



**The CBC Pensioners
National Association**

Preserving our Future, Sharing our Past

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

Assurer notre avenir, partager notre passé

CONTACT

Spring 2020

President's Message



In the April issue of Contact we normally invite our membership to the PNA's Annual General Meeting. I am sure that it does not come as a big surprise to anyone that this year's event to be held in Toronto in May has been postponed and re-scheduled to October 15 at the InterContinental Hotel.

This event is even more special this year because it marks the 20th anniversary of the incorporation of our not-for-profit organization recognized as the only active advocate of all CBC/Radio-Canada pensioners.

Please be assured that we are monitoring the coronavirus pandemic crisis very closely and will give as much advance notice as possible through the PNA's website and our list of emails if the event is cancelled. It is of the utmost importance to our Board members that the venue chosen for this year's AGM is safe for everyone.

In this newsletter, you will find an update on the current status of the CBC Pension Plan as well as Dan Oldfield's update on the ongoing discussions held with representatives of the CBC, the PNA and all Unions regarding the 2009 Agreement that spells out the sharing of any pension surpluses.

Have you had the opportunity to visit our brand-new Website? We have received many positive comments since the February 14th launch date. Please visit www.cbcpensioners.ca and let us know what you think. Our congratulations and sincere appreciation go to the leaders of this project, Dave Jeffrey, Vice-President Anglophone, and Suzie Bougie, PNA Webmaster and IT Specialist.

This is a time when simple communication is more important than ever as we all feel a sense of isolation and uncertainty - an encouraging email or phone call is more important than ever. PNA staff and members of our Board of Directors hope each of you are continuing to be safe and healthy and we all look forward to a time when we can return to a routine of normalcy.

In closing, I remind you of the many accomplishments of our dedicated volunteers and staff and how thankful I am to be involved with them in "*preserving our future and sharing our past*".

Take care of yourselves and others!

Denis Collette



**Relating to surplus sharing
under the CBC Pension Plan
and to cost management
under the CBC Supplementary
Health Care Plan**

UPDATE - MARCH 2020

The PNA and all CBC Unions have sent a letter to the CBC formally rejecting the CBC’s unilateral position and advising the CBC that we are prepared to defend the deal.

Since our last meeting in December, there have been no further discussions regarding the Memorandum of Agreement on pension surplus sharing and employee benefits. CBC management is maintaining the unfortunate position that the Agreement will expire as of the end of March.

By way of background, the Memorandum (MoA) was negotiated ten years ago. It set out the rules for equally sharing future pension surpluses. It also established a fund designed to offset future increases in employee benefit costs. As part of the agreement the PNA withdrew a class action lawsuit and the Unions withdrew more than 20 grievances.

It should be noted the Agreement contains no expiry date and in fact states clearly that it will be “reviewed every ten years, beginning in 2019.”

The Parties met several times beginning in June of last year. The CBC was given full opportunity to propose changes to the deal but instead took the position that as of March 31st, 2020 the deal was no longer in force and proposed to negotiate a new agreement that would expire within five years. CBC management has been advised that the PNA and the Unions are satisfied with the existing agreement already in place and will not be negotiating any new deal. We are considering all legal options for protecting the deal that was negotiated in good faith and will keep you informed as events unfold.

Dan Oldfield
Chair, MoA Review Committee

STATE OF THE CBC PENSION PLAN: NO REASON TO WORRY



The CBC Pension Board of Trustees held its quarterly meeting on March 27 (by videoconference, of course, because of the COVID-19!) While this spring meeting is generally devoted to the assessment of the past year (i.e. the results until December 31 of the previous year), it goes without saying that the effects of the coronavirus largely permeated the trustees' deliberations.

Let's start with the results for 2019, which was an exceptional year, before discussing the impact up to now of the current crisis. Our assets went from 7 to 8 billion dollars as of December 31, 2019, an increase of more than 18%. This means that we ended the year with a \$2.8 billion surplus and that on a going concern basis, our funding is at 153%, whereas on a solvency basis (i.e. in the unlikely hypothesis that the CBC was to close shop tomorrow morning), we have reached 102.3%, and the average for the last three years exceeded 100%. So, for the first time in ten years, each of those three indexes were over 100%! This means that our Pension Plan maintains its solid financial footing and that we were in an excellent position to confront the current crisis.

Of course, we are feeling the effects that the coronavirus is having on financial markets and the world economy in general. Within a few weeks, the exceptional gains of last year were erased: as of March 22 of this year, our assets had shrunk back to 2018 level (i.e. the billion dollars added last year had vanished), and preliminary estimates show that our funding ratio on a going concern basis has dropped by approximately 15% remaining well above 100% (so, no reason to panic!), and the one on a solvency basis has dropped by less than 10%.

But the situation remains very fluid and last week's modest rebound on the financial markets has somewhat improved the situation. It remains to be seen what global effect the coronavirus crisis will have if it lasts for any length of time. One thing is sure, though, the investment strategy adopted in 2008-09, which had protected us from the worst effects of that economic crisis, continues to protect us in the current one.

Our Pension Plan remains solid and you have no reason to fear for your pension cheque.

Alain Pineau

Retiree representative

Board of Trustees, CBC Pension Plan

The EAP is there for us, let's take advantage of it!



The words *coronavirus*, *COVID-19* and *pandemic* have become a part of our daily lives. There is no escape: written and electronic media keep flooding us with information on this crisis which touches each of us personally. The coverage is so intense that you might feel like being at a baseball or football game.

But let's not fool ourselves; this is not a game. The hope and optimism of the New Year have quickly dissipated. Our governments and the country's entire population are in an untenable situation: the country is virtually paralyzed.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau orders us to stay at home and, with a touch of optimism, adds that we will survive this. In the meantime, only essential services are available. Confinement and quarantine are the new buzzwords. The number of people suffering from COVID-19 continues to climb across the country, as does the number of deaths.

How are we going through this pandemic? How are we going through quarantine or self-isolation?

How do we manage our stress, our anxiety, our depression? Are we grappling with financial difficulties? Are we blocked from visiting relatives or friends in nursing homes? Our grandchildren are driving us crazy ...

Are we overwhelmed by this tsunami of information on the pandemic, from both traditional and social media?

Whatever the situation, we might need to speak to someone about it. It's true that we may not think we will ever need help but there are occasions when it is necessary to turn to someone else for advice even if we do not want to admit it to ourselves.

The EAP is there to help us. It is there for me and for my partner as well. One phone call is all it takes to tell the EAP what troubles us and to be directed to a counselor who will be able to answer our questions or alleviate our concerns.

This service is free, confidential and accessible by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To reach the counselling service in English, dial 1-866-838-2025, or 1-866-839-7897 for service in French.

You can also visit the CBC PNA website at www.cbcpensioners.ca to see the wide range of issues that can be addressed.

Donald Langis, PNA Representative on the National EAP Board