

# contact

CBC PNA • L'ANR de R-C

# 25

  
ANNIVERSARY

## A Legacy of Impact: 25 Years of the PNA

President's Message  
by Dan Oldfield

We hope you find this 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of our national newsletter CONTACT both interesting and energizing. It's been an amazing quarter century for our organization which has grown from a simple idea to a powerful network of intelligent, generous and eager volunteers.

The work has been both satisfying and challenging. I would like to thank and congratulate my colleagues on the national Board for the hard and thoughtful effort they've put in. As well I would like to thank the many volunteers across the country who have given their time, talents and efforts in preserving and improving our Association.

Success for the Pensioners National Association can be measured by both the tangible and intangible. The fundamental purpose of the PNA is to serve as the official representative on behalf of all CBC pensioners. That means we are the go-to organization when it comes to all matters concerning pension and healthcare benefits. We play a critical role of ensuring the voices of thousands of retirees are heard by those who sponsor and manage our various plans.

You are receiving this edition of CONTACT at about the same time you are receiving the third payout of surplus from our pension plan. The PNA was a key player in achieving and protecting a negotiated surplus sharing agreement.

In total, the amount paid out to Pension plan contributors by the end of this year will be nearly a quarter of a billion dollars. Money that has made a real difference for a lot of CBC pensioners.



Dan Oldfield, President of the CBC Pensioners National Association

On another front our supplementary health benefit plan provides one of the best members-paid post-retirement packages available. It hasn't been without its challenges but we have worked hard to keep premium costs down while maintaining a high quality of benefits delivered.

This is an ongoing struggle but one I am confident we can meet. We have also partnered with organizations in order to provide access to affordable insurance coverage and other benefits to members. We will continue to look for future opportunities.

So, what does our future hold? We are keenly focused on having an Association that is inclusive, relevant, and transparent in all its dealings. While we have just passed the 6000-member threshold, there are more than 10,000 CBC retirees who benefit from the efforts of the PNA and all of them should be members. We are working hard to find ways of reaching out to those who have not yet joined us.

If you are not yet a member, please join us. What we do matters. To be truly representative, we need to grow the Association. Growth grants us more credibility and means we'll have access to more hands, hearts and minds.

The national Board has established an ambitious strategic plan built around four main priorities.

Those include concentrated efforts to recruit new members, a significant redesign of our communications, new initiatives in broader advocacy and more specific and meaningful efforts in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. We are making important strides in all of those priorities.

Any successes we have are successes of the entire organization. We stand on the shoulders of those over the past 25 years who have come before us.

We're thankful for their time and efforts. And while we reflect on our most obvious tasks, we must not forget the subtle – the phone call to the lonely or isolated. The note or visit to the sick, and the many social gatherings, big and small. For those too are part of why we're here – why we exist as an organization.



## Surplus Payment Update

By now you have or are about to receive a pension surplus payment. This payment covers the year ending December 31, 2023.

Understandably there has been some confusion around the payments made so far. For clarity all contributors and survivors will have received payment for the years 2021, 2022 (last July) and now for 2023.

Later this month you will receive a notice advising you that CBC has sought permission from the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) for the release of funds in order to payout surplus for the year ending December 31, 2024. **You are not required to respond to this notice.** But you may do so by writing directly to OSFI.

