

LIVEWIRE

CBC PNA ONTARIO REGION

ROWING IN THE SAME DIRECTION

BY DAN OLDFIELD
PRESIDENT-ELECT, PNA NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS



“It’s all about the members.”

For the best part of 25 years working with the Canadian Media Guild, that phrase—posted on my office wall—was a constant reminder of what mattered.

The same is true in the PNA. Our Association is as vulnerable as any group with a governance structure to being derailed by petty disputes, personal aspirations, empire building or quests for power. Internal politics pose a threat to any organization, even though the average member isn’t privy to behind-the-scenes wrangling.

Just look at the body-politic at the international, national, and provincial levels. We are seeing a disturbing political current where division and identity politics is

Continued...

feeding a hunger for power, and pitting people against each other.

In the PNA, we can put our personal needs and desires aside, and dedicate ourselves to our common cause instead of focusing on differences, whatever they may be. What matters most is to build a large, strong, vibrant organization that stands up for the rights of CBC pensioners.

My primary goal as president is to create a greater sense of unity and common purpose in the PNA. To be successful, we simply cannot allow ourselves to be divided. All too often, people lose focus on why their organization exists, and the fundamental obligations that come with it.

At their core, the challenges we face should unite us. They have little to do with geography, language, age, gender or positions held during a CBC career. Although these factors can't be ignored and all voices need to be heard, we can choose to focus on the reality that there is more to unite than divide us.

Our strength is in our members, more than 5,000, but the task of representing and serving the PNA has fallen to relatively few. Not only that, but we are only slightly more

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Livewire is the Ontario Region newsletter of the PNA



**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

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Feedback and ideas are welcome.

Please write to pnalivewire@gmail.com.

ROWING IN THE SAME DIRECTION, CONTINUED...

than half the total number of CBC retirees. That must change, which means we need to do more to grow the Association. That's why recruitment of new members continues to be a top priority—one where the obligation is accepted by each one of us, and where leadership is held accountable.

I am confident those in leadership roles at the Chapter, Region and National levels are up to the job. I believe we are all committed to the work necessary to grow the PNA. I am also confident that the fair-minded people who are not yet members of the Association will understand why they need to join and support our vital work. It's work from which they, too, are benefiting.

“We can choose to focus on the reality that there is more to unite than divide us.”

We have an army of intelligent, generous people with a wealth of experience and knowledge. Instead of feeding the politics of division, we must harness our energy to ensure our voice is big enough, clear enough, and powerful enough to guarantee our needs are protected—our pensions; access to affordable health benefits; and ensuring the value and rights of individual members.

And let's keep this Swahili proverb front of mind: “A boat doesn't go forward if each one is rowing their own way.”

- *Related article on page 24:
“Erasing the two solitudes in the PNA”*

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HOW TO SAVE BIG BUCKS THROUGH THE PNA

BY TALIN VARTANIAN

There are few things in life that we buy and hope never to have to use. At the top of my list: insurance.

Since joining the PNA, I've saved about \$2,000 a year on home, car, and travel insurance. You can, too.

Home and auto insurance savings

When you log in as a member on the Association's website, click on "For members only," and

and choose "Resources." You'll find benefits under the heading "Affinity program." It gives you the name of a group insurance company that's affiliated with the PNA.



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HOW TO SAVE BIG BUCKS, CONTINUED...

(Because *Livewire* is accessible to everyone, I'll be calling it "the PNA's insurance company" here, rather than naming it.)

For about a decade, I used an excellent insurance broker. She combined our home and auto policies under one company's umbrella as a cost-saving measure, and every year she shopped around for the best possible rates on both. Consistently, we saved money. I referred friends and colleagues to her over the years, and they were equally happy to have someone in their corner who was both diligent and kind.

In 2020, shortly after I left the CBC, our insurance policies came up for renewal. As usual, my broker went to work on our behalf. Out of curiosity, I called the PNA's company for an additional quote. During the phone conversation, I had our home and car policies in hand, and shared the details of our deductibles, riders, and so on. That ensured I'd have an apples-to-apples comparison.

The result was astonishing. The PNA quote was almost \$1,400 lower than the combined premium from my long-time trusted broker. Given our long relationship, I called her to ask whether she could match the rate. She couldn't, and she said the companies she contacts "can't touch a group insurance rate."

The PNA quote was almost \$1,400 lower than the combined premium from my long-time trusted broker.

What is group insurance?

Group insurance can be offered by a company to its employees, by a university or college to its students, or by an association (such the PNA) to its members. The company or group negotiates rates with an insurance company to offer its employees or members the best value.

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HOW TO SAVE BIG BUCKS, CONTINUED...

Essentially, group insurance uses the buying power of a group of consumers to keep rates lower. It's like shopping in bulk. When many people take advantage of it, everyone gets a discount.

A bonus in dealing with the PNA's company is that most of its employees live in Newfoundland. Without exception, every person I've dealt with on the phone has been friendly and professional.

Travel insurance savings

Earlier this year, I needed trip cancellation insurance for myself and my husband, and researched rates online with several companies. Our supplementary healthcare plan covers us for travel medical, so we didn't need that. We wanted to cover our flights and hotel at a resort in Mexico, in case we had to cancel or interrupt our trip for any reason.

I gathered quotes from a few different companies, including the CAA, Royal Bank, Travel Guard, and Manulife, and only for trip cancellation or interruption. Their rates ranged from \$640 to \$703.

Then I called the PNA's company. They offer a comprehensive package that includes trip cancellation, trip interruption, baggage claims, and travel medical. Even though we have medical coverage through another provider, it wasn't possible to exclude that from their rate. However, they explained, if there wasn't adequate coverage from our main healthcare insurance provider to cover our needs, they would top up (as "second payer") to cover additional expenses.



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HOW TO SAVE BIG BUCKS, CONTINUED...

At \$487, not only was it significantly lower than any other quote I found, but it covers us between now and August 31st (pro-rated to the company's year-end date) for any trip outside Canada that's shorter than 17 days, and for trips of any duration within Canada. We have additional travel planned this summer, so that means more savings. (The company also offers a "35-Day Base Plan" for longer trips, at a higher cost.)

