



**The CBC Pensioners
National Association**

**L'Association nationale
des retraités de la SRC**

contact

Newsletter - August 2019

President's Message



To mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day last June 15 our local seniors club invited a panel of four experts – a social worker, a home care nurse, a police officer and a lawyer – who were asked to share their experiences dealing with cases of elder abuse. It was alarming and very disturbing to hear their tragic stories and the fact that in most instances the abuser is more often than not a family member or a supposedly close friend and trusted individual.

If you are a victim of abuse be it physical, sexual, psychological/emotional, financial, or neglect please **seek help as soon as possible**. As you have been reminded recently in a PNA mail-out, the **CBC employees and retirees assistance program (EAP) is available to all pensioners, their spouse or partner by phone at 1-866-838-2025**. Counselling services provided by the EAP national provider, Homewood Health, are free, confidential and available 24/7.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to report highlights of the PNA recent Board and Annual General meetings held in the lovely city of Victoria.

Further to a proposal received from the Newfoundland and Labrador Region, Board members unanimously approved the creation of the Western Newfoundland Chapter located in the Corner Brook and surrounding areas of the province. Congratulations to Bill Maher, outgoing NL regional president, and Kevin Hanlon, recruitment director, for their success in signing up new members in record time which lead to the birth of the PNA's seventeenth chapter.

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Participants at the Board of Directors' meeting shared new and innovative recruitment and communication strategies initiated to attract additional members and achieve the PNA's 3-yr goal of 55% membership. The good news is that numbers have increased in the past six months due to ongoing efforts in all Regions and Chapters. A special mention and congratulatory wishes are conveyed to Jean-Claude Labrecque, President of the Quebec Region, and Board member Micheline Provost, for their continued success in signing up former colleagues.

With reference to achievements linked to communications strategies, Dave Jeffrey, Vice-President (Anglophone), provided a detailed update on the Association's web redesign project which will probably see light of day in the coming weeks. In addition to inaugurating our new website we will be showcasing the PNA's newest slogan (presented by Dave in this current edition of Contact).

After months of diligent scrutiny followed by a comprehensive consultation process coordinated by Paul Gaffney with the assistance of Pierre Racicot, the amended PNA By-Laws were approved unanimously by members attending the AGM. We are most grateful to Paul and Pierre as well as all those members that participated actively in this review. The new document will be posted on our website in the coming weeks.

Our yearly event ended with a detailed presentation by Duncan Burrill, recently appointed Managing Director / CEO of the CBC Pension Plan. All attendees welcomed the good news that the Plan's overall financial health measured by both funding ratios, solvency and going concern, is extremely positive. Details about this and other pension related information are available in the Pension Plan Annual Report mailed out recently to all pensioners.

On behalf of the Board, sincere thanks to Dianne St. Germain and Suzie Bougie for the many hours spent in organizing both meetings and to our hosts, Jim Nelson, President of the BC and Yukon Region and John Mang, President of the Vancouver Island Chapter, for their assistance and warm welcome.

Please be reminded that your thoughts, concerns and ideas are welcome at any time. I can be reached at my email address dcollette402@gmail.com.

Enjoy the remaining summer months!

Denis

MOA Review Begins



Representatives from the PNA, CBC's Unions and CBC management have begun meeting in order to review the Memorandum of Agreement on Pension Surplus Sharing. The MOA as it is termed was negotiated in 2009 to ensure a fair sharing of surplus monies in the plan. The PNA is represented at the talks by Dan Oldfield (chair), Pierre Racicot and Marc-Phillipe Laurin (who all took part in the original negotiation of the agreement) along with Dave Jeffrey (VP, Anglophone of the PNA).

Although two days of talks were held there is little progress to report. The current review is required under the terms of the MOA which calls for a review every ten years beginning in 2019. Although the review does not anticipate a re-negotiation of the agreement the parties are free to seek amendments. There is some indication the CBC will be proposing some changes. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 6th. We will keep you informed as the discussions progress.