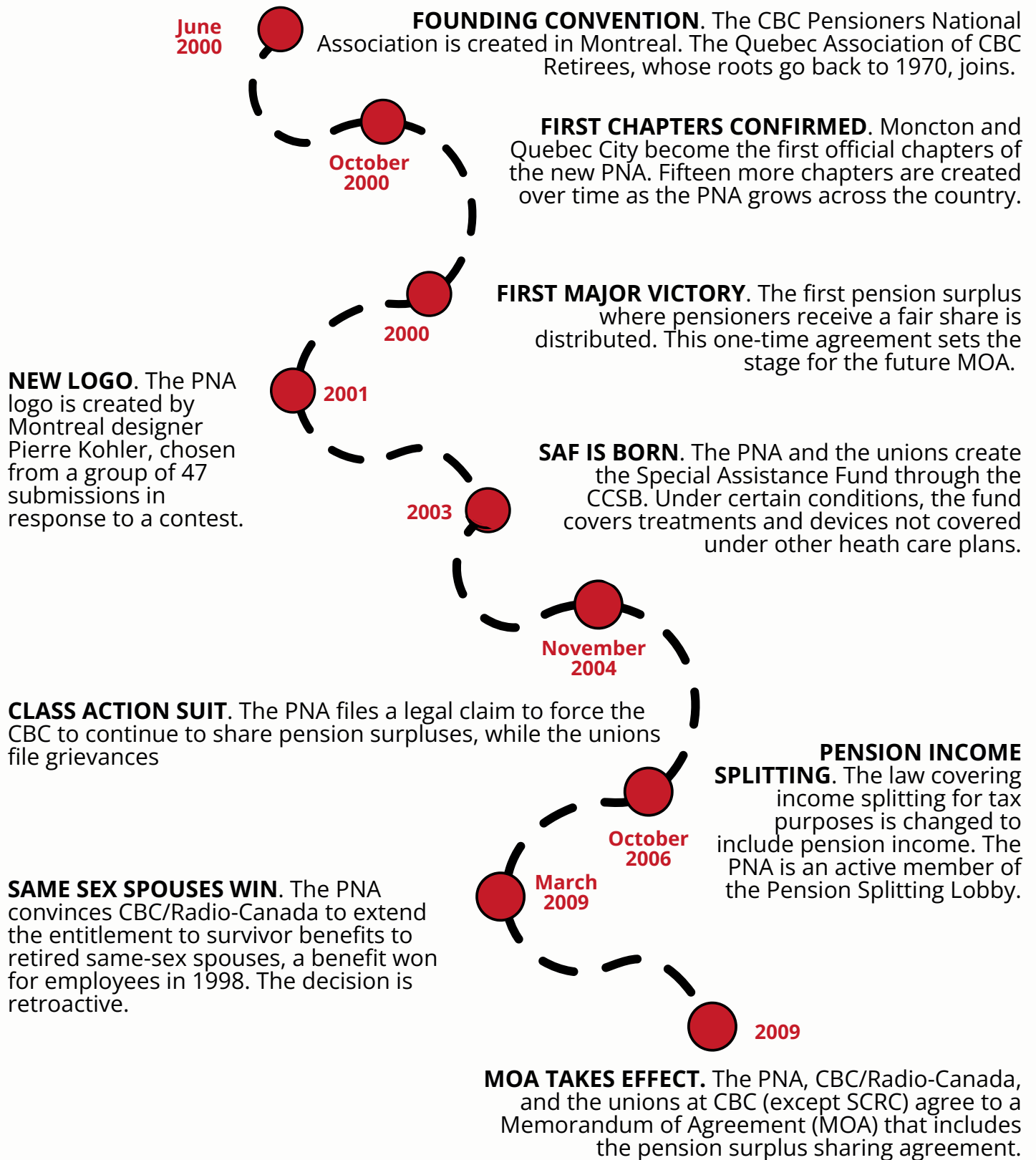
Assuming the pension regulator agrees, it is expected this payment will be made later this fall. The actual date will depend on the timing of that approval.

As further information becomes available members will be notified by email and information will be posted on the PNA website.

