

MARITIME STATION BREAK

Pension Surplus Update

Dan Oldfield updates the long struggle to get a share of the CBC Pension surplus for pensioners.

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Anne Godin's "retirement"

She is one of the best-known Acadian women in the Maritime provinces. She has hosted numerous radio and TV shows during her long career...Having retired six years ago, the last thing Anne Godin intended was...to retire!

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Memories of CBC: Crossing the English Channel

Read what Ian Petrie remembers about a unique assignment they both were part of for CBC Prince Edward Island in August 1989.

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New Executive Members Installed at May 2 AGM

By Wendy Martin

Some new faces have joined the regional executive of the CBC Pensioners National Association, following the Maritimes AGM in Halifax May 2. Judy Kovacs of Halifax was acclaimed as regional treasurer, replacing Jane Hartlen who is stepping down. Kovacs joins president Geoff Turnbull and secretary Shelley Bridges, who are continuing on in those roles.

Elaine Bateman of the Fredericton/Saint John chapter and Claire Colette of Moncton are newly acclaimed directors-at-large, joining returning directors Claire Brownell, Barbara MacPherson, Olga Milosevich, and Chris Morris. More than 40 pensioners attended the AGM at the Bedford Legion, marking what Turnbull called a year of tremendous growth for the regional association. "It's been a great year and it's been a tough year," he said, noting that the fight for the pension surplus had likely factored in the uptick in memberships. 51 additional pensioners joined the group across the region. Turnbull said in terms of growth percentage, the region leads the country in new memberships. Turnbull said the region also lost 19 members in the past year, and the group held a moment of silence to remember them.

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Pension Surplus By Dan Oldfield

We are expecting to receive approval any day now from OSFI (the federal pension regulator) which would set the final stage for a payout of pension surplus. The process has taken longer than we had anticipated but we are advised the issue is considered high priority for OSFI.

Once the go-ahead is given, the funds will be held for a further 40 days before distribution can begin. During that period each contributor and benefit survivor will receive a "surplus statement." That document will include the amount to be received and how it was calculated. We should also learn the exact date of payment which you will receive in the same manner as you receive your pension.

We realize the duration of the process is creating some frustration. Unfortunately there is little we can do about it. The latest report from the Pension Board of Trustees shows that once again the plan has generated another significant surplus for this past year. This will mean that in addition to the above payout anticipated for 2021 and 2022 retirees and contributing employees can expect to receive an additional payout of about \$55-million. We do not know whether this will mean we need to repeat the process for this current payout. We will keep you informed when we know more.

There was some discussion about ways to further increase membership. Linda Gillan Young of Charlottetown said the PEI group has put a recruitment poster in the staff room at CBC PEI, explaining the benefits of joining the PNA. She encouraged other chapters to consider doing the same. Young is also on a national committee that's trying to recruit more diverse members, and said she welcomes any ideas of how to recruit more members from under-represented groups. It's important, said Turnbull, to make it easy for people to join the organization. "We need to be open to everybody," said Turnbull. "We all need each other to make this thing work." Some of the most compelling pitches for joining the PNA came from the chapter presidents, who gave brief reports to the AGM. Carole Ryan of Moncton said the group has tried a number of different activities, including winery tours, and a hugely successful afternoon of card games. "We like to get together to laugh and have fun," said Ryan.

PEI is planning a summer get-together in June featuring lobster rolls for lunch. The Cape Breton chapter recently hosted a luncheon with an investment advisor, who talked about strategies for minimizing tax penalties from the pension surplus payments. Halifax hosts monthly lunch-and-learn sessions, ranging from talks on wills to physiotherapy. "We have lots of laughs and fun," said Halifax member Jane Hartlen. "We look forward to seeing everyone each month."



Maritime President Geoff Turnbull and new Treasurer Judy Kovacs at the AGM on May 2, 2024.



A Well Garnished Retirement

By Jacques Hamelin

Anne Godin is one of the best-known Acadian women in the Maritime provinces. She has hosted numerous radio and TV shows during her long career. Over time, and especially because of the quality of her performances, she became known elsewhere in Canada and in France where her tales and stories were praised. Having retired six years ago, the last thing Anne Godin intended was...to retire! So what has she been up to?

