



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

DURHAM-TRENT CHAPTER



SEPTEMBER ————— **2021**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings!

One of the things about writing a regular newsletter is how conscious it makes me of the passage of time and the changing of the seasons. The summer is over and fall has begun. Time to put away the sandals and get out the sweaters. It's been a summer of extremes – heat, storms, wildfires. The number of days air quality advisories were in effect in Northwestern Ontario, where I've been throughout the pandemic, was a surprise to me. Some days the smoke was so thick you couldn't see the famed Sleeping Giant beyond a hazy outline.

It's also been a surprisingly busy summer for me personally which has meant we've fallen a bit behind in our bimonthly newsletter schedule. We hope to get back on track now that we're moving into fall.

This fall also brings to an end the current term of office for the Chapter Executive. I will not be re-offering as your president since I will be moving out of the region sometime next year. This also means that our treasurer Dan Oldfield (who many of you know is my husband) will be stepping down. And our Vice-President Joe Solway has also resigned due to family commitments.

This means we will have several vacancies to fill, and we are hopeful some of you will step up. If we are unable to elect a new Executive, we risk the Chapter dissolving and being folded into the Toronto group... something that almost happened three years ago. Elections will take place at our AGM in December.

If you think you might be interested and would like to know more about what's entailed, please drop me a note. I'm happy to chat anytime! bsaxberg@outlook.com

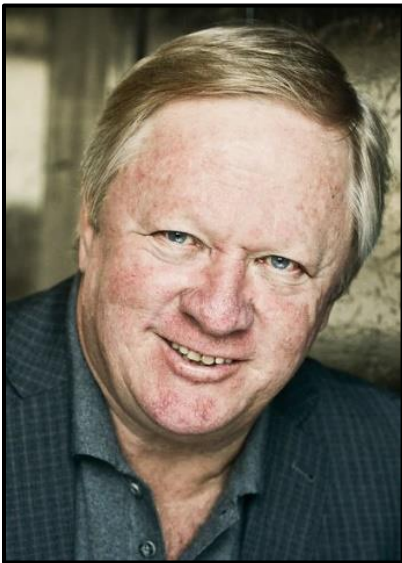
You may also be wondering whether we'll be holding our annual Holiday Luncheon in conjunction with our AGM. At our recent executive meeting, we made the difficult decision not to hold a luncheon again this year. Given the uncertainty we still face regarding the pandemic, we are erring on the side of caution. We remain hopeful though that we will be able to meet once again in the spring.

This issue of Buzz also brings you the latest on the status of the arbitration over the Memorandum of Agreement regarding any pension surplus, a report on the activities of the National Board of the PNA, and a feature on the importance of laughter in our lives.

Happy Reading!

**Barbara Saxberg, President,
CBC PNA Durham-Trent Chapter**

CBC PNA NEWS UPDATES



MOA DISPUTE GOING TO MEDIATION

By Dan Oldfield, PNA CCSB Representative

A couple of questions have come up recently regarding the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on surplus sharing and the overall status of the CBC pension plan.

First a bit of background on the MOA. The agreement was reached in 2009 and sets out a process for sharing future surpluses in the pension plan among the CBC, retirees and current employees.

In simple terms, a surplus occurs when the value of the assets of the plan exceeds the liabilities of the plan. Under the MOA, surplus sharing happens when the value of the assets exceeds 105% of the liabilities. A calculation of the plan's status takes place at the end of each calendar year.

The CBC pension plan has roughly \$8-billion in assets. Based on calculations at the end of June, the value of those assets against liabilities stood at nearly 110%. If that value is sustained until the end of this year, it should trigger surplus sharing.

However, like all pension plans, the CBC plan is subject to fluctuations in the stock and bond markets as well as interest rates. So no precise forecasts can be made at this time.

Complicating matters is the unfortunate fact that the CBC has taken the view that the MOA no longer exists.

It is a puzzling position given the plain language of the agreement and one which the PNA is obviously obliged to challenge. The matter is set to go before an arbitrator in late February.

In the meantime, the parties (the PNA and the Unions on one side and the CBC on the other) have agreed to attempt to mediate their differences. It's expected the mediation process will begin sometime in November.

There is no set deadline for the mediation process other than it will have to be completed with or without agreements before the arbitration process begins.

On a related issue, some members have asked about the status of the pension in the event CBC's funding is cut.

The CBC Pension Plan is sponsored by the CBC and is funded by both employer and employee contributions. It pays out more 10-thousand pensions monthly.

