



**The CBC Pensioners
National Association**

Preserving our Future, Sharing our Past

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

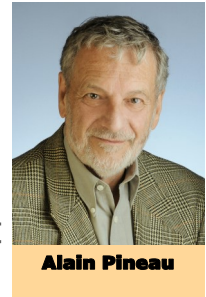
Assurer notre avenir, partager notre passé

CONTACT

October 2022

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

It must be a sign of aging: I can't believe that autumn has already arrived! Where did summer go? Here in eastern Canada, we can enjoy the colourful fireworks that nature provides, at least for a little while longer!



Fall is synonymous with another meeting of the Board of Directors of the Pensioners National Association (PNA), held on October 3 and 4 in Gatineau, Quebec, across the river from Ottawa.

Before I elaborate, you may have noticed that this edition of Contact looks a bit different. We decided to follow one of the recommendations set forth in the new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guide, namely the use of larger characters for people with visual difficulties. We are looking forward to your reactions!

Back to the Board meeting, which had several important topics on the agenda. I am including an overview of our discussions, but some of these are covered in more detail in separate articles.

- The Board welcomed the draft Guide to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. It is packed with practical advice regarding the accessibility of our members to written communications, as well as to events and meetings across the country.
- We received the annual reports of our Standing Committees on Recruitment and on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, as well as that of our Communications Coordinator on the national portrait of our communications with members (newsletters, use of new media, frequency, and distribution platforms).
- Dan Oldfield and Marc-Philippe Laurin provided a detailed update about the arbitration process in regard to the 2009

Memorandum of Agreement. The MOA details the terms of division of any surplus of the Pension Fund and its continued validity is contested by CBC.

- We discussed the difficulties our members are experiencing with Canada Life's management of requests for access to the Special Assistance Fund (SAF) and how to address the situation.
- We honoured one of the founding members of the PNA, John Dixon of Toronto, and our past president, Denis Collette of Winnipeg, for their considerable services to our Association over the years.
- The Board discussed the Moncton Chapter's request to become a separate region from the current Maritimes Region. After lengthy discussions, we decided to postpone the decision. We have set up a joint working group whose mandate is to present to the Board, no later than the May 2023 meeting, solutions that will satisfy each of the parties.
- Post-retirement surviving spouses: this advocacy file has been stalled since its launch in 2012! The pan-Canadian coalition formed by the PNA includes more than five million members. It has tried in various ways to change the six laws that deprive some surviving spouses of a pension, whether the union is post-retirement (as is the case at CBC) or after the age of 60 (as for the Armed Forces). The Board tasked the Executive Committee with preparing a plan to update the 2012 data about the cost of such an initiative, which ultimately does not require a legislative change but a simple decision by the pension fund's sponsor, CBC. We will keep you informed.
- PNA representatives have had some promising meetings with the Vice-President of the English Networks, Barbara Williams. The objective is to improve the CBC's collaboration with the PNA, inspired by the relationship with Radio-Canada (facilitation of communications and organization of pre-retirement sessions; access to CBC premises across the country; etc.).

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- We set up a small working group to present, as soon as possible, the basis of a programme for PNA members to sit in as observers at meetings of the National Board of Directors and perhaps those of the regions and chapters. The purpose is to foster member engagement and recruit volunteers who contribute to the association.

The day after the National Board meeting, members of our two standing committees on Recruitment and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion met face-to-face after a year of virtual meetings. The purpose was to bring together the volunteer members of these two committees whose mandates are complementary and to discuss the progress made and challenges encountered.

One of the highlights of the day was a presentation of what CBC is doing in terms of diversity and inclusion. We were pleasantly surprised that the two CBC representatives, Jovane Drouin and Youla Pompilus-Touré, were accompanied by the Vice-President, People and Culture, Marco Dubé. This led to frank and courteous exchanges of views.

As you can see, your representatives and volunteers are not idle. We barely had time to admire the stunning fall colours during these three particularly magnificent days!

It will soon be time to start writing the Christmas issue and send you my best wishes for the New Year. Time flies!