Trip cancellation strikes some people as an unnecessary expense. The financial pain would be far greater if a trip had to be cancelled or cut short because of a family emergency. External factors, such as wildfires, can also affect travel plans. Insurance buys us peace of mind.

The most significant benefit of joining the PNA is that it strengthens our collective voice in standing up for our rights. Reduced insurance rates are a welcome side benefit. Why not take advantage?

A caveat: The PNA believes its insurance plan is one of the best available, but it's wise to do your own research to make sure you have coverage that meets your own particular needs.

SUBSCRIBE, FOLLOW, SIGN UP, READ!



If you're on Facebook, be sure to sign up for the Ontario PNA page: "**Ontario CBC PNA.**"

It's not to be confused with a former page "Ontario Region CBC PNA," which was hacked.

Follow the page with the shorter name for the most up-to-date news about the pension surplus, photos of PNA events, and more.

ACT II: SHIFTING FROM THE OFFICE TO THE MUSICAL STAGE

OUR OCCASIONAL SERIES ABOUT WHAT PNA MEMBERS ARE DOING AFTER THE CBC

BY LISE LAREAU



Former CBC Radio engineer Laurence Stevenson performing at the Cobourg Highland Games. (Photo by Barbara Stevenson)

For some it happened by accident, for others it was part of a plan. A surprising number of former CBCers have replaced broadcasting with music. Whether they're performing on big stages or in small bars, they're loving it.

They play a variety of instruments. Whether it's a fiddle, a guitar, keyboards, drums or their own voice—music is now the focal point of their lives.

Continued...

PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

Most have occasional gigs, and one is performing in as many as 90 shows a year, and making good money. (See the profile below of the former director of CBC production services Doug Broadfoot.)

Laurence Stevenson calls his fiddling “a lifesaver.” Susan Mahoney describes hearing her choir as “heart expanding.” Ted Hackborn says his drumming gives him “excitement.” Phil Park calls his guitar playing “a ton of fun.” The six PNA members interviewed for this article clearly are energized about their musical lives, and they likely represent just a small sample of former CBCers who have done the same.



Ted Hackborn jamming at Black Swan Tavern in Toronto (Photo by Lise Lareau)

Colman Jones made his living playing keyboards in a duo that toured Northern Ontario before starting at the CBC in 1994: “But I always kept my music going.”

Jones found ways to insert his original compositions into his CBC work. He created short musical ‘stings’ as studio director for *Sunday Morning* and *As It Happens*, and “stuck” his music into many editions of *Ideas*. (He also played at Lockstock, the weekly CMG concerts during the CBC’s lockout of employees in 2005.) He says

the skills he developed at *The World at Six* gave him expertise in audio software that has been useful in his post-CBC life, composing music in his home studio in Lion’s Head, on the Bruce Peninsula.

Continued...

PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

Susan Mahoney, far right, in concert with Toronto's Pax Christi Chorale.

Directly beside Susan is Mary Stinson, who is also a PNA member and a former producer for CBC Radio. (Emily Ding Photography)



Stevenson, who has played the fiddle "forever," also brought his music to his CBC work. He was an audio technician in radio news, and spent years creating experimental audio, as synthesizers evolved, and Stevenson became one of the technical creators of *Out Front*. Not surprisingly, he says, "I am addicted to sound in general."

He's one of the few who managed to play gigs while working. Stevenson played at folk festivals across North America, and won the Ontario Folk Festival Lifetime Achievement Award. He now plays in Florida, where he spends his winters, and recorded an album with David Watt Besley and Friends. At home in Brighton, he does about six summer gigs with Madman's Window, playing Irish drinking tunes.

Stevenson is doing all this despite a health challenge. Ten years ago, he began noticing his fiddle playing was deteriorating, and his "left hand wasn't doing what I wanted." Two years ago, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, and switched to the mandolin. It means he doesn't have to hold the instrument at shoulder height, and doesn't have to pick with his right hand.

He credits music with helping his condition. "When you play music, you develop more dopamine," an important chemical in the brain that's linked to activity. Typically, dopamine levels are low in Parkinson's patients.

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PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

Mahoney strongly suspects music is good for the brain, though she admits memorizing music is more of a challenge with age. She has been singing with a 100-person choir, the Pax Christi Chorale, for about two decades, and is now rehearsing for their major

Whether it's a fiddle, a guitar, keyboards, drums or their own voice – music is now the focal point of their lives.

spring concert in Toronto. "Not only are you making beautiful music, you are doing it with all these people you respect."

But it was after she left her job as executive producer of *The Sunday Edition* in 2019 that Mahoney returned to an old musical skill. She took up piano again, and found a wonderful teacher who is encouraging. Unlike the rigid lessons she'd had years ago, she now plays the music she wants to play, with a repertoire that ranges from jazz standards such as

"Autumn Leaves" to Bach and Debussy.

Leaving their work in the Broadcasting Centre has also been a musical game changer for both Hackborn and Park. Hackborn played drums in his high school stage band, and says it was always in the back of his mind to return to them. Thirty years as a shooter and supervising technician put that in the background.

"But sometimes it takes one person and [ex CBC colleague and sound man] Brian Whitty was that person. He knew I drummed. Last year, he asked me if I wanted to join his band, Blue Dog Ramble."

Since then, the band has played Toronto bars such as Grossman's, Capone's and the Smokeshow, in addition to street parties.



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PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

Hackborn says he had to get over nerves to step onto the stage for his first gig at Grossman's - a storied venue, "but the more I do it, the less nervous I get," whether it's a paid gig or a jam. He says it helps to play in a band with regular rehearsals, go to jams, and hope to get frequent gigs: "You feel yourself getting better and better every time."

Park left the CBC in 2012 as a senior producer on *World Report*. He took up guitar again after years of not playing.

Back in the day you'd have to take lessons, go through a chord book or do scales," he says, "but now it's all there online. If you have an instrument and the internet, you never get bored."

He now subs in with a Beatles tribute band, Groovin' Up Slowly, which he joined through a CBC connection. In March, he played at the Smokeshow in Toronto, and hopes to do more. Park recalls the time he'd performed at an open-mic event near his cottage in Haliburton. Someone recognized him at the local dump: "It felt like I was some famous singer."