It is managed independently and overseen by a Board of Trustees consisting of representatives from the PNA, employees and the Corporation.

Money in the pension plan belongs to the plan. It is not CBC money. This also applies to any surpluses. ***Funds cannot be taken out by the CBC to offset budget shortfalls.***

The plan is regulated under federal law and monies in the plan are for the sole purpose of paying pension benefits and meeting the operating costs of the plan.

The CBC pension plan is celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year. It is in good financial condition and is considered one of the best-run defined benefit plans in Canada.

NEW REPRESENTATIVES FOR CCSB & EAP

The PNA's National Board of Directors has appointed two new representatives, one for the Consultative Committee on Staff Benefits and the other for the CBC Employee Assistance Program.



Marc-Philippe Laurin replaces Jean-Paul Rouillard as the PNA's observer to the CCSB. Jean-Paul decided to step down after 18 years of dedicated service.

Marc-Philippe brings more than a decade of CCSB experience when he was CBC Branch President of the Canadian Media Guild.

He was part of the team that originally negotiated the Memorandum of Agreement regarding any pension surplus. Dan Oldfield remains as the PNA's voting member on the CCSB.

Susan Graham has been appointed to the EAP, replacing Donald Langis who was recently elected to the National Board of the PNA as Vice-President, Francophone.

Susan joined the EAP originally in 1990 while still working at the CBC. She worked in Human Resources until her retirement in 2006 and has spent much of her adult life volunteering in a variety of ways.

We congratulate Susan and Marc-Philippe on their appointments which took effect immediately following the PNA's Annual General Meeting on September 10th.



NATIONAL BOARD OF THE PNA UPDATES

Since the May Convention of the PNA, the National Board has been working on the implementation of a three-year strategic plan. The Board approved the recommendations of the four committees tasked with developing action plans and the work is underway.

The Board approved the Diversity & Inclusion committee's new policy on D&I and it's now available on the PNA website. Both the Recruitment and Diversity & Inclusion committees are still seeking volunteers to continue the work.



If you are interested in joining the Recruitment Committee, contact Suzanne Cunningham at suzanne.cunningham@hotmail.ca.

If you are interested in joining the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, contact Gail Carducci at gail.carducci@gmail.com.

The National Board, working with the Communications Committee, is about to post a six-month contract position for a new Communications Coordinator. The Co-ordinator, working with a new Communications Advisory Board, will be tasked with developing a communications policy for the PNA and a consistent and coordinated strategy. Watch for the posting coming soon.

A new ad hoc committee on bylaws and policies was also struck following the Convention. This committee is reviewing the PNA's national bylaws in an effort to ensure consistency between the French and English versions, and to recommend changes to both the bylaws and policies of the PNA to make the organization more transparent and democratic.

This ad hoc committee has been meeting regularly since the Convention and is making good progress. It hopes to have a final report by the end of November.

The recommendations will then go to the National Board for debate and approval. The Board has the authority to implement changes to the bylaws on an interim basis but they must ultimately be approved by the PNA membership at the next Annual General Meeting in 2022.



KEEP TICKLING YOUR FUNNYBONE

By Bette Laderoute-Sampson

Happiness in the time of Covid-19 is in scarce supply. Happily, it is a renewable commodity. Unhappily, to have any happiness depends on our ability to develop and maintain a sense of humour.

Researchers have discovered that a sense of humour is made up of six elements:

1. The ability to create or understand jokes.
2. An appreciation and enjoyment of jokes.
3. Behavior patterns of joking and laughing.
4. A cheerful or humorous temperament.
5. A bemused attitude about life.
6. A strategy of using humour in the face of adversity.

“A sense of humour, then, can mean either being funny or enjoying funny things.”

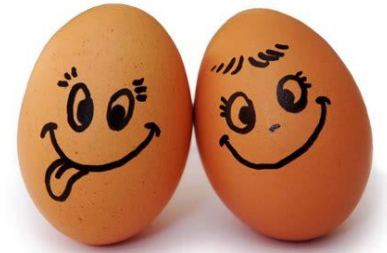
I began to wonder if I had a sense of humour; I don't think I'm funny but I do enjoy “some funny things” depending on my circumstances or the news of the day. This required more research!

The Journal of Aging Research offered an article on a 2010 study. “The researchers gave one group of senior citizens “humour therapy” – daily jokes, laughter exercises, funny stories, and the like – for eight weeks.

A control group did not receive this therapy. At the end of the experiment, the people in the first group reported feeling 42 percent happier than they had at the beginning.