A bit of technical background: the financial performance of the plan is assessed every year to ensure there's enough money to pay retirement benefits. The performance of the plan is measured in two ways both designed to assess the assets of the plan against its liabilities. One method is called the "Going-concern" calculation which measures the book value of all the assets in the plan. (currently about \$7 billion). The other is called the "solvency" calculation which assumes the plan is being closed and the assets are being converted to longer term, safer investments. These assessments are placed against the liabilities of the plan (currently about \$5 billion). When the lowest of the two calculations exceeds 105% of the value of the plan's liabilities a surplus is declared. Under the agreement, that surplus is shared equally with the Corporation receiving half and the other half given to pensioners and contributors (employees).

Dan Oldfield
Chair - MOA Review Committee

The Pre-Halloween Election

As we must all know by now, a federal election will be held in late October - - remarkably close to Halloween. Why do we care about this timing? Because these two dates could have something in common - the return from the dead.

By now, everyone must have seen at least one iteration of the “Friday the 13th” horror series featuring slasher Freddie Kruger and some pretty young girl being terrified out of her mind. Freddie is eventually killed off but somehow he keeps returning year after year to terrify more innocent young girls.

So it is with Bill C-27, the piece of legislation introduced by Finance Minister Bill Morneau which would add Target Benefit Pension Plans to the list of available options for employers in the Federal arena. In our view, the bill does more than make these plans available - it openly encourages employers to convert their existing Defined Benefit Plans to Target Benefit Plans and thereby significantly reduce their financial obligations. This concept was originally introduced by the Conservatives under Prime Minister Stephen Harper but it generated such a significant backlash from plan members and retirees, as well as fair-minded voters, that they withdrew the proposed legislation in the run-up to the election - thus, the first time it died. Sadly, the Liberals picked up on the idea and introduced it in the form of Bill C-27.

[If you wish to be reminded of the history of the concept of Target Benefit Plans, go to our website under “newsletters” and find the December 2018 issue of Contact. In it you will see an article entitled “An Election is Coming” which describes our opposition to this concept and our involvement with the Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security.]

So what is the relationship between Bill C-27 and Freddie Kruger?

Since being picked up by the Liberals and introduced as legislation, Bill C-27 has barely made it past first reading. It languished at first reading longer than any previous piece of legislation in history. When it finally made it to second reading, widespread protests, particularly from organized labour groups, prompted the government to withdraw the bill for “further consultation”. The rules of Parliamentary procedure indicate that when the writ is dropped announcing the end of the current session of Parliament and the calling of an election, any bills remaining unpassed, die on the order paper. Thus we have been eagerly awaiting the (second) death of Bill C-27.

But Hark! We have now learned that while the bill may die (there is almost certainly no time to get it passed before the dissolution of Parliament), its spirit may live on and come back to haunt us in another form.

As has been previously reported, the PNA is a member of the Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security (CCRS) - a group representing several million retirees - that has been fighting against the introduction of Target Benefit Plans for years. Through research conducted by some of the major unions in the coalition, as well as staff supporting the National Association of Federal Retirees, we have learned of some 'behind the scenes' activity which does not bode well for retirees in the federal domain. Apparently the evil genius, Bill Morneau, has come up with a plan which the coalition has labelled 'C-27 through the back door'. It goes as follows:

Pension plans in the Federal domain are monitored by OSFI - the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. OSFI is an independent agency of the federal government that reports to Parliament through the Minister of Finance. It assures the application of the relevant pieces of legislation governing pension plans and, more importantly, rigorously interprets and applies the regulations that flow from the legislation. Apparently the Ministry of Finance is pressuring OSFI to modify those regulations to allow an employer, if it wished, to "amend" its Defined Benefit Pension Plan so that it behaves more like a Target Benefit Pension Plan. As explained previously this would remove the employer's responsibility to ensure that the defined benefit is completely funded, allowing the employer to reduce the benefits temporarily or permanently to a level that the funding can afford. The "defined" or guaranteed benefit would, thus, become a "target" - sometimes we hit it and sometimes we don't - with the employees and pensioners in the plan assuming all the risk.

The Liberals must have learned that reducing the security of retirees is a very unpopular thing to do in Canada. And even though the Liberals introduced Bill C-27 early in their term, they did very little to advance it through the approval process. Most politically sensitive Liberals probably don't wish to be associated with such activity. Surely the newly minted Minister for Seniors could hardly be seen to approve of such action. Bill Morneau continues to push Target Benefit Plans but has probably been told to do it quietly or through the back door.

So what can we do?

Make it public. Let them know that we know what they are up to. Challenge them.

