time and money. You have already exhausted the on-line sources. But don't forget other local resources. Only a small fraction of the historical records have been put on line and there are still vast holdings in places such as Library and Archives Canada and the City of Ottawa Archives ([http://ottawa.ca/residents/heritage/archives/index\\_en.html](http://ottawa.ca/residents/heritage/archives/index_en.html)), which also houses the libraries of several local genealogical groups.

You might also try the Ottawa Stake Family History Center (<http://www.ottawastakefhc.on.ca/index.html>), which has access to the tremendous resources of the Latter Day Saints' Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Before going on a field trip:

- Check on the records available at the repository that you plan to visit.
- Decide what types of records/information you would like to find within the time you have available. Prioritize.
- Organize key information that you already have in a clear, concise format so the reference person can direct you to the appropriate resource available in the location being visited. Bring your own pedigree chart with you and you can easily show the staff who you are looking for. Most facilities have excellent staff and/or volunteers

who are willing to help but it is frustrating when a person is not organized enough to provide the basic details.

- Contact the local facilities or at least check their websites. Know the hours of operation. Know whether one can gain access to the records needed. Know what records are available to the researcher.
- Reserve needed equipment, such as microfilm/microfiche readers and printers, in advance.

You did not mention that Ancestry is available in every library in Ontario, at least for the next few years, thanks to the Ontario Government. All libraries in Ottawa have access from their machines.

If you or other members are interested in learning more about the hobby, there are several genealogical groups in the Ottawa area. Some focus on a specific topic, such as the Ukrainian Genealogy Group-National Capital Region, the Jewish Genealogy Society of Ottawa, la Société franco-ontarienne d'histoire et de généalogie, or the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa. Across the river, la Société de généalogie de l'Outaouais focuses more on Quebec roots. The Ontario Genealogical Society's mission is to encourage, bring together and assist those interested in the pursuit of family history.

Locally, the Ottawa Branch of OGS (<http://ogsottawa.on.ca/>) has monthly meetings that are open to the public. The annual Ryan Taylor Memorial lecture on 23 Oct featured Kevin James, Professor of History at Guelph University and consultant for the TV show "Ancestors in the Attic".

For further education, both BIFHSGO and Ottawa Branch OGS hold annual genealogy conferences. Gene-O-Rama was held in April 2011. Both groups also regularly hold courses for Beginner's and more advanced genealogists; keep an eye on their websites for more details

I look forward to hearing more about your genealogical adventures. Thanks.

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### **Seniors Canada Web site**

Are you interested in knowing what government programs and other community-based services that may be available?

If so, please visit:  
[www.seniors.gc.ca](http://www.seniors.gc.ca)

### **TAX TIP**

Claim medical insurance premiums on your tax return!

Did you know that when you do your tax return you can claim the premiums you pay on your Health Care as well as your Dental Care Insurance plans? As you are aware, these premiums are deducted at source from your pension cheque. Although the government does not issue receipts for those premiums, you can calculate the annual premiums yourself by doing the following:

- 1) Make a photocopy of the pension statement sent to you at the beginning of the year by the Pension Office (or a monthly statement for RCMP Retirees). The pension statement is the slip of paper sent at the beginning of the year advising you about the new pension amount to be paid to you for the coming year.
- 2) Note the boxes entitled PSHCP and PSDP on the pension statement. (These indicate the monthly deductions for the medical and dental plans). Multiply each amount in these boxes by 12 as that represents the amounts you can claim for each PSHCP and PSDP.
- 3) Write the calculation on the photocopy, claim it and attach this to your tax return. For those filing electronically, you should keep the documents on file just in case CRA wants to see them

Camille Guérin  
Managing Director,  
FSNA Ottawa Branch