



## Storm clouds on the horizon

by PNA Ontario Region President Barbara Saxberg

Pundits are anticipating the political swing to the right in the United States soon may be mirrored in Canada.

Pierre Poilievre has vowed to axe the CBC, effectively eliminating the national public broadcaster. We also know that the Conservative leader is considering cuts to defined benefit pension plans. He has talked about converting them to defined contribution plans, which are inferior.

What does this mean for CBC pensioners? A well-funded public broadcaster is essential to maintaining democracy. And our healthy, well-managed CBC pension plan is essential to our long-term wellbeing.

Once a federal election is called, the PNA will speak up on these and other issues relevant to us all.

The PNA's National Advocacy Committee has prepared a series of papers providing background on vital concerns, why they matter to PNA members, and where each party stands.

Continued...

### *Storm clouds, cont'd...*

They also include questions for local candidates, when they come door knocking or at all-candidates' meetings. We hope the answers you hear will help you make a choice that's in your best interest.

The Committee also will be supporting the Canadian Media Guild in a nation-wide campaign to save public broadcasting. PNA members are free to speak on political matters in ways that employees are not. We plan to use our collective voice. Please watch your email, social media, and the PNA website for further information. And we urge you to take up the call.



**The CBC Pensioners  
National Association**

*Preserving our Future, Sharing our Past*

**Contact is the national newsletter  
of the PNA**

**Editing and layout** - Talin  
Vartanian

**Contributors** - Donald Benham,  
Gail Carducci, Dan Oldfield, Doris  
Beaudry Rousseau, Barbara  
Saxberg, Connell Smith

**Illustrations** - Scott Galley

**info@cbcpensioners.ca**

### **One community's story** by Connell Smith

Just over a decade ago, the CBC was taking a serious look at downsizing the Saint John station to a storefront. We knew it was important to tell the community before the decision was made. That's why two colleagues and I set up an information table at the Saturday Kingston Farmers Market.

As members of the Canadian Media Guild, we asked people to sign cards, addressed to three local Conservative MPs, objecting to freezing the CBC budget. Nearly everyone we asked, signed. Even well-known provincial Conservatives stepped up that day, including a former speaker of the legislature.

Then Saint John area artists staged a "Save CBC Saint John" concert for an enthusiastic crowd at an uptown bar. And the Saint John station remains open today.

The political tone has changed. Now, an online vocal minority

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One community's story, cont'd...

can make a lot of noise.

"They hate us," a former colleague said recently.

"They" are not among the millions who visit the CBC website, listen to local CBC Radio, or watch CBC TV. And "they" certainly do not represent the people we met at the Kingston Farmers Market. That said, there's work to be done, and there's a role for CBC retirees. We're lifelong communicators who risk nothing by speaking up for public broadcasting.

We can talk about CBC wins in our regions: investigations that led to changes in legislation; music shows that highlight regional talent; and the millions of dollars raised for community causes.

It's time for all of us to shine a light on the importance of public broadcasting in our communities.

*Connell Smith was a reporter in Saint John, New Brunswick.*



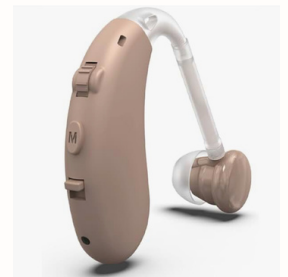
## Medical bills not covered?

### The Special Assistance Fund

Many CBC pensioners and employees are not aware we have access to medical funding through the Special Assistance Fund (SAF).

It was established to help defray the cost of services and devices not covered by group health plans, such as hearing aids and mobility devices.

The Consultative Committee on Staff Benefits (CCSB) decides whether to grant a request for funding from the SAF; and Canada Life en-



sures they meet the fund's guidelines and Canada Revenue Agency's rules.

SAF benefits are available to all CBC retirees, employees and family members living with them. They are not exclusive to those who are insured through the Supplementary Health Care Plan (SHCP) by Canada Life. (The space on the application form for a SHCP number can be left blank.)