"The more I do it, the less nervous I get... You feel yourself getting better and better every time."

Phil Park performing at the Smokeshow in Toronto with the Beatles tribute band Groovin' Up Slowly. (Photo by Konrad Ejbich)



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PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

WHERE TO CATCH THESE MUSICIANS

Susan Mahoney: Pax Christi Chorale and the North York Concert Orchestra perform "Carmina Burana" at the Meridian Arts Centre, Toronto, Sunday, June 9.

Ted Hackborn: Blue Dog Ramble at the Smokeshow, 744 Mt. Pleasant Road, Toronto, Thursday June 27, and monthly through November.

Laurence Stevenson: Madman's Window at the Lion's Club Annual Jiggs Dinner and Dance, Cobourg, May 4.

Doug Broadfoot: Keep the Faith, Bon Jovi Tribute Band: May 3 at the Kiwanis Theatre, Chatham; June 15 at Fiesta Extravaganza, Vaughan; July 7 at Taste of Lawrence, Toronto; August 23, at the El Mocambo, Toronto. In Epic Elton: September 5 at the Rosedale Country Club; September 13 at the Grand Theatre, Kingston; October 5 at the Playhouse Theatre, Vaughan.

FROM CBC MANAGER TO ROCK STAR!

Doug Broadfoot in costume with Keep the Faith, Bon Jovi tribute band, in a televised concert in the Philippines (Photo by Magnum Graphic Productions)

It's one thing to dabble in music after your CBC career, but former Senior Director of Media Production Services Doug Broadfoot has taken dabbling to a whole new level. He's a member of three different tribute bands, and has performed on stages across Canada, the U.S., Japan, Bermuda, and most recently, four large concerts in the Philippines, including a televised major show with a reach of more than 10 million viewers. He's booked to perform in more than 30 concerts this summer and fall alone.

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PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

Broadfoot started playing piano and keyboards at age nine, learned bass at 11, and six-string guitar at age 14. He studied TV, film, and recording engineering at a post-secondary level, and brought those skills to post-production work at CBC TV, where he worked on shows such as *Kids in the Hall*, Canada Day specials, and Juno Award broadcasts. Broadfoot left full-time work in 2020, after managing a production staff of 500 employees in radio, TV and graphic design.



Broadfoot on keyboards (far right) at the Richmond Centre for the Performing Arts with Epic Elton, one of three tribute bands in which he plays (Photo by Jim Ziegler)

He'd been in a number of bands in the 1970s and '80s when a coincidental conversation at a garage sale helped launch his current life of playing in tribute shows. A Garth Brooks impersonator saw Broadfoot's gear in the back of his car, and asked whether he could sub in on guitar or keyboards with his Garth Brooks tribute band. Three months later, Broadfoot was a regular in the band Fresh Horses, performing on weekends in Canada and the U.S., while still working at the CBC. That led to work with Billy Joel and Elton John impersonators. Last year, during a show with a Journey tribute band, he was scouted for the Bon Jovi tribute group Keep the Faith.

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PNA MUSICIANS, CONTINUED...

The four Bon Jovi concerts in March have been among the most memorable of his post-CBC career. They were on large elaborate stages with audiences of 3,000 or more, and included a TV appearance and a radio interview.

“The fans in the Philippines are really into Bon Jovi,” says Broadfoot. “We were treated amazingly well, and promoters were very professional, managing every aspect of the tour. We had full-time security, a police escort, and were treated to dinner at the homes of very wealthy sponsors.”

He says audience participation is a highlight: “The fans in the Philippines are amazing. They love Bon Jovi and sing along to all the songs. It’s really amazing when you hear that many people singing with you. That happens elsewhere too, with our Elton John and Garth Brooks concerts.”

There’s some wear and tear being in three different bands. Often 30 performances a year, plus travel, is a big time commitment: “I’ve had to turn down some shows this year due to scheduling conflicts.”



Broadfoot on keyboards for Keep the Faith, a Bon Jovi tribute band, at the Limketkai Center in the Philippines. (Photo courtest of Doug Broadfoot)

Broadfoot has seen changes over the years. He’s lugging around less these days because a lot of equipment has become smaller, lighter, and more computer based. However, with no teleprompter, he has to remember a lot of songs for various shows, with set lists that run from 90 minutes to two hours.

He’ll have to get used to the demands. All the bands have busy schedules, and Keep the Faith may be booked to play in the Philippines again next year.

BEEN THINKING OF PLAYING MUSIC IN YOUR POST-CBC LIFE?

SOME TIPS:

- Just do it. Pick up your instrument and play: "People assume you have to have some innate talent. Maybe yes, maybe no," says Park.
- Go out to hear live music. Shows can inspire you, and you can often connect with people who have similar interests.
- Work with the tools you've got: If it's your voice, join a choir. There's a choir for everyone, whether you want to perform rock, religious, jazz or join a barbershop quartet.
- Take lessons. Find a teacher you connect with, someone who's interested in the same kind of music as you are. YouTube lessons also are helpful.
- Technology makes it easy to access music: "You can just Shazam [a music identification app] something you hear, find the score online, download and save it," says Mahoney.
- If your music lends itself to jam sessions, find some in your area and go. You will get over your shyness after you get on that stage the first time. Jam out and have fun.
- Seize opportunities to play for free.
- If you want to make money at it, Broadfoot says, "You have to put a group together that has a calibre of musicianship that will make people want to hire you. You have to get to the point where people are getting good entertainment value."
- Repeat: Just do it.

JUMP IN, HELP OUT AND HAVE FUN



If you live in York Region or Toronto, please consider applying to become a Toronto Director on the Ontario Region Board, along with Lise Lareau, Susan Helwig, and Mike Darley. It involves attending about ten Board meetings a year and occasionally helping to organize events for our members.

Please write to ontario@cbcpensioners.ca by April 30th to say you're interested.

YOU'RE NOT RID OF ME YET!