30% DISCOUNT FOR MEMBERSHIP

As of April 1, 2022 CBC pensioners now get a 30% discount across the board - so no matter what program you chose - it will be 30% off the regular price.

The pensioners will need to contact Anita Adams at anita.adams@cbc.ca for their individual code in order to get the promotion.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, WHY?

Ron Charles. Co-Chair of the SCEDI

The Pensioners National Association (PNA) strives to be a diverse and inclusive association. To achieve its vision and flesh out its policy, the PNA created the *Standing Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* (SCEDI) last year. The committee is composed of one representative from each region and given the complementarity of their mandate, one representative from the Standing Committee on Recruitment.

Mandate

The SCEDI addresses issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity, ability issues (related to hearing, sight, mobility, and other age-related issues), education, language, and geography.

The committee's objective is to ensure that current and future retirees feel included and welcomed in the PNA.

Year one: Developing a practical guide

The committee's main project during its first year was the development of a guide filled with practical suggestions to:

- facilitate the recruitment of volunteers;
- make PNA publications more accessible;
- organize truly inclusive and accessible events and meetings.

The draft Guide was enthusiastically welcomed and adopted by the National Board of Directors at its meeting in early October.

We don't expect all the tips included in the guide to be implemented overnight. We want to ensure that people associated with our organization are aware of what inclusion and accessibility mean, that we are sensitive to it and try as hard as possible to achieve it.

The guide will soon be available on the national website, and we hope to print copies for PNA leaders. It is an evergreen product that will evolve as the PNA changes, reflecting the needs of new incoming retirees.

Projects for the coming year

The committee is looking at several projects that can inspire, inform, and even entertain PNA members. This could take the form of a series of storytellers who talk about their experience dealing with the challenges posed by various forms of disability. We will determine the format of this series. We also want to explore the possibility that the series be co-produced with partners such as FADOQ, CARP, or Rotary Clubs.

We plan to apply for a grant under the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP). This has been given the green light by the Board of Directors.

NHSP is a federal grants and contributions program that provides funding up to \$25,000 for projects that make a difference in the lives of seniors and their communities. Such a grant would help us produce a more professional publication of our Guide and to expand its distribution, as well as to advance our storytelling project. The committee's co-chair, Rochelle Porter, has significant experience in preparing such grant requests and has volunteered to write ours.

SHARING THE PENSION PLAN SURPLUS: ARBITRATION UPDATE

Dan Oldfield, PNA Representative

What's new?

Arbitration continues to determine whether the pension surplus agreement between CBC, the PNA, and the CBC Unions is still valid. At stake is a share in a pension surplus generated at the end of this past year (2021) and any future surpluses.

The PNA and the Unions have completed their evidence and the CBC has begun to present its case. Three additional hearing dates have been scheduled for October 12, November 15, and December 6. We hope the hearings will conclude this year, with a decision issued early next year.

If the arbitrator decides in favour of our position, pensioners and employees can have their share of the 2021 surplus, which is some \$40M, the equivalent of the contribution holiday the CBC was forced to take this year.

In the meantime, it seems likely based on the results of the second quarter, that the Pension Plan will register another surplus.

We will keep you informed of any future developments.

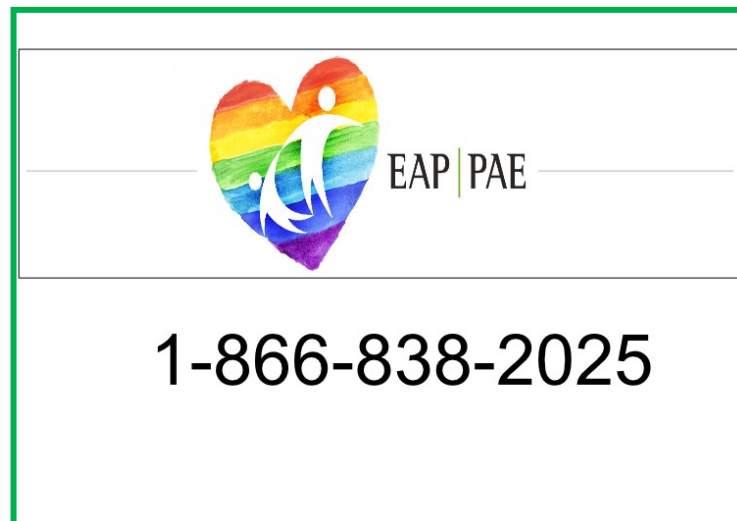
What is the Issue?