A great storyteller, she never stops telling stories and legends. She is an active member of the Canadian Association of Professional Storytellers, invited to perform across Canada from Sudbury to Shippagan via Trois-Pistoles, Memramcook and St-Georges in Newfoundland. She tells legends and personal stories which never fail to captivate audiences. Anne will always feel indebted to her Nova Scotian mentor Clara Dugas, from Baie Ste-Marie, who introduced her to this role.

But there is always her interest in cooking. "Since my childhood, I have been passionate about cooking. At the age of 10, I helped my mother in making her dishes. And much later, Radio-Canada producer Maurice Olson and I created *La Cuisine au Quotidien*, broadcast once a week across the entire network."

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Thanks to the family and cultural expertise of her husband of 40 years, Vietnamese cuisine no longer holds any secrets for her. But it is also through her many travels that she has managed to recreate Greek, Italian or Portuguese recipes.

To perfect her culinary knowledge, she will not hesitate to call on great chefs in the kitchen of their restaurants. "I remember doing it in Italy. Our waitress thought I was a little cheeky for wanting to meet the chef under the pretext of discovering the recipe for the dish we had just tasted. And yet, the man agreed to meet me after closing and he explained everything to me."

It's partly thanks to all these recipes learned and perfected that she caught the attention of the owners of the Brix restaurant in Moncton. She offers Vietnamese, Portuguese and Italian cooking workshops and of course, Acadian cooking classes. Anne has brilliantly succeeded in combining her culinary talents and her profession as a storyteller.

Recently invited to a conference in Châtelleraut, in the west of France, she was able to gauge the interest aroused by this pairing or we could say, this recipe. "I was invited to give a presentation on the History of Acadian cuisine from before the Deportation to the present day. I expected to meet a few dozen people there, nothing more. Phew! It was a reception room as large as a gymnasium. Well, let's see, I said to him, are you dreaming?... However, it turns out that no less than 300 people were admitted and they had to refuse some for lack of seats."

We can easily assume that our friend Anne will never refuse an invitation from these French cousins whose interest in gastronomy has never been lacking. But it's not just France that appreciates the recipes of the Great Acadian Chef. Her Facebook page Cooking with Anne now has 10,000 subscribers. This could partly explain why Ms. Godin's calendar is particularly full. "I love traveling, meeting people, learning about their culture and sharing mine. Retirement for me is not tomorrow."

Humour Kept Us Going By Rich Knowles

Back in the mid 60's I worked on a weekly variety TV show in Toronto called Night Cap. It was a crazy show, but lots of fun. I was doing sound effects. One of the ongoing favourite sketches was a Tarzan and Jane jungle scene that needed jungle sounds running through it. Back then, many of the sound effects were on 78 rpm records along with a few LP's and 1/4" tapes. The jungle sound records were great and, as we had three turntables to use, I would put on three jungle records with all the usual chattering and screeching animals going full bore.

In 1983 I went to Sri Lanka on a volunteer assignment. I was staying near Colombo in a large one storey house on the edge of the jungle with overhanging screened-in roofs. All was good until I went to bed the first night and became aware of the sounds from the jungle just a few feet away. I'd always wondered if I'd been overdoing it with the sound effects on Night Cap years earlier. I was wrong. There were about fifty of those records playing outside my window. There were animals and insects and reptiles of all sorts out there doing amazing things to each other in the jungle.

If Rich has triggered a memory of something that gave you a laugh while working on a program, studio crew or engineering project, share it with Rich by email at rk@sailpower.ca.

Memories of CBC: Crossing the English Channel

By Ian Petrie

There was a good story, an important story, to be told. But it's very unlikely this would ever happen in today's television world. In 1989 the late Geoff Hussey, the boss of Compass, PEI's 6 o'clock supper hour show, convinced the right people that Compass should cover the story of a courageous young woman from Summerside who was making a third attempt to swim the English Channel. I was the lucky reporter Geoff chose to cover the story.

Summerside had just gone through an economic shock when the Conservative government announced the closure of CFB Summerside. There was one more heartache the community was living with. A year earlier, Barbara McNeill had gone to England to fulfill a life-long dream to swim the English Channel. First, strong currents prevented her from finishing the swim. A week later she made a second attempt. She was within 5 km. of France when her pilot boat received a distress call to go to help a nearby swimmer, Renata Agondi of Brazil. Barb didn't hesitate to end her second swim. Agondi died before the Coast Guard helicopter could get her to a French hospital.