BY GAIL CARDUCCI
OUTGOING PRESIDENT, PNA ONTARIO REGION
INCOMING VICE PRESIDENT, PNA NATIONAL BOARD



So, there I was, halfway through my term as Ontario Region president, and a new opportunity appeared. Several colleagues, who I respect and admire, encouraged me to run for national vice president (Anglophone). And I took up the challenge.

Our Ontario executive has enjoyed many successes since taking office in October 2022, including a significant increase in the number of new members, which strengthens the voice of the PNA for us all; more frequent and fun gatherings; and the revamped, professional *Livewire* newsletter you're reading right now.

There are many tasks left to check off on our Ontario "to do" list, and a strong team is poised to take them on, with Barbara Saxberg at the helm. According to our bylaws, she—as the current vice president—will become Ontario Region president. We'll be in good hands.

In the meantime, I'll be working closely with Dan Oldfield, the PNA superhero who works tirelessly to ensure that the CBC respects our rights. Most recently he led the team that won the battle over the surplus in the pension plan.

My priorities as national VP will be recruitment, member engagement, and communications. And I'll be helping to form policies and strategies that will make

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BY THE NUMBERS

Surplus in the CBC pension plan - \$2.54 billion

Increase in the surplus since January 1 - \$177 million

Total pension payments in first half of 2023 - \$163.5 million

Total contributions from employees in the first half of 2023 - \$29.7 million

Number of employees contributing to the CBC pension plan - 7,640

Number of pensions being paid - 10,249

- *Statistics from June 30, 2023, September 2023 communiqué from CBC Pension Board of Trustees*

GAIL CARDUCCI, CONTINUED...

the PNA even stronger as an organization representing the best interests of all CBC pensioners.

Meeting PNA members across Ontario is a pleasure. I'll continue to do that, and hope I'll have the opportunity to meet PNA colleagues in other provinces, too.

When I left the CBC in December 2015, I had one goal: to get my health challenges under control. As I felt better and stronger, the desire to make myself useful outweighed my temptation to do nothing but read and knit. Volunteering for the PNA is work, no doubt about it, but it feels like good work, important work. We're making a difference in the lives of our former CBC colleagues and standing up for our collective rights. In the process, it's a joy to meet and to work with members of my extended CBC family. There's lots to do. Please join us.

And I'm still knitting and reading, but never expected that at this stage of my life I'd have such an intimate relationship with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

THE INSIDE WIRE: A REMARKABLE AND RIDICULOUS PODCAST

BY KERRY JOHNSTON

PRESIDENT, NORTH CENTRAL ONTARIO CHAPTER

If you listen to podcasts regularly, odds are good you're tuning in to some true crime. One Pew Research study found 24 per cent of the top U.S. podcasts fit that genre. In fact, iHeartRadio has so many, it lists the top 100, so we can narrow down our options.

Sometimes, though, all the murder and mayhem can be a little dark. So how about something that's true crime lite?

I highly suggest *Ridiculous Crime*, with the motto, "Always 99% murder-free, and 100% ridiculous."



The hosts Zaron Burnett and Elizabeth Dutton are young, irreverent, and can be surprisingly sympathetic to criminals who clearly bit off way more than they could chew. In fact, the show's character development is half the fun. The height of hubris and the depth of stupidity sometimes go hand-in-hand. The program presents a variety of topics, including crime stories from the arts, music, sports, pop culture, and history...something for everyone.

If you want to give *Ridiculous Crime* a try, there are a few episodes that would be good starters. "Nuns On the Run" is the tale of a group of elderly Belgian sisters who discover the Catholic Church is planning to sell the convent out from under them and put them all out to pasture. What to do? Pull off a heist, of course.

Continued...

THE INSIDE WIRE, CONTINUED...

Then there's "Sex Raft!" a saga from the seventies that would make today's reality TV show creators drool. A middle-aged anthropologist decides the best way to study societal violence is to isolate ten young, attractive men and women on a raft, set them adrift across the Atlantic Ocean without engines or sails, and film what happens. It's a great tale, funded by a science grant from the government of Mexico.

There are con artists and grifters galore in the series, including the teen featured in "I'm Not a Doctor, but I Play One on TV...News," who shows up at a clinic with fake papers, some basic medical knowledge, and a hand in the till. There are the Fox sisters, in "The Truth is Out There," psychic con artists with criminal gifts. And "The Forty Elephants: London's All-Female Jewel Thieves," a gang of the smartest criminals in London.

In another episode, author Clifford Irving's plan to ghostwrite Howard Hughes' autobiography takes some unexpected turns. There's even a segment about Stephen Fry's life of teenage crime.

All in all, it's a fun series, worth a listen. My only problem with it? When I'm walking in the park with my headphones on and suddenly burst out laughing, people look at me like I'm crazy, and give me a little extra room.



Kerry Johnston spent more than 35 years in TV News, starting as an EA at The National, moving to CBLT Toronto in crew assignment, assignment and producing, then on to NSS/Syndication working with stations across the country. She was a writer/ editor/producer in the business unit. When it was shut down, Kerry was asked if she wanted to retrain for something brand new. She declined.

She's now president of the North Central Ontario Chapter of the PNA.

ERASING THE TWO SOLITUDES IN THE PNA

BY TALIN VARTANIAN

Francophones make up 22 per cent of the Canadian population. By comparison, about 40 per cent of the PNA's members are Francophone. As a result, French-speaking leaders in the Association have called for 40 per cent representation on the national Board of Directors. (It is noteworthy that they have not used the same reasoning to correct the gender balance on the Board, which is dominated by men.)

Enter Pierre-Léon Lafrance, the new PNA Francophone vice president-elect. (His acclamation will be approved at the PNA annual general meeting in May.) Although Lafrance left Radio-Canada in 2011, he is relatively new to the PNA, and he's a new member of the national Board. His professional career was primarily in news: as an editor, a producer, and a correspondent in Ottawa and Washington. He also served as head of International Relations, and as an editor-in-chief of Radio Canada International.

Livewire emailed him a few questions. Here are excerpts from some of his answers.

On 40 per cent Francophone members of the national Board:

"It's not a question of numbers, even though they do have some importance. Numbers do not assure quality or unity, attitudes and respect do that."