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) came into effect in 2009 and requires that the parties "review the agreement every ten years beginning in 2019."

The CBC has taken the position that the agreement expired at the end of December 2019. The PNA and the Unions object vigorously to this position.

The arbitration hearing is being held before Dennis O'Connor, former Chief Justice of Ontario. While there are a variety of issues to be settled, Justice O'Connor is being asked to rule on two questions:

1. Is the agreement still valid?
2. Do formerly excluded employees have a right to be included in the agreement?



UPDATE ON THE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FUND

The Special Assistance Fund (SAF) continues to experience administrative difficulties and misunderstandings. These have caused some delays in payments or improper denial of benefits. CBC recognizes that these problems are caused primarily by a lack of personnel and of training at Canada Life, which has committed to more training for its administrators and better communication when dealing with requestors and their questions about the rules and processes to be followed.

For the most part, however, payments to Pensioners National Association (PNA) members are continuing as we work through the problems.

Meanwhile, we encourage members to contact the PNA office in Ottawa prior to making a request. This will ensure the request meets SAF guidelines and that correct supporting documentation is provided. It is easier to avoid problems than to address them after the fact.

It has been a challenging and frustrating transition, but we will continue to work with the CBC and Canada Life to address the situation.

Contact info@cbcpensioners.ca

To get a request form: [SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FUND \(SAF\) Request form \(cbcpensioners.ca\)](#)

What is the Special Assistance Fund?

The Special Assistance Fund is for all CBC pensioners. You do not need to be a PNA member to access it. The pensioner and the spouse have a lifetime maximum of \$12,500. The same lifetime maximum of \$12,500 also applies to surviving spouses who receive a pension.

Almost a year ago, CBC decided unilaterally to transfer the administration of the fund to Canada Life. CBC declared it no longer was prepared to administer the Fund.

Though we offered to take over the administration of the fund for a fee, CBC refused, citing privacy issues.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RECRUITMENT

Debbie Hussey, Co-chair

debbiehusseypna@gmail.com

Recruitment is undoubtedly the top priority of the Pensioners National Association (PNA). This is why our National Board of Directors adopted the recommendation made at the 2021 Convention to create a standing committee on recruitment.

Our committee is composed of volunteer representatives from the PNA's eight regions across the country, in addition to the two Co-Chairs, me from Newfoundland and Labrador and Phil Peck, from the Ontario Region.

We are still missing two members (National Capital + BC/Yukon Regions), don't hesitate if you'd like to get involved, please contact us.

Mandate

The Committee exists to ensure that the Association establishes a strong representative body of CBC retirees in order to maintain and strengthen the PNA's position as "the sole voice for all CBC pensioners" and an "advocate and defender of pensioners' rights".

The Committee recognizes recruitment as a principal and ongoing component of the PNA, driven by a national recruitment strategy that is adapted to the various realities of the Regions and Chapters. Working closely with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee, we ensure our association is welcoming to all retirees and offers an inclusive environment.

Action Plan

We continue to update and implement our action plan to achieve the PNA's objectives with regard to recruitment:

- ensure a close relationship with the elected officials of the regions and the chapters;
- distribute the spring 2022 survey results to all regions and chapters for follow-up (lists of non-members who said we could contact them and members who offered to work as volunteers);
- propose an additional non-voting membership category, presented and approved by the Board at its recent meeting;
- ensure that best practices concerning recruitment are shared across the country;
- ensure the ongoing presentation of pre-retirement sessions (currently offered in some regions);
- implement shareable databases (ACCESS being implemented at the national level);
- establish databases for future members (i.e. future retirees from the CBC workforce, deferred pensioners, etc.);
- design new programs targeted for specific groups (i.e. spouses, surviving spouses) and assist in their implementation;
- review data obtained from CBC Pension Plan;
- constantly update our data and strategies.

