

PENSIONER

NEWSLETTER

*A Publication of the Newfoundland and Labrador
Public Sector Pensioners' Association*

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Sharron Callahan

2011 will be a year of intense activity for your Association. As you know, last fall we began a public information campaign addressing the deliberate confusion that Government has been advancing to sway public opinion in favour of its steadfast refusal to remedy your pension benefit issues.

The NLPSPA and our Coalition partners continued this campaign into the new year. We have done interviews and now we are gearing up with a concerted strategy to take our message “on the road” and hold a series of pensioner meetings all across the Province, including visits to Labrador. Wherever you live in our Province, we will need your help to facilitate these meetings, to pass the message along, to solicit meeting space, and to encourage all citizens to come out and show their support. By the time this message reaches your home, we will have collected all the petitions that were circulating throughout the Province and these will have been readied for presentation when the House of Assembly reopens.

On January 28, your Association along with the RTANL and NAPE Retirees Local 7002 made a joint presentation during the Pre-Budget Consultations. Unfortunately, while our presentation was grounded in sound argument and focused on the Government’s ethical and legal obligations to right the past wrongs against public sector pensioners we did not receive a positive response from the Minister of Finance. Despite this reception, we will continue our struggle to have Government recognize its obligations to its former employees and we will update you all in future issues of this newsletters and when a public meeting is held in your location.

It is easy to get discouraged by the lack of progress with Government on our issues. I pledge to you to remain steadfast and I also urge you to keep your resolve high, to spread the word of the injustices of the past, tell your family, your friends and your communities about our struggle and when the 2011 Election candidates knock on your door, be sure to ask them for their position on the resolution of our pension issues.

I trust your winter is not too difficult and that we will all soon enjoy warmer temperatures with longer daylight hours and bright spring sunshine.

Sharron Callahan, President

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

For more detailed information on the Association’s activities,
visit our website at www.nlpspa.ca

Mandate Statement:

The Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association exists to ensure that pensioners have improved pensions and insured benefits that will contribute to a better quality of life.

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YOUR ASSOCIATION, YOUR ADVOCATE

By Jerry Vink, Executive Director

Your Association has been extremely active in promoting your concerns. Moreover, plans are being made to continue this during the rest of this year.

At the same time the Office continues to improve our support functions, notably those associated with the database – a key tool in communicating with you. One example was the recent by-election in Humber West when we were able to extract the addresses of our members resident in that electoral district. Thus, we were able to send information relevant to contacting the local candidates.

When we conclude our redesign and reconfiguration of the database, we will be able to produce new membership cards for everyone.

Our Association continues to grow. In February of 2011 our membership has passed 6240 people, not counting Associate Members.

This growth in membership brings with it an obligation to advocate on your behalf in a respectful and responsible, yet firm manner. This is especially relevant considering the recent Auditor General's concerns about unfunded liabilities of the Pension Plan and the increase in liabilities related to health and life insurance benefits. (*See the Association's Pre-Budget Consultation Position Paper on our Website, www.nlpspa.ca and the link to the AG Report*)

We must continue to press ahead with Government to meet its legal, financial and ethical obligations. The A.G.'s Report is a warning that must not be ignored.

The proposed *Pension Improvement Strategy* reproduced in this newsletter is an indication of our willingness to step up to the plate on this matter. It behoves our former employer to take note and recognize that it must come to term with past failures and meet with us in an open and respectful manner to rectify the injustices of the past, the effects of which are continuing to haunt us to this day.

WE NEED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESSES

To send you information as quickly as possible when events demand speedy action and to keep you up to date on developing issues and activities, send us a simple email to pensioners@npspa.ca asking to be placed on the contact list.

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

In past years, the NLPSPA and the Coalition have made annual presentations during the Pre-Budget Consultations. Again, in January of 2011, a submission was prepared.

A few days prior to the consultation date, the Auditor-General indicated his concerns with the serious underfunding of the Pension Fund. As well, the AG pointed to future problems for the Fund to meet its financial and insurance related obligations.

This necessitated additions to our already planned pre-budget presentation. It forced us to shift the emphasis to a *Pension Improvement Strategy* that aimed at a more consultative approach to deal with the underfunding and the fact that the Pension Fund should be based on assets that include those contributions that were never paid into the pooled funds due to earlier Government decisions.