PNA members strongly are encouraged to send their application form to the PNA office for review before submitting it. Staff members

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### *Medical help, cont'd...*

will help refine it and address any concerns. The PNA also tracks all the forms from its members to ensure they are addressed.

Canada Life reviews applications at least 4.5 weeks before each meeting of the Consultative Committee on Staff Benefits. The CCSB meets in March, June, September and December.

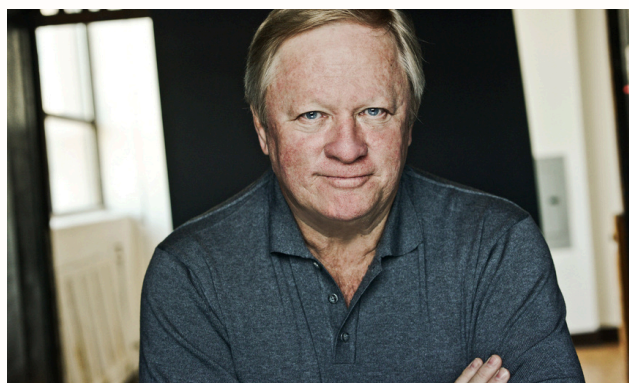
CBC PNA members can find the SAF application form under "Member Resources" on the Association's website.

## A message from the PNA president

by Dan Oldfield

Welcome to a revamped edition of our national newsletter *Contact*. We have the privilege of sending this edition to all CBC pensioners, not just members of our Association. We hope you find it informative and entertaining.

It's been an exciting and challenging time for the PNA. The new Board took office in May, and I am invigorated by the intelligence, energy and dedication of our volunteers across the country. Our work is vital and, for the most part, falls on the shoulders of those people.



Dan Oldfield: "While the PNA is the official voice of all retirees, more than 4,000 CBC pensioners are not members." (Photo by Denise Grant)

We are working hard on several fronts, including a new strategic plan. (See page 6 for details.)

Most of you are aware the PNA played an important role in securing and protecting a deal that guarantees all CBC pensioners receive their fair share of pension surpluses. So far, about \$130 million has been distributed with another \$55 million to come early next year. Likely, another similar amount will come your way next fall. This is great news, particularly given the recent financial challenges faced by so many seniors.

To ensure we can continue to advocate for and protect our pensions, we need an active and

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*President's message, cont'd...*

mobilized membership. We also need numbers. While the PNA is the official voice of all retirees, more than 4,000 CBC pensioners are not members. That is unfortunate, and frankly, unfair. Our volunteers are giving their most precious gift—time. Joining the PNA is the least everyone can do to help protect our pension rights, and ensure we have access to affordable healthcare benefits.

*“To ensure we can continue to advocate for and protect our pensions, we need an active and mobilized membership.”*

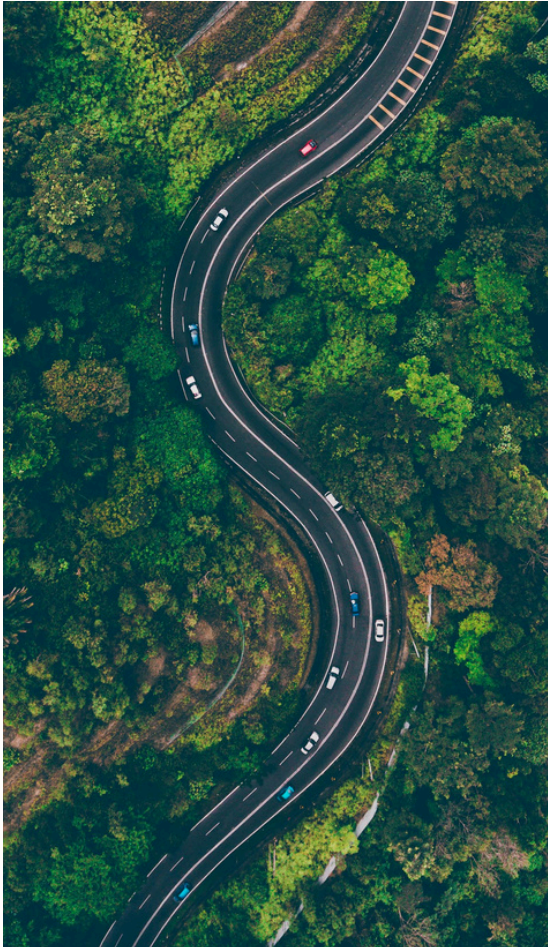
It's easy to join and the dues are affordable, averaging just a few dollars a month. Increasing our membership will strengthen our credibility and voice. Please join us, and encourage former colleagues who are not yet PNA members to do the same. On behalf of the Board of the CBC pensioners' association, I wish you all a healthy and happy holiday season and peaceful 2025.



