



The CBC Pensioners  
National Association

# Contact

L'Association nationale  
des retraités de la SRC

## Newsletter

### President's Message

Hello all:

This issue of Contact is being published to let you know what went on at various meetings we held recently in Montreal.

With the semi-annual meeting of the national Board of Directors coming up, we were invited by the Quebec Region to hold the meeting in Montreal – coincidentally in the midst of the celebrations being held to mark the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of that great city. We were pleased to accept, noting that we'd be getting together within a month of the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding – also in Montreal – of the CBC Pensioners National Association!

So we put the board meeting together with the Annual General Meeting of the Association Québécoise des Retraité(e)s de la Société Radio-Canada – otherwise known as the Quebec Region – and the national association's own AGM. We are, I'm sure you'll agree, the very model of high efficiency!

#### **The Annual General Meetings**

AGMs, as we all know, are those constitutionally-mandated affairs at which we report on the doings of the previous year, hold any necessary elections and review audited financial statements to assure ourselves that our elected officers don't have their hands in the till. Good news on that front – both the AQR and the national Association received clean and unqualified audits! (And you can find the national financial statement on the PNA website -- <http://www.cbcpensioners.ca> – click on the “About Us” tab.)

Of course, aside from the opportunity to mingle with former colleagues, the AGMs also give our members a chance to raise issues that may be concerning them and get answers to questions of interest. As those of you who have attended national AGMs will recall, they are also the venue for a thorough presentation on the **CBC Pension Plan**. This time, we had the pleasure of welcoming both **Debra Alves**, the plan's Managing Director/CEO, and **Duncan Burrill**, Secretary/Treasurer and the plan's second in command.



Their “tag-team” presentation, titled “Delivering the pension promise”, explained the plan's organization and guiding principles and presented a clear overview of the challenges it faces as a “mature” plan (that is, one with more retirees drawing pensions than there are employees paying into it) and its performance over the past year.

The details of the presentation can be found on the CBC Pension Plan website (<http://cbc-radio-canada-pension.ca/> and click on “Annual Reports” under “Useful Information”).

Details aside, however, you can rest assured that our Pension Plan is in very good shape and continues to out-perform in comparison to its peers. In what was a generally difficult year in the markets, the CBC plan exceeded both its asset and liability benchmarks, experiencing an overall growth in assets from just short of \$6.5 billion at the beginning of January, 2016, to over \$6.6 billion by the end of the year. Over the same period, contributions by employees and by the CBC totalled some \$97 million, while pension payments were \$289 million – roughly \$3 paid out for every dollar contributed. It’s a testimony to the skills of the plan’s leadership and portfolio managers that that gap is not only covered but thoroughly exceeded, year after year.

### **The National Board Meeting**

The primary focus of the board at this meeting was the ongoing review of the **Supplementary Health Care Plan**. You will recall that, for the past year or so, a joint PNA/CBC committee has been reviewing the SHCP, looking for ways to maintain its relevance, control its costs and assure its future affordability.

The committee was faced with a number of concerning realities, prime among them the fact that the insurance plan is – and must remain – self-sustaining. The CBC doesn’t subsidize the operation. It subsists entirely on the premiums paid by its subscribers. The problem is that those premiums have been rising steadily over the past several years – and all industry projections are that the expense of both prescription drugs and paramedical services will continue to increase in the years ahead. Put that together with the fact that our own population – pensioners – is an aging one that places heavier demands on the system (particularly in the area of paramedicals) and the conclusion is inevitable – unless we can find ways to control costs, our plan risks becoming unaffordable, deterring new subscribers and driving existing plan members to lower cost (but much less beneficial) commercial alternatives – or, worse, no supplementary coverage at all.

So, at the May meeting, the board of directors was given a detailed presentation by the CBC and the consultants from Morneau Shepell, the company that provides CBC’s pension admin and actuarial services. The presentation outlined a number of cost-saving alternatives, all designed to assure retirees continue to receive the level of coverage they need for both prescription drugs and a wide range of paramedical services – but at prices they can afford now and in the future.

The review, as noted, remains a work in progress – but it’s fair to say the Association’s directors were encouraged by the analysis and the options for improvement. Based on what we’ve seen, we expect the work will yield positive results before the end of the summer.

In other areas of interest, we reviewed progress on the work of the two pension-related coalitions in which the PNA plays a role – the one dealing with survivor pensions and the other with the government’s proposed changes to the pension legislation. As matters regarding pensions are evolving at the federal level, we find the activities of the two groups are beginning to run together. Here’s what’s been happening.

First, **Rick Inglis** and **Maurice Gill** are leading the charge for the **Surviving Spouses Pension Fairness Coalition**. Maurice attended the board meeting on the team’s behalf to report on their progress.

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The coalition is lobbying for pension legislation that would grant official survivor status to people who have married a CBC employee after that employee has retired. As you may know, that is not permitted now and we – along with thousands of others who are subject to federal pension laws – believe that is grossly unfair. Maurice reported that, while the group’s efforts have so far been focused on the Liberal government, the coalition has now formed a close relationship with the New Democratic Party, whose legislative experts are currently writing a Private Members Bill aimed at modifying the Pension Benefits Standards Act (the legislation that governs pensions for federally regulated industries, including Crown Corporations like the CBC.)