Pension Improvement Strategy:

The Pensioners' Coalition requests the Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to:

- A. Acknowledge its obligations to its former employees by committing to remediate the issues that public sector pensioners have been articulating for the past 21 years;
- B. Set in place a Government & Pensioners' Coalition Liaison Committee, distinct from the Government's Pension Investment Committee, to assess and recommend solutions with regard to these continuing issues, including compensation to pensioners for their losses due to the actions of past Governments' non-investment of the pension fund as required by its contract with its former and current workers;

- C. Arrange to meet with representatives of the Pensioners' Coalition to discuss the escalating costs for the management of the Pooled Pension Fund, including but not limited to, the costs associated with the Pensions Division of Government and the costs associated with the investment of the funds of the Pooled Pension Fund, both of which are liabilities against the Pooled Pension Fund;
- D. Initiate an accounting in relation to the operations of the Pooled Pension Fund and its predecessors and profits accruing thereby to the pensioners;
- E. Immediately commit to financing the Pooled Pension Fund to current expected funding values by providing restitution/repayment of any and all monies belonging in equity to the Pooled Pension Fund.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Nominations Committee is currently accepting nominations for election to the Association's Board of Directors. Elections will be held during the Annual General Meeting scheduled for September, 2011 in St. John's.

The Association needs committed Board Members with effective communication and interpersonal skills as well as leadership skills. If you are interested in being nominated for elections to the Board or if you would like to nominate another member, please contact the NLPSPA Office at (709) 754 5730, 1-800 563-4188, fax (709) 754-5790, or e-mail: pensioners@npspa.ca. Up to date information on the work of NLPSPA is available at our website, www.nlpspa.ca.

Nominations Committee Chair, Tom Cooper

PROTECTING YOUR HOME AND BELONGINGS

By Michelle Ivany

Wanting to “get away from it all” is a common sentiment. If you don't take precautions while you're away, however, you may return home to a more worrying situation than you'd left originally.

Dark houses, full mailboxes, and snowy driveways are telltale signs that you're not at home. To protect yourself against burglary, there are a number of measures you can implement. For instance, when your mailbox is full, it's an indication the house or apartment is vacant. Replace a small mailbox with a larger one, have a neighbour take in your mail, or arrange for Canada Post to hold your mail. Call the newspaper to stop delivery until you return.

In the summer, ask someone to mow the lawn, or in the winter, shovel the walk and clear the snow off your car. Ask a neighbour to keep an eye out for anything suspicious, and give someone you trust a set of keys so they can check your house periodically. Keep your car in your driveway, or if you're taking your car with you, ask your neighbour to park in your driveway.

Set lights on timers in various rooms. Timers are inexpensive and effective, especially the multiple-program type. Illuminate the house at different times each day, so a burglar can't pick up on a pattern. Motion sensor lights outside can also startle burglars; consider installing them at the front and back of your house.

If you are going to be away from your home for more than 4 consecutive days, especially in the winter season, you should have someone check your home to ensure that heating is being maintained **and/or** shut off the water supply and drain all the pipes and appliances. Otherwise, your insurance coverage could be compromised. If you plan to rent a car while you are away, be sure to contact your

insurance provider if you want the rental coverage applied to your insurance policy.

Consider your belongings – the items you have collected over the years. Can you name every article you have in your home? Take the time now to make a record of your possessions and minimize the worry later.

Completing a home inventory will make the claims process much quicker and easier. Keep any bills, receipts, warranties and instruction manuals; they can serve as proof of ownership. Store these in a safe place – not in your home. You should also keep your inventory away from your home; ensure it is in a safe place such as a fire-proof box or safety deposit box, and review it annually. If you do suffer a loss, it will make filing a claim much easier. Use a tape recorder, video camera or digital camera to speed up the process, or use a company that specializes in videotaping belongings.

A useful home inventory tool, Know Your Stuff™, is available from the Insurance Bureau of Canada. This service allows users to create and maintain an accurate home inventory. The Know Your Stuff™ tool builds a room-by-room record of belongings and calculate replacement costs. Check it out at http://www.knowyourstuff.org/iii/ibc_login.html.

More tips:

- Don't leave notes on your door saying you're away; it advertises your house is unattended.
- Use deadbolt locks and ensure all doors, windows and garage doors are locked.
- Protect items that hold sentimental value. Put jewellery and other valuables in a safety deposit box while you're gone.

Michelle Ivany is Manager - Customer Care with Anthony Insurance in St. John's.

UPDATE ON THE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

The Publicity Campaign to highlight our members' pension related concerns began in September of 2010 and was largely completed in February 2011.

Press Conference: The Campaign was launched at the September 2010 convention. A press conference was conducted by Bob Langdon (NLPSPA), Ralph Morris (NAPE Retirees' Local 7002) and Jim Dobson (RTANL). And focussed on three issues:

1. Government broke the contract with its pensioners;
2. Pensioners, not Government, pay for the pension division and the management of the pension funds;
3. Pension enhancements are based on the original employment contract.

Letters-to-the-Editor: Four letters were sent and published in the *Telegram*. The first three letters were also published in six local newspapers, at the same time that our advertisements were published and the radio spots were aired.