In October, the PNA National Board of Directors discussed a new strategic plan and new policies. (Photo by Talin Vartanian)

**The PNA's new policies govern conflict of interest, human resources, anti-harassment, finance, and communications.**

**Details are available on this web page:  
<https://www.cbcpensioners.ca/governance/>**



## A new journey for the PNA

The National Board of Directors recently adopted a new three-year strategic plan. At the top of the list of priorities is growth. Membership now stands at just over 58% of all CBC pensioners.

By the end of 2027, we are aiming to reach 7,000 members of the 10,000 plus retirees. Why does this matter? The more people who join us, the stronger our voice will be when we discuss our pension plan and benefits with the CBC. Having at least 70% membership will increase our credibility as the sole voice of CBC pensioners. This matters particularly when we are working with other organizations and regulatory bodies, such as OSFI (the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions) which approves matters such as pension surplus payouts.

You will also see revitalized communications coming from the PNA. We are about to hire a new communications officer and have established a committee to help guide future communications. Expect to see a revamped website in the coming months, a stronger social media presence, and some snappy new newsletters.

Other priorities for the next three years include expanding our advocacy efforts on legislative issues relevant to PNA members; engaging more of you in the activities of the PNA; strengthening our efforts to be more inclusive and diverse; and ensuring our internal processes and governance are as effective and responsive as possible.

Join us! We need your ideas, your voices, and your help. Contact any member of the Board to take part in this journey with us.





## My memorable moment at the CBC

by Doris Beaudry Rousseau

Practically every day, I parked on the Papineau side.

I'd walk down the long corridor on level A of the Maison Radio-Canada in Montreal, passing the credit union and the cafeteria, to get to the main entrance and take the elevators.

One day, my mother accompanied me, and she pointed out that several people greeted me, recognized me, even called me by my first name. I felt almost like a star. I was filled with pride when I saw the gleam in my mother's eyes.



Doris Beaudry Rousseau in 1990. She was a news-room administrative officer in Trois-Rivières. (Photo by Marcelle Montgrain)



Doris Beaudry Rousseau, 2023 (Photo courtesy of the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services)

It was then that I realized that what I appreciated most about working at Radio-Canada was the closeness between colleagues, the smiles and pats on the back that everyone gave each other.

It was teamwork that made TV and radio shows possible, even though I wasn't the main star or known to the public. The people I met here and there made up the great Radio-Canadienne family, and I belonged to it!

**Share your most memorable moment at the CBC.**

**Write to us at [info@cbcpensioners.ca](mailto:info@cbcpensioners.ca)**

## CBC pensioners from across the country gathered in Ottawa for a convention and AGM

by PNA National VP (Anglophone) Gail Carducci  
Photography by Ted Hackborn



PNA Convention and AGM in Ottawa

*Ottawa, 2024* – Every three years, we invite delegates from across the country to a convention to discuss the future of our organization. This year's event in Ottawa marked a notable shift from the past, when the focus was on voting for a new slate of Board executives. Our bylaws now mandate electronic voting, enabling all members, not just those at the convention, to participate in elections. As per our tradition of alternating presidencies between Franco-phone and Anglophone leaders, the 2024 AGM heralded the start of an Anglo-phone term, with Dan Oldfield assuming the presidency.