Having been involved this past year, and meeting John Dixon, one of the founding members of the PNA, has been an interesting and huge learning experience. I look forward to helping the PNA "preserve our future and share our past"!

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 our newsletters or communiqués, mailed or emailed to you by the Association, as well as keeping our database updated.

You can notify us either by email  info@cbcpensioners.ca or by toll free telephone number:

1-877-361-9242 - ext. 23



CREATION OF A NEW CATEGORY OF MEMBERS

At its October meeting, the Board of Directors voted in favour of a proposal by the Standing Committee on Recruitment to create a second category of members of the PNA.

The purpose of this change in our Bylaws is to encourage the recruitment of new members and interest them in the workings of the PNA.

This new non-voting category includes the following persons, who must agree to eventually become voting members:

- individuals who are still working at the CBC and planning to retire;
- retirees whose pension is deferred: these are people who are no longer employed by the CBC and who, for various reasons, do not yet receive a CBC pension;
- spouses of retirees: these are married to CBC retirees and who, upon their spouse's death, are eligible for the surviving spouse benefit.

These new members will not have the right to vote and cannot be elected to a leadership position at the national, regional or chapter level. They will, however, have all the other rights of voting members, including attending Annual General Meetings, speaking at those meetings, and serving on a committee formed by the board of directors of the region or section in which the member resides, provided that the purpose of that committee is to make recommendations that the board of directors may, in turn, adopt.

The National Board of Directors is currently evaluating the membership dues that would apply to the new members.

This modification to our Bylaws must be ratified at the next national AGM in May 2023 but it takes effect as soon as dues are established.

TRIBUTE TO TWO PNA MEMBERS

At the recent National Board meeting, we honoured two members of the Pensioners National Association for their considerable services to our organization: John Dixon of Toronto, a founding member of the PNA, and Denis Collette of Winnipeg, our former Treasurer, and past President.

John Dixon

John has been involved in the Ontario Region since its early days and he was directly involved for over 20 years. He was its first Vice-President for 8 years. After that, John became President in 2007, serving in that capacity for 3 years and then continuing on the Board for another 6 years as Vice-President. Because history has a way of repeating itself, John was elected Vice-President yet again and held that role for another 4 years.

John worked tirelessly for the membership and spent many hours helping to establish Chapters throughout Ontario. His dedication to the members saw him travel each year to remote sections of Northern Ontario to meet with PNA members and CBC retirees.

John is a great mentor, with endless knowledge of the organization's history and he is admired and respected for his knowledge, his wit, and his dedication.

Denis Collette

When you want something to be well done and in a timely fashion, ask someone who is busy with all sorts of commitments! That is what the PNA did when we approached Denis Collette.

Initially, Denis acted as the Representative of the Association on the Employee Assistance Program, before being elected Treasurer of the Association. As Treasurer, Denis implemented electronic fund transfers, which facilitated payments to creditors, reimbursement of travel expenses, as well as direct deposits in the bank accounts of members, regions, and chapters, bringing the PNA financial administration into the 21st century.

Denis was elected national President in 2018. On top of the usual challenges linked to running PNA business, Denis faced those of the pandemic. He succeeded in implementing virtual meetings for regular board meetings as well as the Annual General Meeting and our 2021 triennial Convention.

His term as President also included the challenges of undertaking a review of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Corporation and the Association, as well as the important issues of dealing with Supplementary Health Insurance. Finally, he was able to negotiate the inclusion of our membership application form with the issue of Contact that the CBC sends once a year to all pensioners who are not members of the PNA.

Denis' work as a volunteer has not been limited to the PNA: he occupied various volunteer positions amongst a variety of organizations in Alberta and Manitoba and has been a pillar of the francophone communities in those two western provinces.

Thanks to both of you for all you have done for our organization!



Raj Narain and John Dixon



Alain Pineau and
Denis Collette