Barb returned home disappointed. She knew she had done the right thing but to be that close to fulfilling a life-long ambition was pretty tough. That's when the town of Summerside rallied. Money was raised so Barb could go back. That was the story Compass had to try to tell.

Geoff and I settled into a small hotel in Dover in August of 1989. Timing is always a critical part of these Channel swims. Weather, tides, currents, shipping schedules all play a role. We had a British camera operator and an audio technician on stand-by.



Covering an international story like this and getting material back to PEI was much more difficult. Video had to get to London for satellite feeds. I did daily reports on radio, and phone interviews with Compass.

We were starting to get to know Barb and her support crew - trainer Barbie MacPherson and coach Dawn Moase. There was no guarantee of a happy ending so it was important to build trust so we would cover the story fairly. Barb not only had a daunting swim in front of her, but she was also carrying the hopes of a community that desperately needed something to celebrate.

The swim was set for August 24th. The support vessel had about a dozen people including several friends from PEI. We set out before sunrise. I used a cell phone to connect with CBC Charlottetown as well as other PEI radio stations and newspapers.

About half way across, a Force Seven gale moved in. Barb was fighting large waves and conditions on the boat deteriorated. Almost everyone including our camera operator (not me for some reason) was sea sick. I started thinking about how I could frame a story of yet another disappointment. I was also concerned that we wouldn't have enough video (that's what TV reporters do).

Barb McNeill would have none of it. After 17 hours of incredible effort, and alone in the dark of night, her knees touched the sandy bottom and she stood up on the French coast. Meanwhile there was still more drama on the boat. The support vessel had grounded on a sandy shoal and the propellor was damaged. We lost sight of Barb and had no idea whether she was safe or had made it ashore. An official who was on board to certify the swim for the Channel Swimming Association took a small dinghy and went to find her. He declared her crossing was official and brought Barb back to the boat wrapped in a blanket. I've never seen anyone so exhausted, and so exhilarated at the same time. It's something I will never forget.

By that time, the cell phone battery was dead and we had no way of getting the information back to PEI. We had to go to the nearest port after limping into France with no passports. The French officials weren't pleased. Once I got to a phone, I did several interviews after being up for more than 24 hours. Geoff worked on getting a television story back to PEI. We had our story, and a happy ending.

Barbie MacPherson was still an electronics student at Holland College when she became Barb MacNeill's trainer. She accompanied the swimmer on all three English Channel swims.

"I had no intentions of going to work for the CBC when Geoff and Ian were with us that day. But a year later I started a career at the CBC that lasted 28 years."

Barbie says many people she worked with at CBC would be surprised to hear that she was part of McNeill's team.



She didn't often talk about it except with her closest colleagues. *What did you do before you started working for the CBC? If you have done something in your life that you think will surprise your CBC colleagues, send us an email!*



A Retirement Journey: From Couch Potato to Capturing the Wild Beauty of New Brunswick By Chris Morris

Chris Turner was well on his way to becoming a seasoned couch potato when he was struck by a revelation that this was not the way to spend his post-CBC retirement years.

Chris, a senior broadcast technologist and active union member at CBC Fredericton until his retirement in 2013, said his rather sudden departure from the world of full-time work left him feeling bored and directionless.

"I actually had a moment where I found myself stretched out on the couch and I said to myself, 'This is not the rest of my life. This is not happening.' I retired with the idea

that I would do all these projects around the house. I've been a handyman all my life, but I found I didn't want to do any of that stuff. It was like I'll do it tomorrow and I just kept putting it off."

Chris found a part-time job shuttling customers for a Fredericton auto dealership that he enjoyed and helped fill the time. But then the pandemic hit and the job ended. It was at this point that Turner found his true calling and a passion that would fill his days with great personal satisfaction – he became a wildlife photographer.

"We live in an area surrounded by woods," he said of his home on the outskirts of Fredericton.. "Nature has always been a big part of who I am. So wildlife photography was a natural fit and getting a better shot soon became a bit of an addiction."