May's convention focused instead on a series of workshops tailored to reflect our organizational priorities. They were developed and led by our own dedicated members, and covered crucial topics such as recruitment, member engagement, and communications. A post-convention survey revealed largely positive feedback from attendees, providing valuable insights into what delegates appreciated, and what areas need improvement for future events.

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### Convention and AGM, cont'd...

Following the convention, the PNA held its Annual General Meeting. Duncan Burrill, CEO of the pension plan, provided an encouraging update on the plan's status, reassuring members of its health and sustainability. Draft minutes of the AGM are available here: <https://www.cbcpensioners.ca/governance/>

The day following the AGM, the new National Board of Directors convened for the first time. Board members expressed gratitude to the outgoing executive committee, and welcomed new and returning leaders: Dan Oldfield as President; Pierre-Léon Lafrance as Vice President (Francophone); Gail Carducci as Vice President (Anglophone); and Réjean Labrie as our returning Treasurer.

PNA Executive members, left to right: VP Gail Carducci, Treasurer Réjean Labrie, VP Pierre-Léon Lafrance, President Dan Oldfield



As we move forward, recruitment remains our top priority, alongside effective communication of important information to our members. Your PNA leadership is committed to protecting your pension and benefits and delivering valuable services to all members. Continued support through your modest membership fees empowers us to sustain this important work.

PNA members can benefit from our partnership with Telus for savings on smartphones, connected devices and rate plans. Details are available here: <https://telus.com/CBCRetirees>



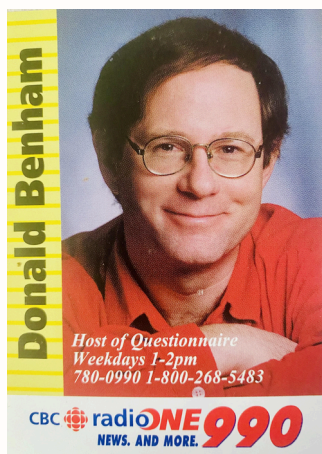
## My memorable moment at the CBC

by Donald Benham

It was the end of December, 1999, and the final moments were ticking down on the millennium as I planned an episode of *Questionnaire*, our daily open-line show.

The question? "Are we prepared for the Y2K disaster?" Canadian Internet guru Rick Broadhead, among others, had predicted that computers would fail at midnight on December 31st.

I called Broadhead and booked him as our guest, but he said he was too busy to be pre-interviewed. Everything he had to say was already out there in the media he told me, before hanging up.



Donald Benham in 1999, host of *Questionnaire* on CBC Radio. (Photo by Tony Nardella)

As our theme music ran, I read some of the worst predictions: "Traffic lights will go green in all directions. Hydro grids will fail. Planes will fall from the sky. Here to tell us more is



Donald Benham, 2024. (Photo by Patricia Benham)

Canadian expert Rick Broadhead," I said excitedly. "None of that is going to happen," Broadhead said.

"But, but, I just read an article in which you said it was going to happen," I said.

"It was going to happen," he said, "but I predicted it and told people how to fix it, so there's no problem now."

Great. Only 52 minutes and 55 seconds left to fill!

*Donald Benham was the host/producer of Questionnaire, CBC Radio Manitoba.*

**Write to [info@cbcpensioners.ca](mailto:info@cbcpensioners.ca) to share your most memorable moment at the CBC:**

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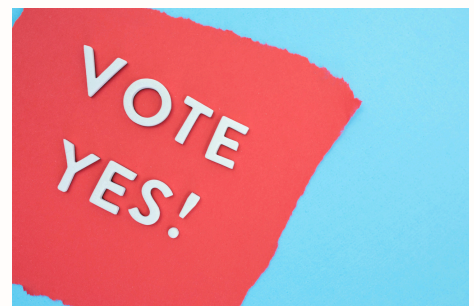
## Vote “Yes”

by Dan Oldfield

The CBC is getting ready to share about \$60 million in our pension plan surplus with close to 20,000 plan contributors. That's if enough pensioners vote yes.