One obvious candidate for such treatment is Filomena Tassi, the Minister for Seniors. She represents the riding of Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas. The third specific task in her mandate letter of August 28, 2018 begins with the following statement:

“With the Ministers of Finance and Families, Children and Social Development, bring forward *options to improve financial security for Canada’s seniors.*”

Does Ms. Tassi understand, or even know what Bill Morneau and the Finance Department are up to? How does she square the downgrading of defined benefit pensions through subtle “modifications” as improving financial security for seniors?

This would be an excellent issue to raise at any candidates’ meetings or town halls that you have the opportunity to attend. The NDP and Green candidates would love to have such an unpopular issue to tar the Liberals with. Even the Conservatives would likely pile on, hoping that people would have forgotten that the Target Benefit idea was originally theirs. If there are no such meetings in your area, candidates will probably be knocking on doors; talk to them all. If they are Liberal - shame them; if from other parties, inform them and encourage them to support retirement security and condemn Morneau’s apparent plans.

Take the time to write to your Member of Parliament. Research has shown that individual letters carry far more weight than form letters and signed petitions. Remember, we only get this opportunity to influence the law-makers once every four years - so get involved!

Howard Simpson

PNA Representative - Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security



PNA – Rogers Wireless Affinity Plan Update

As you know the PNA negotiated an agreement with Rogers Wireless where Share Everything wireless plans are discounted 30% off normal retail prices. We were recently informed that Rogers has launched a new program called Rogers Infinite which provides unlimited data plans for those that want to stream all video, music and content worry free. This new plan will not be eligible for the 30% discount. If you already have a share everything plan, you will continue to receive the discount. However, if you decide to upgrade your phone or change your plan, you will lose the 30% discount.

If you have any questions, please contact your PNA National Office at 1-877-361-9242.

PNA's New Slogan

As part of the new web re-design project we thought it would be a good idea to come up with a catchy new slogan to better illustrate the PNA's mission. After reviewing ideas with the website committee, we have decided on the following:



The CBC Pensioners National Association

Preserving our Future, Sharing our Past

This new slogan captures, in few words, the mandate and goals of the CBC Pensioners National Association. The PNA preserves all CBC pensioners futures by advocating for them on matters related to the Pension Plan, the Supplementary Health Care Plan (SHCP) and the Special Assistance Fund (SAF) just to name a few.

It promotes collective work experiences and friendships through social events organized by Regions and Chapters and by keeping members informed of important events and issues.

You will see this new slogan integrated into our current logo and be part of all new communications in the future. We hope you like it.

Dave Jeffrey
VP, Anglophone



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please make sure that you advise us of any change of address, telephone or email as soon as possible. This will avoid delays in receiving newsletters or communiqués, mailed or emailed to you by the Association, as well as helping us keep our database updated.



You can advise us either by e-mail at: cbcpensioners@on.aibn.com or by telephone 1-877-361-9242 extension 23 or via our website: www.cbcpensioners.ca

New PNA Website - Coming Soon

As reported in the April issue of Contact, the PNA hired Xactly Advertising and Design, an Ottawa based communications consultant, to review the PNA's messaging and digital strategies including a total redesign of the Association's website as well as an update of brochures, posters and retirement kit.

In our discussions with Xactly, it was agreed that a new and improved website would assist the PNA in achieving the following outcomes:


- Better recruitment tool to attract non-members
- Improved accessibility and search functionality
- Valuable digital resource for members
- Content focused on the history of the CBC and the contribution that its pensioners made to cultural, political and technological events and progress
- Content that reflects the dynamic nature of PNA members (promotion of upcoming events, photos of current members and activities) to support a stronger sense of relevancy
- Aesthetic and functional design changes with integration of animation and movement elements as well as increased font sizes for the visually impaired

We are happy to report that we are making good progress towards delivering on the above-mentioned outcomes. We are confident that you will be pleased with the final product and look forward to sharing the new website with you in the near future.

Dave Jeffrey
VP, Anglophone



EAP - Employee Assistance Program

1-866-838-2025 

Problems? As a CBC pensioner, you are entitled to five hours of free professional counselling through the Employee Assistance Program.

This service is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It is simple, fast and effective.

Consultations are provided by a private, independent firm located off the premises of the CBC. Confidentiality is guaranteed. A simple telephone call puts you in touch with the person who can help you right away.