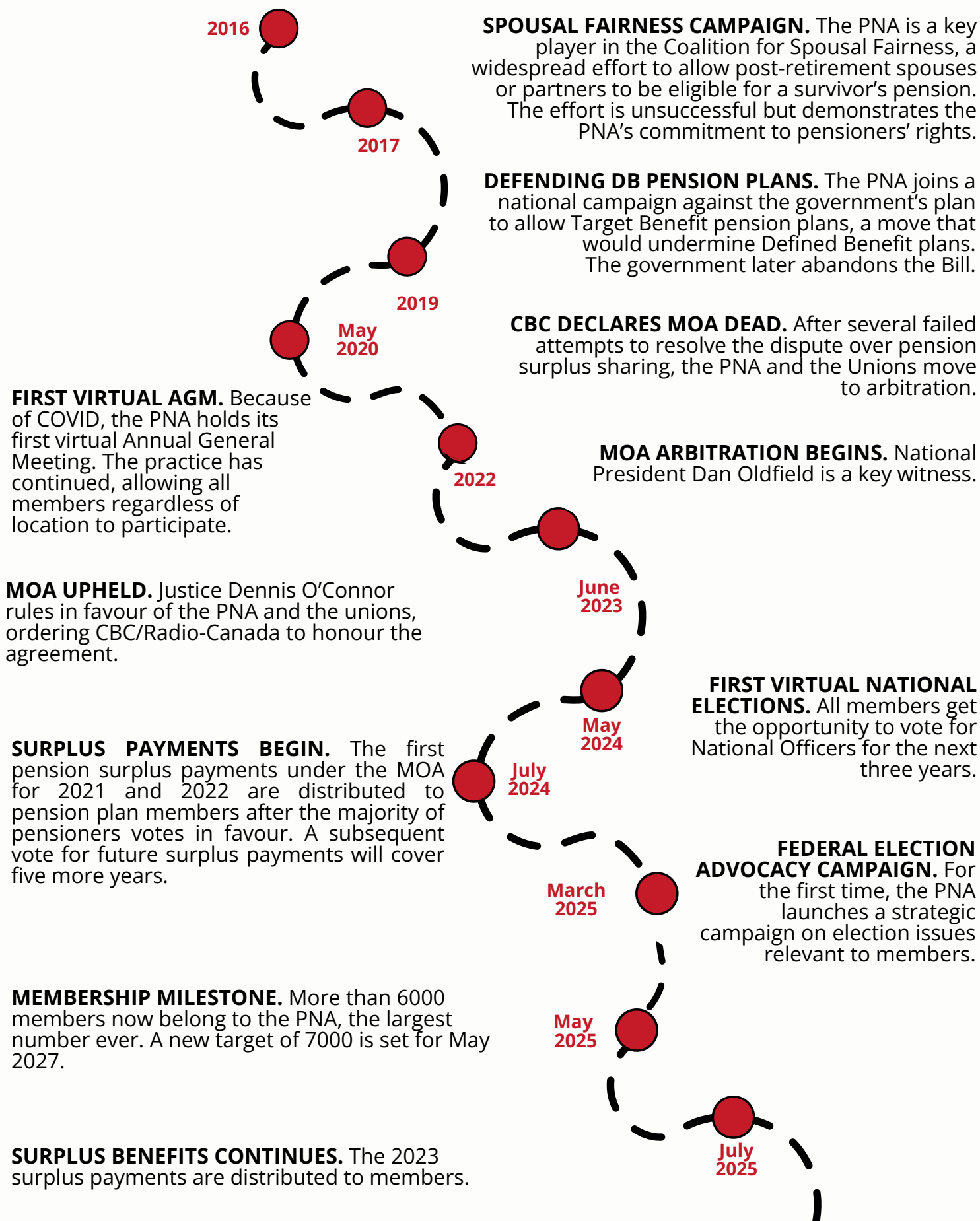
I wish all a fun filled, relaxing and fulfilling summer. I look forward to hearing from you as well.

Dan Oldfield

# The Road to Success: A Quarter Century of Milestones and Achievements







# Protecting What Matters: The Story Behind the CBC Pensioners National Association

by Susan Wood  
Contributor

It started in the late 1990s, when the CBC suddenly changed the game. The Corporation announced it would no longer share surpluses from the pension fund—a move that quietly ended a long-standing practice of providing occasional, much-appreciated top-ups of about \$500.00 each. After decades of dedicated service, retirees were left feeling uncertain about their long-term financial security

That move lit a spark.

Pierre Racicot, a former Vice-President of Human Resources at CBC, knew the inner workings of the system better than most. But this wasn't just business—it was personal. He and others saw a growing need for retirees to come together, speak with one voice, and stand up for what they had earned. What began as quiet concern quickly became a grassroots movement with one clear mission: protect the rights, benefits, and dignity of CBC retirees.

Racicot later said:

***"It wasn't just about money, it was about respect...  
about making sure no one gets left behind."***

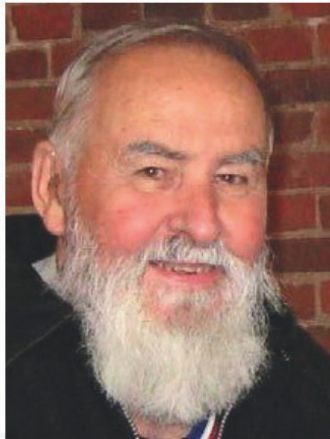
With passionate volunteers like Dianne St-Germain, Howard Simpson, John McKay, Jack Brownell, Jean-Paul Rouillard, and many others stepping up across the country, the idea of a national pensioners' association began to take shape. The turning point came in June 2000, when retirees from across Canada gathered in Montreal for a founding convention where the CBC Pensioners National Association (PNA) was officially born.



They started from scratch—drafting a constitution, electing a board, setting up regions to ensure retirees from every part of the country had a seat at the table. The goal was simple but powerful: give retirees a real voice in decisions that affect their pensions, their health benefits, and their lives. The founding members then reached out to pensioners from coast to coast.