Letters to the MHA's: The letters to the MHA's, including the *Pension Improvement Strategy*, the response to the Auditor General's concerns with the Pooled Pension Fund and the Pension Fact Sheet were sent in February of 2011.

Radio/Newspaper Information Spots: Four short radio information spots were developed and broadcast throughout the province on the VOXM network. Each spot was broadcast 50 times over a three-week cycle. In total, our messages were broadcast 200 times (4 cycles).

The same messages were published in 6 local newspapers, in the *Telegram*, and in the *Herald*

Supplemental Activities – Face Book and In-depth Interviews: For the first time in the Association's history, we have set up a Face Book page to ask

people to support the petition and to encourage their family members and friends to join the campaign.

Rogers Cable broadcast an in-depth interview with Sharron Callahan, NLPSPA President, and Ralph Morris, NAPE Retirees President, on their **Out of the Fog** program.

Petition Campaign: The Petition forms were distributed at the convention, upon request from the office, on the Website and as inserts in the December newsletter. The Coalition Partners also circulated the same petition through their respective newsletters and communications systems.

At this time we are winding up this part of the Strategy. It is intended that we will be submitting the petitions during March when the House of Assembly resumes its deliberations. As of February 18, 2011 the NLPSPA has received 4000 signatures, NAPE Retirees' Local 7002 has received 1700 and the RTANL has received 2800.

Develop a Future Strategy for 2011: The Pension Action Committee of NLPSPA has taken the lead in this area. During the last months of 2010, they developed an Election Strategy to be implemented in 2011 leading up to the provincial election.

The Election Strategy blueprint has gone through various revisions, was then adopted by the Board of Directors of the NLPSPA and eventually by the Pensioners' Coalition. If it can be implemented as planned, it should prove to be a comprehensive successor to the 2010 Publicity Campaign.

The Humber West By-Election: The Coalition intervened in the by-election in Humber West. Besides an advertisement in the *Western Star*, the Association and its partners sent out individual letters to our respective members in the District asking them to ensure that our pension concerns continue to be raised. As well, we circulated an updated version of the *Did You Know* Fact Sheet.



Volunteers in Action

We have started the preparations for the 2011 AGM and Convention to be held at the Holiday Inn on Sept 18, 19 and 21st. This demanding task can only be achieved with the support of volunteers such as the following members:

Barbara Barclay
Phyllis Feltham
Neil Hamilton
Doug Neary

Eileen Hatch
Berkley Reynolds
Blandina Snow

BOARD CHANGES

Pat Roberts, Board Member and Convention Chair resigned from our Board due to personal and professional demands on her time. She did an outstanding job organizing the very successful convention in 2010 and made substantial contributions to the Association as a Board member since being elected in 2008. Her participation will be greatly missed.

Subsequently to Ms. Roberts' resignation, the Board met in a special session and appointed Mr. Ralph Morris to serve the remainder of her term until September 2011. At that time, Mr. Morris can choose to stand for election for a new and full term.



If you're an NL Public Sector Pensioner...

With NLPSPA member PERKS you get more

At Anthony, we appreciate your contributions. If you're retired - or plan to retire in the next five years - as a Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association Member, you are entitled to PERKS - exclusive savings and benefits from Anthony Insurance that could save you \$1000's.

- ✓ **Exclusive Auto Savings**
As an NLPSPA Member, you get an exclusive, additional discount on your auto insurance.
- ✓ **Enhanced Home Protection**
At no additional charge, your home liability protection is increased from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000.
- ✓ **Maximum Home Discounts**
Get your exclusive member discount plus your discount limit is increased to 55%.
- ✓ **Other Special Rewards**
Combine home and auto to receive vanishing deductibles and more claims enhancements.
- ✓ **Better Driving Coverage**
For Members only, we'll add Emergency Road Service protection to your auto policy.

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THE BIG WINNER AT KANANASKIS: LITTLE CANADA

The following is an excerpt from a column by Jeffrey Simpson, published in the Globe and Mail on December 22, 2010. It deals with the creation of a national securities regulator and changes to CPP. We have reproduced only that section that deals with the background to the discussions on changes to the CPP

The Alberta-Quebec alliance at the core of the opposition to a national securities regulator also scuttled expansion of the Canada Pension Plan at Kananaskis.

Increasing CPP premiums, and subsequent benefits, had been Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's preferred option. It was a sensible, low-cost option that would help low-income Canadians by using a vehicle they all know, and in which investments are made by an existing arm's-length agency (the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board).

Two-thirds of the provinces representing two-thirds of the population are required for CPP changes, and Alberta and Quebec blocked those changes. So Mr. Flaherty retreated to a less desirable voluntary scheme for the self-employed or those who work for a company without a pension plan. This entity would be controlled by the banks and other financial institutions. Any guess why they liked the idea so much?