It was a fortuitous obsession since his doctor was also warning him that he had to get more exercise. Better health was just one more reason for Chris to head out into the woods with a camera to explore New Brunswick's flora and fauna. Now friends and colleagues can enjoy the fruit of Chris' woodland explorations with his many photos posted and available for view on [Instagram](#), [Flickr](#) and [Facebook](#). Although there are lots of shots of animals and plants, the majority of Chris' work is focused on birds.



Using digital cameras with telephoto lenses, Chris initially spent a lot of time trying to get as close as possible to his flighty subjects.

"Then you realize there's more to the life of a bird than getting up close. How does that bird interact with its surroundings? How do parents interact with chicks? You get species interacting with each other, and birds looking for food. Then you realize there's more to this than closeups," he said.

Chris has taken some wonderful shots of unusual birds, but his consistent favourites in the avian kingdom are what he calls "the bug eaters" – especially the warblers. These jewels of the sky can be fabulous colours and there is a challenge in searching them out and getting good shots.

"It's kind of like Wayne Gretzky in hockey, it's not where they are now but where they're going to be.. You have to position yourself so they're coming towards you as opposed to chasing them."

Chris has become well acquainted with the birder world and enjoys the company and knowledge of New Brunswick's many birders. But he considers himself as much a photographer as a birder.

A lot of his best pictures are the result of unexpected opportunities. "It's often the unexpected that makes it all so interesting. When I've been silently focused on a heron I've had a muskrat come and start feeding a few feet beside me or once I was trying to 'ambush' a Chestnut-sided Warbler and noticed 'flakes' falling from the sky. Looking up I found myself 10 feet below a couple of Hairy Woodpeckers mating and, in their passion, they were knocking bark off the tree branch. It's amazing what finds you when you're being zen in the woods and the woods has always been a place I find peace, a oneness with the universe."

Still Helping Others

By Kathy Large



Rachel Forbes spent most of her years at CBC and SRC helping fellow employees with human resources issues. And unlike some people who are glad to let their career go when they retire, Rachel devotes some of her time these days to continue to help in an unofficial capacity, with neighbours and more recently, with the CBCPNA. "I do it for people in my community and now whenever there is a CBC pensioner who passes away in Nova Scotia, I call the surviving spouse. The initial call is just to say who I am, that I worked in HR for 25 years and I know the paperwork very well and I'm calling you on behalf of the Pensioners Association because I am part of that so if you have any questions or concerns, just reach out. And most of them do."

Many CBC employees in the Maritimes will remember Rachel's kindly nature and strong work ethic. She must have been a model HR employee - because she isn't scared off by lots of paperwork. "I know the paperwork like the back of my hand - I feel if I can help them through that because it is a bit daunting at times, I certainly don't mind. I love paperwork!"

Since she retired, she estimates she has helped about 15 to 20 people get their necessary business done with pension boards, government offices and insurance companies.

Rachel remembers one neighbour whose husband passed away from COVID, a woman who is nervous about dealing with bureaucrats. "So I said, bring all your papers, we are going to Service Canada. And it went like a charm. I said we are going to take one day, and we are going to go everywhere - Service Canada, some phone calls and then to Access Nova Scotia and we'll get you a new license. It was all done pretty much in a day."

Some surviving spouses are faced with shocking news about their financial situation after the death of their partner. "It's mostly the case when an employee retired a long time ago. The salaries were not the way they are now. When you look at 60% of their pension for a surviving spouse, it's really not that much and I really feel sorry for them." So she makes sure they access whatever funds might be available to help.

As an example, she has also helped pensioners obtain money from the Special Assistance Fund for all kinds of assistance, not just for hearing aids. One case involved a man who had been refused support for a specialized dental surgery. With Rachel's help, he gathered a statement from his doctor who detailed how the problem affected his speech, eating habits and his overall health.. and on the second application, he was awarded \$10,000.

She has collected a lot of information on what needs to be done following a death. The checklists come in handy because each person's situation is different than the last. But she makes sure they feel comfortable talking through what has to be done.

"Once I start talking to them, they aren't shy to call back."

In addition to working with surviving spouses in Nova Scotia, Rachel also volunteers her time to be part of the national recruitment committee of the CBCPNA.