On the differences between Anglophone and Francophone members of the PNA:

"We come from different communities, but I think that basically we are pretty much all the same. A member from Toronto and another one from Acadia both have the same basic needs, and they are preoccupied by their health, their finances, their children, and their spouses. The PNA is not a political party. There are differences, and we must unite behind a common objective,



Pierre-Léon Lafrance, new Francophone VP:
"We must unite behind a common objective."

Continued...

ERASING THE TWO SOLITUDES, CONTINUED

but I do not think that, at the level we operate, there are essential differences between Anglophone and Francophone members that need to be addressed...We must always remember that our interests as pensioners of CBC/Radio-Canada is the central unifying factor. Vive la différence!"

HELP ADVOCATE FOR OUR RIGHTS



If you are skilled in public policy research, or have political contacts, or are a clear and snappy writer, we need you. If you are knowledgeable about health care or pension plans in Canada, we need you, too.

A federal election is not far off. There are serious threats on the horizon of major concern to PNA members. The CBC could come under attack, risking the future of public broadcasting in Canada.

There likely will be attacks on defined benefit pension plans like ours. And a national pharmacare program could wither on the vine.

We don't want to be caught unprepared. The PNA's National Advocacy Committee intends to build a series of information backgrounders on these issues. We also want to arm our members with questions for your local candidates and provide you with talking points should you find yourself asked to speak on an issue.

Please contact any of us if you're interested. We can't do this work alone.

The CBC PNA Advocacy Committee:

Barbara Saxberg, Ontario Region VP, Committee Chair bsaxberg@outlook.com

Jon Soper, Newfoundland & Labrador Region President jonsoper@nf.sympatico.ca

Gail Carducci, Ontario Region President gail.carducci@gmail.com

MEET A MEMBER: FLOYD BURRELL

BY TALIN VARTANIAN

Floyd Burrell's career trajectory would not have happened at the CBC today. He started in the mailroom, and eventually became one of Canada's most-respected, and most-in-demand sound engineers and foley artists.

Even when he was declared "redundant" in 2000, and refused to bump another employee, Burrell told his manager he knew he'd soon be back at work. The reply was, "No, you won't. You've lost your job." About a week later, the call came: Burrell was invited to do the sound design for the acclaimed documentary series, *Canada: A People's History*. Executive producer Mark Starowicz was amazed by Burrell's artistry. He had budgeted three days for sound work on one episode, and realized he'd underestimated. Perhaps that's because he wasn't aware of Burrell's professional credo: "If it moves, it gets a sound."



Sound effects engineer and foley artist Floyd Burrell in 1995.
(Photo courtesy of Floyd Burrell)

"Mark said, 'I guess you'll need more time, but how much?'" Burrell recalls. "I told him it would take three weeks, and he said, 'You've got it.'" Burrell did the sound for all 17 episodes of the series.

His impressive list of credits includes programs such as *Razzle Dazzle*, *The Friendly Giant*, *Fraggle Rock*, *Mr. Dressup*, *Quentin Durgens*, *M.P.*, *Wayne and Shuster*, *Reach for*

Continued...

FLOYD BURRELL, CONTINUED...

the Top, The Red Green Show, and the Olympic Games in 1976 and 1984. He has multiple award nominations and, in 1990, he won a Gemini for best sound in an information or documentary program or series, for *Behind the Mask*, about *The Phantom of the Opera*. That gold-plated statuette now serves as a doorstop.

People tend to be confused about the difference between foley and sound design, and Burrell does both.

Foley artists are named after Jack Foley, a New Yorker who began with various roles in the film business, including location scout, stunt man, and director. In the late 1920s, with the advent of "talkies," Foley turned his attention to sound,

"If it moves, it gets a sound."

and launched a ground-breaking career that lasted more than three decades. He made sound a critical aspect of movies, and even voiced the first Tarzan yell. Foley artists replicate everyday sound effects for films. They might bang together two pieces of wood to create the sound of a door slamming or strike a microphone with a slab of meat to replicate a punch.



Burrell often used a slide whistle on children's programs (Photo by Adam Burrell)

A sound designer, on the other hand, creates sound effects to enhance a scene or to convey a particular mood, one that immerses the audience in the story. It might involve the addition of creepy noises in a suspense film or the hum of an engine in one of the Apollo movies.

Burrell originally was trained as a tool and die maker, and he moved to Toronto from Kingston in 1959, when his uncle offered him a summer job at the Toronto Brick Company. He decided to stay in the city and took other low-paying jobs, including a moonlighting gig as an usher in a movie theatre. The doorman Jim Richards, whose day job was in accounting at the CBC, told Burrell there were opportunities in his office and offered to help him.

Continued...

FLOYD BURRELL, CONTINUED...

Internal candidates were hired in accounting, but Richards said a job had opened in the mailroom, and it would be a chance for Burrell to get his foot in the door. He took it. It was 1960, and he reported to work in the Radio Building on Jarvis Street. Within a few months, an opportunity came up to be a CBC sound effects trainee, and Burrell was hired. On weekends, he worked without pay in a TV shop, and learned electronics. The following year, Burrell was bumped up two levels because he was taking initiative and doing more work than was expected of him.

At the time, between radio and television, there were 21 sound effects operators at the CBC because so much of the programming was live. Eventually, Burrell moved up from trainee, and became a sound effects technician. He began in the newsroom, rolling music under items, and working with voice-overs.

"My first big break was with Michele Finney and Al Hamel on *Razzle Dazzle*," says Burrell. "That was a challenge because we had a booth with a mic in it, and it took two guys. We did live effects because the show was live from 4:30 to 5 p.m., and I used to throw in things that weren't expected of me. But they never threw them out."

A typical day would begin at 11:30 a.m., to review scripts and prepare for the show. After *Razzle Dazzle* aired, he might head to another studio to do *Nightcap*. (Later Chris Bearde took *Nightcap* to the States, and it became *Laugh-In*.)

Burrell was known at the CBC for his meticulous attention to sound. For example, he would create music for the conclusion of a program that would end cold, with a definitive finish: "A lot of guys would just fade it out, and I didn't like that."



A gizmo that simulates the sound of a wheeled cart. Burrell saved it when the CBC eliminated its foley library (Photo by Miranda Burrell)

Continued...