In those early days, CBC helped with logistics—office space, mailing services, basic communication tools. But the journey wasn't always smooth. Many retirees were deeply loyal to the CBC and hesitant to get involved. Some worried the association might be adversarial toward CBC—a company they'd spent their lives building. That made messaging crucial. The PNA wasn't out to fight CBC—it was out to represent retirees, advocate for fairness, and build a better path forward. It worked. Within a year, nearly 60% of CBC retirees had joined the new association. As St-Germain put it, "That first outreach was critical. It helped us explain why collective action mattered—and why it was long overdue.

### **CBC Pensioners National Association Executives in 2000**



Don Waterston  
President



Denis Lamontagne  
Vice-President,  
Francophone



Bill Laing  
Vice-President,  
Anglophone



Larry O'Grady  
Treasurer

Early wins proved the power of working together. The PNA secured a seat at the table in discussions around pensions and medical benefits—no small feat. And when CBC agreed to deduct membership dues directly from pension payments, it gave the organization a strong foundation for the future.

Legal incorporation, a national office, and the official registration of the PNA logo followed. Through it all, Racicot remained a driving force, serving as the first Executive Director and helping the association find its feet.

A big part of the PNA's early success came from Quebec, where retirees had already built a strong association of their own - l'Association québécoise des retraités(es) de Radio-Canada. With the help of leaders like Raymond David and François Péladeau, many of their members joined the new national body, bringing with them strength, experience, and legitimacy.

It hasn't always been an easy relationship with CBC. There have been disagreements, tough conversations. But the PNA has never backed down. It continues to advocate—firmly, respectfully, and with a deep sense of purpose—for the rights of retirees who gave so much to Canadian broadcasting.

Today, the PNA stands strong because of the people who built it—and those who keep it going. Volunteers, advocates, organizers, and everyday members who understand that when we come together, we are far more powerful than we are alone.

***As Racicot put it:***

***"We believed in the value of what we had built—and in the importance of protecting it, together."***

## **PNA Members Gather Online for a Truly National AGM**

More than 120 members tuned in for the PNA's Annual General Meeting on May 15—held virtually via Zoom. Folks from across the country, including those in remote or rural areas, from the Yukon to Newfoundland and Labrador, it was a truly coast-to-coast gathering.

One of the meeting's big highlights was a detailed update from Duncan Burrill, Managing Director and CEO of the CBC Pension Plan. Duncan reported that the fund remains in great shape, with funding ratios comfortably above 150% and solvency ratios over 120%. The plan is solid and healthy. Members should be receiving surplus payments from 2023 on July 15, with 2024 payments expected in the fall.

**Did you know?**

**PNA members can take advantage of a range of discounts through our affinity programs.**

**For instance, we offer auto and home insurance with belairdirect, and as of July 1st, Medoc/Johnson travel insurance has been rebranded under belairdirect.**

**To learn more about all our partners and available offers, please visit our website at [www.cbcpensioners.ca](http://www.cbcpensioners.ca).**



PNA President Dan Oldfield also took the virtual stage, giving a rundown of what the national board has been up to over the past year. He shared an exciting milestone: more than 6,000 pensioners are now part of the Association, with 622 new members joining in just the first few months of 2024! That said, about 4,000 pensioners still haven't signed up. We encouraged everyone to reach out to former colleagues and encourage them to join the PNA.

National committees have also been hard at work. A brand-new website is on the way, and the Advocacy Committee provided key materials during the last federal election. The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is working on new guidelines and the Treasurer shared a positive, strong financial report.

**You can find the updated bylaws here:**  
**[bit.ly/44uYs7v](https://bit.ly/44uYs7v)**

**We made some key decisions to help modernize and grow the organization.**

**The Board gave the green light to the Communications Committee's proposal to rebuild our website from the ground up.**

**We're also partnering with a branding agency to give the PNA a fresh, updated look. And with plans to boost our presence on social media, we're aiming to be more visible, accessible, and engaging than ever.**

## **PNA National Board Looks Ahead and Sets Bold Goals**

by Gail Carducci  
PNA Vice-President, Anglophone

Twice a year, the National Board of Directors, committee Chairs, reps from the Consultative Committee on Staff Benefits and the CBC Pension Board of Trustees, come together to talk about where the CBC Pensioners National Association is headed.

These gatherings help keep the PNA strong, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our members across the country.