Our pension plan is in solid financial shape, with more than \$8 billion in assets, and more than \$2.7 billion in surplus. The payout represents a small portion of the plan's assets, and the CBC has taken its share. According to the financial regulator (the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions), the Corporation needs our consent to distribute an equal share to employees and pensioners.

For the second time this year, the CBC Pension Administration Centre (PAC) will be asking every pensioner to mark a ballot consenting to the distribution of this money. As happened last time, we'll need a two-thirds vote in support. That's nearly 8,200 people. We did it before, and I'm confident we'll rally and do it again.



The biggest challenge is that it's not just PNA members who are voting. There are about 2,200 deferred pensioners, people who left the CBC and are not yet collecting their pensions. In addition, another 4,000 pensioners have not yet joined our Association. These people are not kept as informed as PNA members about ongoing developments.

The last ballot we received related to surpluses for 2021 and 2022. This one will apply not just to 2023, but to any future surpluses between now and the end of 2027.

Depending on the length of the Canada Post strike, the deadline of December 13, 2024, may be adjusted. In the meantime, PAC is making calculations, gathering banking information and working on dozens of details.

Nothing will happen until our ballots are received and counted. Mark yours “Yes.”

**Your ballot and important information are on the [PAC website](https://www.pensionadmin-cbc-src.ca)**  
**<https://www.pensionadmin-cbc-src.ca>**



### Watch and share our video: Great reasons to become a PNA member

A talented team of PNA professionals created a short video outlining the reasons to join our Association. Watch it [here](https://www.cbcpensioners.ca/join-us/):

<https://www.cbcpensioners.ca/join-us/>



## PNA Board of Directors

Dan Oldfield  
President  
[dan\\_oldfield@hotmail.com](mailto:dan_oldfield@hotmail.com)

Réjean Labrie  
Treasurer  
[reggie.labrie@gmail.com](mailto:reggie.labrie@gmail.com)

Gail Carducci  
VP, Anglophone  
[gail.carducci@gmail.com](mailto:gail.carducci@gmail.com)

Pierre-Léon Lafrance  
VP, Francophone  
[lfrancepl@hotmail.com](mailto:lfrancepl@hotmail.com)

John Mang  
President, BC/Yukon  
[mangsong@shaw.ca](mailto:mangsong@shaw.ca)

Lutz Walsh  
President, Alta/Sask/NWT  
[beaupre.walsh@sasktel.net](mailto:beaupre.walsh@sasktel.net)

Frank Machovec  
President, Manitoba  
[fmachovec@gmail.com](mailto:fmachovec@gmail.com)

Barbara Saxberg  
President, Ontario  
[bsaxberg@outlook.com](mailto:bsaxberg@outlook.com)

Talin Vartanian  
VP, Ontario  
[talinv@gmail.com](mailto:talinv@gmail.com)

Marc-Philippe Laurin  
President, National Capital Region/  
Nunavut  
[mplaurin@gmail.com](mailto:mplaurin@gmail.com)

Jean-Claude Labrecque  
President, Quebec  
[jc84labrecque@gmail.com](mailto:jc84labrecque@gmail.com)

Micheline Provost  
VP, Quebec  
[mprovost@videotron.qc.ca](mailto:mprovost@videotron.qc.ca)

Geoffrey Turnbull  
President, Maritimes  
[g.turnbull1645@gmail.com](mailto:g.turnbull1645@gmail.com)

Jon Soper  
President, NFLD/Labrador  
Also representative on the Pension  
Board of Trustees  
[jonsoper@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:jonsoper@nf.sympatico.ca)