FLOYD BURRELL, CONTINUED...

Another of Burrell's specialties was adding audience reactions to a program, such as *The Red Green Show*, in a way that would make it sound natural. "I love making up things, making something that's not real sound real," says Burrell. "When I worked on



Acclaimed puppeteer Jim Henson loved working with the CBC's Floyd Burrell

Fraggle Rock, Jim Henson would say [about Burrell], 'I don't tell him what to do, and he gives me exactly what I want.'"

Burrell was at the top of his game through major technological change, as sound engineering moved from analog to digital: "Before we had keyboards, you'd have a lot of eight-track carts. If you had two machines, you could start the applause, bring in a loop, then hit the ending, instead of fading out. Steve Smith would come

in and listen to the laughs I added to a segment, and he'd just leave because he was happy with it.

When keyboards replaced carts, audience reaction mixes could be more nuanced, sometimes beginning with a single person applauding, then working up to the sound of a full audience. Black and white keys introduced different sounds. Even with the best possible tools, it requires having a good ear because it takes instinct to determine what kind of reaction an audience might have to a given joke or skit.

Made-up sounds might be the crinkling of cellophane to make the sound of a crackling fire; squeezing cornstarch in the hand for walking in snow; or twisting mic cables for squeaking or creaking sounds.

"Children's programming always requested me," Burrell recalls. A slide whistle was a popular tool for those programs, and there were tailor-made sound gadgets. One was a

Continued...

FLOYD BURRELL, CONTINUED...

wood and cork box with different doorbells on it. Another, a wooden wheel with a crank, and twine over the top, to which Burrell added rosin, creating a squeak box. That's one of the rare sound effects items Burrell rescued and still has at home. And the rest? "The CBC threw it all out." The most fun Burrell had on the job? He says it was a toss-up between *Red Green* and Jim Henson: "They let me do my own thing, and they complimented me every time. They loved crazy stuff, and you couldn't be crazy enough for them."

"I had no idea what I wanted to do in life, and lucked out."

When Jim Henson and the CBC couldn't come to terms on what constituted Canadian talent, Henson left the Corporation, but he asked the CBC to grant Floyd a nine-month leave of absence to work on *The Jim Henson Hour*. The CBC granted that request, with no effect on Burrell's pension. At that point, he had worked for the CBC for 42 years, and had earned a full pension seven years earlier.

Burrell notes that most people take the work of the sound effects person for granted, "but they'll notice it if it's wrong!"

He is proud of his career: "I enjoyed everything I did. I loved my job, and I was lucky. I had no idea what I wanted to do in life, and lucked out that Jim Richards took to me and got me into the CBC mailroom."

WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR A CBC SOUND GUY WHO SOMETIMES LOGGED OUTRAGEOUS HOURS

On *Fraggle Rock*, Floyd Burrell worked a 95-hour week, seven days of the week. He would prepare all the effects for a mix on weekends, and spend weekdays in the studio. He had a family at the time, so how did that work out?

"I'm divorced!" he laughs, "but she was actually really good about it. Because of the hours I was putting in, I could do the 1 o'clock feeding for my oldest daughter, but I had to be back at work at 8 o'clock in the morning."

PUTTING THE PNA ON THE RADAR SCREEN



Photo by Ted Hackborn

It's astonishing and disturbing how few employees are aware there's a group that advocates for CBC pensioners. We're changing that. The Ontario Region of the PNA regularly sets up an information table in the Front Street lobby of the Broadcasting Centre. To stay in touch, President Gail Carducci emails *Livewire* to a growing list of CBCers who are interested in joining our ranks one day.

PNA PARTY FOR EMPLOYEES WHO ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO LIFE AFTER THE CBC

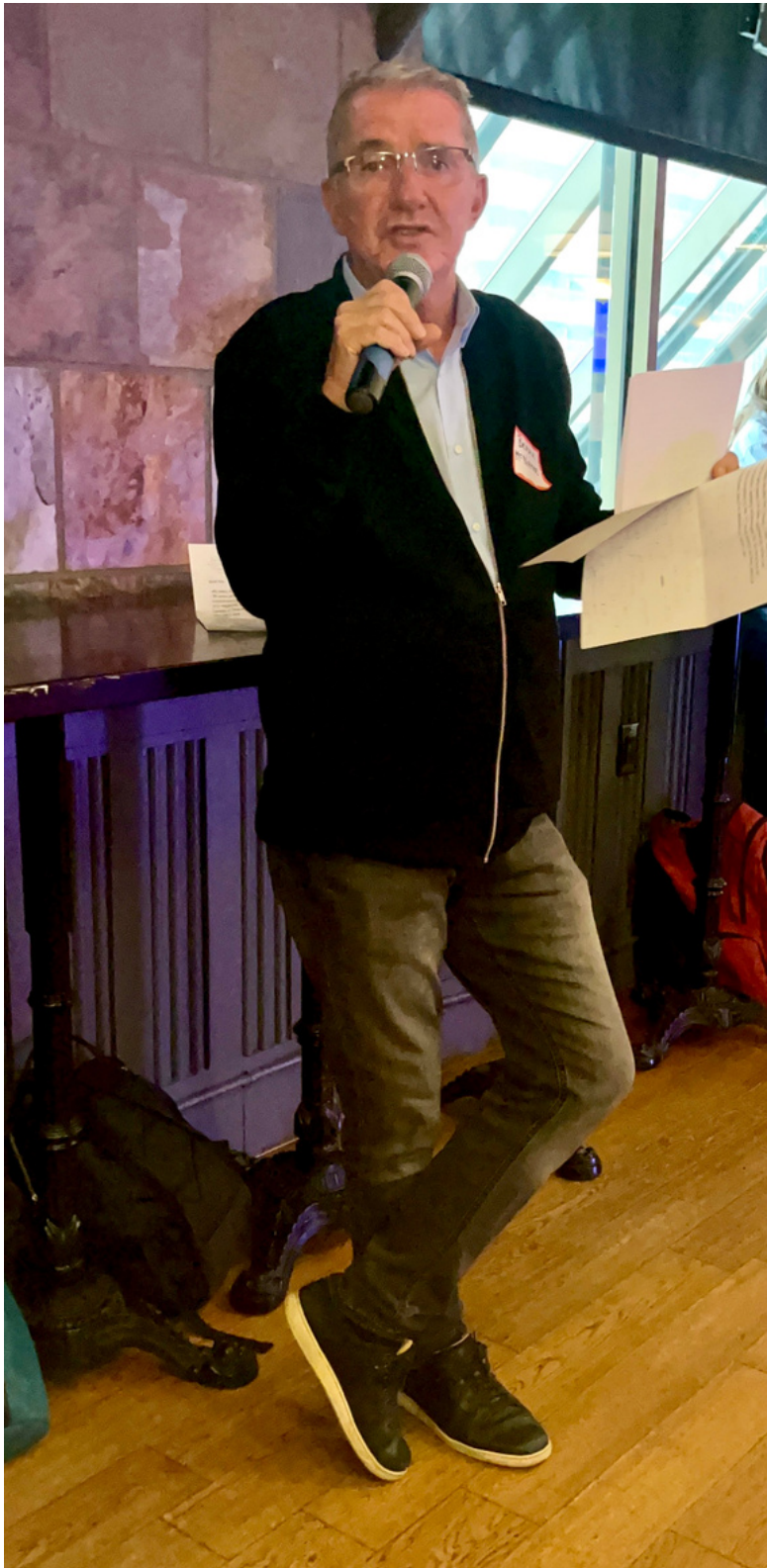
About 40 employees who are contemplating life as a pensioner enjoyed drinks, food and info at a special PNA event at The Pint, across the street from the Broadcasting Centre.