CBC Pensioners' National Assoc. (Maritimes) Financial Report

This is a snapshot of our Financial Report for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Our bank balance as of March 31, 2024 is \$21,509.58 with total revenue amounting to \$38,697.96. Our regional revenue is made up of dues for each member in the region, extra dues money of \$100 per each new member recruited along with money brought in to pay for food at our lunch meetings in Halifax.

Our expenses amounted to \$17,188.38 which reflects rental costs for the hall for meetings and events, food supplies, etc., communication and printing costs for things such as the newsletters as well as the Christmas lunch, travel costs for regional representation from the chapters to the Annual General Meeting and visits by the President to various Maritime locations. For 2023/2024, we finish the year with a small surplus of \$267.48. If you have any questions, please refer to the full Report which is part of the Annual General Meeting materials available at the meeting May 2, 2024 or email JaneHartlen@gmail.com for copies.

Jane Hartlen, Regional Treasurer

Saying Goodbye

By Kathy Large

Two vital advocates for CBC pensioners are retiring from the CBCPNA. The admin coordinator, Dianne St-Germain and administrative assistant and webmaster Suzie Bougie have been crucial to the growth and success of the PNA for years. Dianne St-Germain has been working with the Pensioners National Association since it was created in 2000. Prior to that, she worked for CBC/SRC mainly in Human Resources for 34 years.

"They (Dianne and Suzie) are delightful people...fun and very knowledgeable and they've contributed a tremendous amount to the Association - more than most members would understand," according to John McKay, a long-time national board member and past president of the CBCPNA in the Maritimes.

A New Brunswick native, Adrien Caissie will take over from Dianne as administrative coordinator. Alain Couture of Montreal will be Suzie's replacement. His work with Radio-Canada and CBC was in engineering and IT.

How to Connect with your Association

CBC Pensioners National Association

Dianne St-Germain, Coordinator
Adrien Caissie, June 2024
Suzie Bougie, Assistant and webmaster
Alain Couture, June 2024
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New Members

Tom Anthes - NS - Design Department- Set Designer

George Arsenault - PE - Host of Radio-Canada's morning radio program

Christine Cameron - NS - Surviving spouse of Frank Cameron

Michel Corriveau - NB - TV reporter at the NB legislature

Dave Doherty - PE - Camera Operator - Toronto

Geoffrey Doane - NS - Radio Maintenance Technician

Charlie Dort - NS - Camera operator CBC Halifax

Michael Duffy - PE - CBC Radio's Parliament Hill / Reporter The National

Donald Evans - NS - TV Maintenance - CBC Halifax

Earl Feltham - NS - Radio Operations/Finance Department

Marc Goguen - NB - Traffic/Radio routing/CBC/SRC

John Hamilton - NB

Susan Holle - NS - Associate Director

Greg Howard - NS - Staging Crewleader

Eunice Huskins - NS - Surviving spouse of John Huskins

Judith Kovacs - NS - Specialist, Finance and Administration

Marilyn Langille - NS - Surviving spouse of James Langille

Donald Lowther - PE - Surviving spouse of Barbara Lowther

Iain MacDonald - NS - Carpentry and Design in Halifax

Robert Malenfant - NB - ENG cameraman and video editor

Carolanne McNeil - Surviving spouse of Brian Thomas

Barbara Nymark - PE - executive producer of CBC Radio in Charlottetown

Carol Anne Porter - NB - Surviving spouse of Warren Thomas (Toronto)

Mary Pottie - NS - Surviving spouse of Thomas Pottie

Sally Reardon - NS - TV News Producer

Rhonda Sheppard - NB - Producer Television News

Cheryl Stairs - NB - Executive Producer

Moya Walsh - NS - TV Switcher/Director

Deceased Members

Frank Cameron - NS - CBC TV/ Radio Announcer

Colin Cooper - NS - Reporter and Producer Charlottetown/Halifax/Montreal TV

Phillip Forgeron - NS - Reporter NS News

Maurice Godbout - NB - Television Master Control Room Technician

Janice Jackson - NS

Peter Krikorian - NS - Switcher - Newsnet

David Pate - Producer TV - Radio Halifax

Evangeline Pollett - NS

Francis Porelle - NB - Head of Technical Services - Radio

Jacques Robichaud - NB - Technical Operations Manager

Brian Thomas - NS - Transmitter