The Surviving Spouses coalition is also working on plans for two mailout campaigns – one to all MPs and the other to the media. They had hoped to embark on these a few months ago but have held back a bit to avoid confusion with the broader aspects of protest against Bill C27, the legislation the government has proposed that also seeks to modify the PBSA – which is where the convergence with our other coalition activity begins to occur.

The second group in which we’re active is the **Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security**, an assembly headed by the National Association of Federal Retirees. We are represented on the coalition’s steering committee by our past president, **Howard Simpson**. That group advocates for the general interests of retirees but its current primary cause is opposing the changes the government has proposed to the Pension Benefits Standards Act.

If you’ve been following the updates to the PNA website, you’ll know that we have been pushing ahead with a unilateral approach to the Minister of Finance, protesting changes that would permit the establishment of a mechanism known as a “Target Benefit Pension Plan”, a move we see as threatening the future of more secure Defined Benefit plans such as ours.

The Retirement Security Coalition – along with many representatives of organized labour, together representing literally millions of employees and retirees across the country – is similarly active in contesting the government’s plans as proposed in Bill C-27. The Coalition has recently filed a submission with the Ministry that’s very much along the same lines as the one we submitted.

As I expressed to the members gathered for the AGM and the national board meeting, we don’t yet know whether our voices will be heeded – but we’re hopeful. Our submission can be found on the PNA website, along with a form letter you can send to your Member of Parliament. Many of our members across the country have already done that and received some form of response – predictably, outrage from the opposition parties and “boiler plate” from government MPs. But every voice helps – so, if you haven’t yet joined the fray, please consider doing so.

On the money front, Treasurer **Denis Collette** presented the Board of Directors – and, subsequently, the Annual General Meeting – with the Association’s **audited financial statements** which were approved by both bodies. And, as noted above, the auditors judged our affairs to be well managed. Simply put, we’re in sound financial shape and we owe a great deal to Denis for keeping us that way!

Those were the main issues the directors dealt with. Beyond that, there were reports on regional activities – many with a focus on the all-important task of maintaining and increasing our membership rolls – along with reports from our representatives on the various other boards and committees where we’re represented.

**Julia Sargeant**, who speaks for us on the national board of the **Employee Assistance Program**, reported that retirees have been increasingly active in promoting EAP services in their regions and drew members' attention to the EAP/PAE page accessible via the iO portal of the CBC (**see separate box on page 5 re how to do that**) where there's a lot of useful info to be had.

**Alain Pineau**, who began his term on the **Pension Board of Trustees** in January, advised he is ascending the learning curve associated with that position and, like his predecessor (the undersigned) expressed full confidence in the organization that keeps the pension cheques appearing in our mailboxes, both literally and virtually.

And **Dan Oldfield**, our newly-appointed representative on the **Consultative Committee on Staff Benefits** (joining long-time member **Jean-Paul Rouillard**), reported on his first meeting with the CCSB. Dan's no stranger to the affairs of the CCSB, having spent years there representing the members of the Canadian Media Guild. (**See Dan's bio on page 5**) Dan's busy forging links with the Committee's union representatives, bearing in mind that they're our future members and, as such, that there are many issues of common interest – prominently including the Pension Surplus Sharing Agreement between the CBC, the unions and the PNA that comes up for review in 2019.

That's it for now. I hope you all have a fine summer – assuming that season has or shortly will arrive wherever you are.

Cheers.....

Paul Gaffney  
President



### **EAP - Employee Assistance Program**

HELP FOR PENSIONERS 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.

Please visit our website [www.cbcpensioners.ca](http://www.cbcpensioners.ca) to view the details of all the services offered by EAP.

## **DAN OLDFIELD**



Dan is the PNA's new English representative on the Consultative Committee on Staff Benefits, replacing Anna Whitley. Before his retirement from the CBC, he was for 25 years the Senior Staff Representative and Lead Negotiator for the Canadian Media Guild, the union representing all CBC employees outside the province of Quebec and the city of Moncton. He also represented employees at organizations such as the Canadian Press, APTN, Shaw, Reuters Canada, TVO and TFO. Prior to taking the position with the Guild, Dan spent 18 years as a reporter with the CBC radio news service in Toronto, Whitehorse and Regina.

He represented the Guild on the CCSB for close to 30 years and was, as well, the lead negotiator for the group that put together the pension surplus/benefit deal on behalf of the Guild, the management union, the SRC unions and the CBC Pensioners National Association. He also wrote the discussion paper that led to the founding of the Special Assistance Fund.

When not advocating for the rights of others, Dan and his partner -- former CBC National Radio producer Barbara Saxberg -- operate the company Barb founded, Syzygy Learning and Facilitation. Check out their website at [www.szq.ca](http://www.szq.ca). (The company's name is particularly interesting!)



### **How to access EAP on the iO portal.**

**iO portal link:** [io.cbrc.ca](http://io.cbrc.ca)  
**User ID:** pension-io  
**Password:** services0 (it's a zero)

**Once on the iO portal:**  
 - select the 'Resources' tab  
 - under 'Life at Work' – select Employee Assistance Program



### **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](mailto:cbcpensioners@on.aibn.com) or by telephone 1-877-361-9242 extension 23 or via our website:  
[www.cbcpensioners.ca](http://www.cbcpensioners.ca)



## CBC Pensioners National Association - 2017

### Executive Committee

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