Pictured, right to left, are Toronto Director Lise Lareau, Ontario President Gail Carducci, and veteran news reporter/producer Simon Dingley, who we'll be welcoming as a new PNA member very soon.



Photo by Talin Vartanian

PNA PARTY, CONTINUED...



Left, Bernie McNamee, former host of *The World This Weekend*, regaled everyone with tales of “life on the other side.” He described his own adventures in what he calls his revival, not retirement. Taking up tap dancing was fun, but daunting. He’s traveling. He’s had Spanish lessons in Mexico. And he’s a popular volunteer in a seniors’ home in St. Catharines, where he regularly delivers an uplifting newscast. Bernie describes himself as “living proof there’s life after The Corpse.”

Below, videographer Ted Hackborn and producer Lynn Burgess recorded interviews at the party, with a few current PNA members. They’ll be featured in a special recruitment video. Here, Lynn is interviewing Ann Jansen, who led the *Canada Reads* team from 2007 to 2017.



Photos by Talin Vartanian

Continued...

WRITTEN ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

OUR MEMBERS WRITE BOOKS, AND WE'D LIKE YOU TO KNOW ABOUT THEM

***The Trick of the Tale* by Keith Hart**

Fiction, published in 2023

The story of a former officer for INTERPOL living in Edmonton, who is lured into a surprising investigation.

***Trusting the News in a Digital Age: Toward a "new" news literacy* by Jeffrey Dvorkin**

Non-fiction, published in 2021

A practical text that offers guidance on how to use critical thinking, appropriate skepticism, and journalistic curiosity to assess the modern-day tsunami of misinformation.



That's Why I'm a Doctor: Physicians Recount Their Most Memorable Moments

by Mark Bulgutch

Non-fiction, published in 2020

Stories from 46 physicians with diverse specialties, describing the moment that left them thinking, "That's why I became a doctor."

If you're an author and would like us to share news about your book, please write to pnlivewire@gmail.com.

Humans think they are smarter than dolphins because we build cars and buildings and start wars etc., and all that dolphins do is swim in the water, eat fish and play around. Dolphins believe that they are smarter for exactly the same reasons.

Douglas Adams, writer, dramatist, and musician



PUBLIC HEALTHCARE PROPPED UP BY PRIVATE DUTY NURSES

BY BETTE LADEROUTE

We have a perfect storm that is being financed by public health dollars.

Hospitals have nursing shortages. The simple solution would be to hire staff. Instead, our medical system is syphoning money into agencies that provide them with “private duty nurses.”

Here’s the back story: Beginning in 1637, in what would become Canada, Catholic nursing nuns founded a series of facilities that became the Hotel Dieu hospitals. Those early Canadian hospitals were staffed with nuns who were trained on the job.

Historically, nursing was a calling that, by its very nature, fell to women: no training necessary. By 1860, Florence Nightingale, considered the founder of modern nursing, opened the Nightingale Training School in England.



Canada’s first school of nursing opened 14 years later, the St. Catharine’s General and Marine Hospital.

Later, teaching hospitals provided housing, meals and much more, for as much as three years of schooling with hands-on experience.

Graduates earned Registered Nurses diplomas. Larger hospitals graduated 100 RNs a

year, all qualified for hospital staff duty. Some went on to obtain university degrees in nursing science, specializing in various disciplines.

Others chose private duty nursing. I was one, but only after months of temporary staff work. RNs supervised students, dispensed medications, wrote and delivered reports. The paperwork and bureaucracy prevented me from nursing the patients in my care.

Continued...

PRIVATE DUTY NURSES, CONTINUED...

Registering with a private duty agency was a way to focus on that passion. I paid the agency annual dues, and opted for afternoon or night shifts. They set my per shift rate, and it was generous. I attended to patients in almost every hospital in Toronto.

One of my favourite jobs was in 1960 in the children's wing of a smaller hospital. The head nurse asked if I would stay on, filling the night RN position, and I said yes. It was my first hint of what would grow into a chronic problem: nursing shortages.

This was a good decade before we moved nurse training from hospital schools to newly created Community Colleges. That created a nursing staff vacuum, and at a time when hospitals and medical science were evolving. Registered nursing assistants were being trained in patient care while RNs focused on specialties such as intensive care, or became Nurse Practitioners.



As emergency departments introduced the concept of triage, and surgical procedures improved, post-operative patients required shorter stays, and the need for fewer nurses. That meant that when emergencies arose, such as SARs and Covid-19, there was a sudden need for nurses. That's when private nursing agencies rose in prominence.