They were 35 percent happier than the second group, and experienced decreases in pain and loneliness.” Seemingly, firm evidence that with a good sense of humour we can all capture some happiness even as we make our way through a pandemic without a designated ending.

Fortunately, it is never too late to learn how to improve our conditions. Several actionable lessons come from this brief tour through the science of humour, which we can use to improve our quality of life.



Reject grimness.

The most obvious piece of advice is not to be grim and humourless. We all too often feel guilty when we experience something joyful in a world so filled with legitimate concerns.

Some feel that lightheartedness is inappropriate when we are concerned about crises and injustice. But it is a mistake to think this way, insofar as grimness is not winsome to others, and thus hurts your cause.

Of course, there are instances in which humour is misplaced – remember that timing is everything. On the other hand, some of the best eulogies have also been hilarious.

Don't worry about being funny.

Some people love jokes but can't repeat them. Sometimes even a mangled delivery can evoke laughter. Furthermore, for some of us it's better to consume humour than to supply it. To get the happiness benefits of humour, let others tell the jokes; listen and laugh.

Stay positive.

The evidence is clear that negative, hurtful, or excessively dark jokes are a corrosive force on your and others' well-being.

This kind of humour tends to be nihilistic as opposed to lighthearted; its presupposition is, "Nothing matters, so I am going to make fun of something precious, like my life, or yours."

A good reason to improve our sense of humour right now is that it can "relieve the burden of isolation and fear" we have carried for at least a year and a half.

Humour, some studies suggest, has an almost anesthetic effect thus relieving pain. It may take time but it doesn't cost anything to work on something that research has said can "make us happy and lift us" out of the oppression of a lingering pandemic.

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK – A plea to join us!

By Dan Oldfield, CBC PNA Durham-Trent Chapter Treasurer

When I arrived at the CBC in the early '70s and took my place in the National Radio Newsroom, I was aware of the Corporation's rich heritage. I was familiar with a lot of what we heard and saw on radio and television. From the National, to the World at 6, to the Friendly Giant and This Country in the Morning, CBC was a reliable consistent in my life.

What I did not fully appreciate at the time was the role played by those who had come before me in creating and securing not only my employment but my retirement future as well. When it came to those vitally important features of my employment security, my pay, my working conditions, my benefits and pension, I was standing on a lot of shoulders.

A lot of people, almost all of them volunteers, gave their time and energy and talents to fight for and protect these rights and benefits which I and so many others would enjoy.



As CBC retirees, we sometimes take for granted how fortunate we are to have the kind of pension that few other working people enjoy, the access to supplementary health benefits, and a community of people who understand the challenges and joys of working for the national broadcaster.

But the future is never certain. Benefits won for far too many other Canadians have been reduced or in some cases eliminated.

The work of advocating for CBC retirees falls to the Pensioners National Association. The PNA is those people who shared your experience. They are the technicians, the administrators, the journalists, the on-air and off-air talent. They are the more than 5-thousand retirees who are recognized as the official voice of pensioners at the CBC.

While that number is impressive, it is less so when you realize that more than 10-thousand people collect a CBC pension. The very existence and credibility of the PNA rests in the size of its membership.

It was the PNA that took the fight and spent nearly half-a-million dollars of dues money to secure a refund on pension contributions in 2000, not just for themselves but for all retirees.

If you're not yet a member – and I hope you're reading this because a member has passed on this newsletter – the average monthly dues for the PNA is less than \$10 a month.

That's a small amount to make sure that your interests continue to be protected and your voices continue to be heard. I hope you'll join us!

PNA SPOUSAL MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who receive pension survivor benefits are eligible to become members of the PNA and access all PNA member benefits including the Special Assistance Fund, loyalty programs, discounts and social activities.

They are also eligible to hold office in the PNA and serve on committees.

Join us! We want to hear from you!

CONTACT US:

Would you like to comment on this or anything else in the Buzz?

Perhaps you have a story to tell – something from your days at CBC or something interesting you're doing now?

Maybe you know of a CBC retiree with a skill to share? Or a retiree we should profile?

We're also interested in any photos from your working days you might like to share.

We welcome your contributions and story suggestions.

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SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FUND

The Special Assistance Fund (SAF) helps CBC retirees, their spouses and dependents with health care expenses not covered by OHIP or the SHCP.

It also offsets the cost of hearing aids and mobility devices. There are some restrictions.

Contact the CBC PNA staff in Ottawa for eligibility requirements and help in applying. More information and application forms are on the PNA website.

www.cbcpensioners.ca