This year is a special one marking the 25th anniversary of the PNA! Our roots go back to 1985 when retired Radio-Canada employees in Montreal formed an early version of today's association. Looking ahead, we've set up a planning committee to prepare for a national members' gathering in 2027.

Now that governance tasks like elections are handled electronically, the focus will be on creating a dynamic PNA Leaders' Forum—a chance to connect, collaborate, and energize our volunteers and leaders for the future.



We also spent time discussing two important topics: how to get more members involved in the PNA's work, and how to better support those who are already giving their time and energy. Member engagement and succession planning are critical to keeping the organization vibrant and thriving.

As always, your national board is here for you open to hearing your ideas. Let's keep building a strong, welcoming, and future-ready association together.

**The PNA runs on the energy and enthusiasm of its amazing volunteers — and we'd love to have you on board!**

**If you'd like to pitch in, just drop us a line at [info@cbcpensioners.ca](mailto:info@cbcpensioners.ca). We'd be thrilled to hear from you!**



**Front row, left to right:** Jeannita Richard (Quebec), Geoff Turnbull (Maritimes), Pierre-Léon LaFrance (National VP, Francophone), Barbara Saxberg (Ontario), Dan Oldfield (President), Gail Carducci (National VP, Anglophone), Lilia Rassoul (Communications Officer), Micheline Provost (Quebec), Réjean Labrie (Treasurer), Talin Vartanian (Ontario).

**Back row left to right:** Lutz Walsh (Alberta, Sask., NWT), Ron Charles (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), Jon Soper (Nfld./Labrador, and representative on the CBC Pension Board), Frank Machovec (Manitoba), John Mang (B.C. and Yukon), Marc-Philippe Laurin (National Capital), Jean-Claude Labrecque (Quebec).

**Photo by Renato Sicoli.**

# Life In Motion

## What Our Members Are Up To

### Living the Encore: Suzanne Kennelly's Creative Revival

Suzanne Kennelly, a longtime Radio-Canada host turned singer-songwriter, brings French-language jazz to life in Manitoba. Her debut EP earned a Trille Or nomination, and she's performed at the Winnipeg Jazz Festival, with the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra, and Mardi Jazz. Also active in theatre, Suzanne appears regularly at Prairie Theatre Exchange and Gabrielle-Roy House.



Suzanne Kennelly  
performing a jazz piece

Find Suzanne's work at : [www.bit.ly/3lrbfAh](http://www.bit.ly/3lrbfAh)



André Coupal and two of his  
stage "partners in crime":  
Nicole Laurin and  
Françoise Savard

### Stage of a Lifetime: André Coupal's Return to Theatre

After retiring from a long career at Radio-Canada, André Coupal rediscovered his passion for theatre by joining La Belle Gang, a seniors' troupe that stages socially engaged plays on topics like elder abuse, caregiving, and bullying.

Blending humour with real-life stories, their performances—followed by audience discussions—have reached over 20 cities across Quebec. For André, it's more than a creative outlet; it's a meaningful way to connect, heal, and spark conversation.

Find André's work at : [www.tinyurl.com/2st97zwm](http://www.tinyurl.com/2st97zwm)

### In Perfect Harmony: Hal Higgins' Barbershop Legacy

For 38 years, Hal Higgins was a familiar CBC Cape Breton voice, but his lifelong passion has always been barbershop singing. Now celebrating 45 years with the Cape Breton Chordsmen—42 as director—Hal discovered the genre during frosh week at Mount Allison. Since then, he's never stopped. Even in retirement, he plans music and performances daily, including a standout 115-voice finale at the Savoy Theatre in 2022.

What drives him? "Some join thinking they can't sing—then they catch fire."

Find Hal's work at : [www.cbchordsmen.ca](http://www.cbchordsmen.ca)



Hal Higgins accepts the Roger  
Cooper trophy for the top  
barbershop chorus in Atlantic  
Canada for 2025 on behalf of  
the Cape Breton Chordsmen.

## Letters to the Editor - Your Voice Matters!

### Have something to say?

We'd love to hear from you! Whether it's a response to an article, a personal story, or thoughts on issues that matter to our community, share your perspective with us.

Selected letters may be featured in a future edition of our newsletter.

Reach us at : [info@cbcpensioners.ca](mailto:info@cbcpensioners.ca)



## 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  
[lafrancepl@hotmail.com](mailto:lafrancepl@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)

Jeannita Richard  
Director, Quebec  
[jarichard09@gmail.com](mailto:jarichard09@gmail.com)

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)