By the time the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid was no longer a threat, nurses were too exhausted to care. They were as burnt out as doctors, and began to flee from the work they used to love. Many didn't want to turn their backs on caregiving, so they signed up with agencies.

In the meantime, storm clouds were gathering.

Continued...

PRIVATE DUTY NURSES, CONTINUED...

The exodus of hospital staff collided with an influx of patients whose surgical procedures were no longer on hold. Older family doctors retired and we began to see overloaded walk-in clinics and ERs.

During Covid, hospitals and health care providers had open-ended government budgets to deal with unforeseen expenses. It was a time of unusual expenses, with no time for the usual financial oversight. That was supposed to end when the WHO lifted its global pandemic mandate.

It did, but not for hospitals. They needed the experienced staff nurses who had fled to, or were poached by, the burgeoning agency business

In an arbitration decision between the Ontario Nurses Association and Ontario hospitals, Chair William Kaplan documented the consequences. In 2020 to 2021, hospitals spent about \$38 million on agency nurses. Two years later it was more than \$173.6 million. About half the nurse's pay goes to the agency.

Maybe not perfect, but it's definitely caused a storm. And there's no sign the clouds are disappearing.

HOT TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST FRAUD

All Ontario Region PNA Members are invited to join a special Zoom session featuring an anti-fraud expert. Detective Martin Franssen has more than two decades of experience in policing. He's with the Durham Regional Police Service's Fraud Unit, and has been a vital force in the fight against fraud, especially in support of seniors.

Monday, May 6th from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Please contact Durham Trent President Effy Terry for the Zoom link: effyterry@gmail.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I loved reading the Jill Burns profile! She was the one who hired me to work as a steno in the TV Arts, Music and Science department in 1978. I'm eternally grateful to her. My favourite thing that I remember her saying was that anyone caught stealing the entertainment section of the newspaper would have their own entertainment section removed.

Nancy McIlveen

Former Associate Producer, *Writers and Company*



A Newfoundland superlative would be “wicked.” Great to see so many new members with whom I worked.

Jon Soper

Newfoundland and Labrador President
Retiree representative on the CBC
Pension Board of Trustees

Kudos to all who have had a hand in the revamped *Livewire*. It is very impressive and an excellent read. The articles are timely, relevant and showcase the incredible talent that has passed through the CBC doors for decades, both in front of and behind the cameras and microphones and into retirement.

Thank you for all the love and hard work that goes into putting it together. It shows.

Susan Gagliardi

Formerly in Human Resources

Thanks for the kind words about *Livewire*.

Want to share your thoughts? Please write to pnalivewire@gmail.com.

IN MEMORIAM

David Kirk died on November 17, 2023, at the age of 79. He spent most of his career in TV News and Current Affairs, directing *The National* and later working as a documentary field producer for *The Journal*.

Regina Pfendt died on November 22, 2023, at the age of 91. She worked for many years in the costume/wardrobe department in Toronto.

Margaret Saundry died on November 23, 2023, at the age of 97. She was a pioneer for women in sports broadcasting, and spent part of her CBC career during the 1960s working for TV Sports in Toronto.

Eliezer (Lazar) Griesdorf died on December 11, 2023. He was a technician.

Alexander (Alex) Taylor died on December 18, 2023. He was a sound technician, working in live radio and TV, Radio Recording and Sound Effects.

Juliet Mannock died on December 29, 2023, at the age of 91. She was a visual researcher in TV Arts, Music and Science.

Alfred (Alf) Norris died on January 1 at the age of 84. He was a director, editor and service producer in Toronto.

Peggy Este died on January 7 at the age of 82. Peggy was an assistant producer for CBC Radio.

Shirley Bradley died on January 11 at the age of 76. She worked at CBC Radio in the 1980s and was an Ontario Region member.

Angela (Angie) Paquette-Blair died on January 12 in her 72nd year. She was a chyron operator for TV Sports.

Pauline Nicholls died on January 13. She spent her career as a graphic artist, costumer and milliner at CBC TV.

Nerene Virgin died on January 15 at the age of 77. She was best known as Jodie on the CBC TV children's program *Today's Special*. In the mid-1990s, Nerene anchored the national weekend newscast *Saturday Report*, and was a host on CBC Newsworld and Newsworld International.

Frederick (Ted) Field died on January 18 at the age of 84. Ted worked as a TV accountant and business manager.



Norman Jewison died on January 20 at the age of 97. He was a highly acclaimed, award-winning filmmaker whose career began at the CBC. Norman was an assistant director when CBC TV launched in 1952, and over the course of seven years he wrote, directed and produced a variety of musicals, comedy-variety shows, dramas, and specials.

William (Bill) Cunningham died on January 31 at the age of 91. He was a news correspondent who covered the Vietnam War. Later, as head of CBC News, he pioneered the concept of journalist-anchors.

Connie Sinclair died on February 2 at the age of 77. She was a CBC Radio news reader.

Brian Smyth died on February 3 at the age of 90. He began his long broadcasting career with CBC Radio in Windsor.

Don Elder died on January 7 at the age of 95. He was an executive producer with Network Children's TV.

Fr. William Noel Whelan died on January 24 at the age of 81. He was a member of the Ontario Region. (We do not have information about his role at the CBC).

Peter Krikorian died on January 27 at the age of 66. He was a technical television director, who worked on NHL Games and the Olympics as a switcher.

Mary De Poe Glover died on February 10. She worked for well over 30 years in both CBC Radio and TV.

Rodney (Rod) Slawson died on February 23 at the age of 66. He was a cameraman, editor, and videographer for National News.

Ernest Madsen died on February 23. Ernest was a member of the Ontario Region. (We do not have information about his role at the CBC.)



James Murray died on February 24 at the age of 59. He spent more than 30 years as a journalist, covering major events for both CBC Radio and TV, including the war in Afghanistan, the tsunami in Indonesia, and Olympic Games.

Kenneth (Ken) McCreath died on March 15. He was a national reporter for CBC Radio and TV.

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Visit the Ontario page of the PNA website for information about upcoming events, and to read our bylaws, and minutes of our Annual General Meeting.

<https://www.cbcpensioners.ca/regions/ontario/>



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