Let's remember that Ted Morton, Alberta's Finance Minister, used to argue that Alberta should withdraw from the CPP and create its own plan. He, with now-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, was also one of the authors of the infamous "firewall" letter that urged Alberta to defend itself against federal incursions and intrusions.

So is anyone surprised that Mr. Morton doesn't want to use the CPP to protect Canadians' retirement incomes? He says that, given the fragility of our times, it's not an appropriate moment to raise premiums.

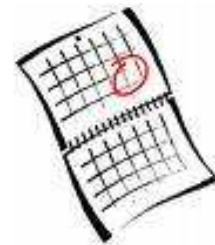
That argument is also being advanced by Quebec, but it is camouflage for the province's deeper objections to Ottawa (and other provinces) acting at all. If Quebec's and Alberta's objections about timing were serious – that a premium increase would be too economically stressful – then governments could agree that the increase could

start in, say, 2013, or when the economy has improved by certain measurable standards.

Curiously, there seems to be an aversion among governments to easing future retirement costs by raising the age of retirement. Australia, France and the United States have already done so, lifting the age for future receipt of public pensions. Other countries are pondering similar moves. In Canada, for reasons one presumes are all about political fear, the issue isn't even on the table.

It's an odd kind of blind spot, because the average life expectancy of Canadians has risen 4.3 years since the inception of the CPP in 1966. Since then, premiums and benefits have increased, the investment of the CPP money has been put in the hands of an arm's-length investment agency, and now debate swirls again around benefits and payouts. We've been willing to modify other elements of the CPP, but no one apparently will touch the issue of raising the retirement age.

Summer Barbecue



The summer barbecue is going to be held on
Friday, June 24th, 2011
at the Knights of Columbus, St. Clare Ave.

Prices to be announced.

Entertainment to be provided
by Gary Lawrence.

MANDATORY RETIREMENT

The following is an extract of an article entitled "Mandatory Retirement February 2010 Update" found on the CARP website.

While a few provinces allow pension plans to create discriminatory situations, the Canadian Human Rights Act still allows employers to terminate employees because they have reached the "normal age of retirement" for employees working in similar positions. This means that mandatory retirement is openly permitted in federally regulated industries and that it affects some 840, 000 workers, or, 10% of all Canadian workers.

As human rights should be universally protected, this creates an unacceptable circumstance.

The federal government is violating older workers' right to choose when they want to retire, which is central to the protection of their equality, the promotion of their dignity, and the enhancement of their financial security. Forced retirement based solely on age amounts to a violation of older workers' human rights.

Forcing people to retire despite being willing and fully qualified to continue working is age discrimination. So with the recent decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that mandatory retirement offends the Charter; it should just stop, right? Well, not so fast.

George Vilven and Robert Kelly are two airline pilots who were forced to retire and decided to fight back by taking their case to the courts. They lost earlier cases but won in a landmark Federal Court case in 2009.

In finding that section 15(1)(c) of the CHRA violates the Charter, the Court said the provision "can only serve to perpetuate the stereotypical view that older workers are less capable, or are less deserving of recognition or value as human beings or as members of Canadian society."

But now, rather than accepting the Tribunal's ruling, *Air Canada* is appealing the decision.

Meanwhile, the pilots' union, the Air Canada Pilots Association, instead of remaining neutral, is supporting the age discrimination against the older pilots so that younger pilots can get ahead.

The very least the federal government can do is change the law already determined by the Tribunal to be contrary to the Charter.

And in fact, shortly after the Vilven and Kelly ruling, the Hon. Raymonde Folco, Official Opposition Critic for La Francophonie, drafted a Private Member's Bill to end Mandatory Retirement in federally regulated industries. **Bill C-481** has passed first reading and, since it is a Private Member's Bill, it did not die on the order paper when the Prime Minister decided to prorogue Parliament.

Although bill C-481 would do the job, it is unlikely it will see the light of day unless it can garner cross-party support. If you want to help put an end to mandatory retirement you can write to your MP as well as the Prime Minister to ask them to make bill C-481 a priority and start the process of ending age discrimination once and for all.

Social Services Reunion

Did you work with the Department of
Social Services before 1998?

Interested in a fun reunion?

Join us May 14, 2011 at the Elks Club,
Carpasian Road, St. John's, NL.

For more information, contact
socialservices.reunion@gmail.com .

REAL PATIENT-CARE REFORM COULD BE A MOUSE CLICK AWAY

The following is an extract of an article by André Picard, Globe and Mail, Nov. 12, 2010

At the Group Health Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, ON, paper records are a quaint relic, stored away for historical purposes. The pioneering clinic has had electronic medical records since 1997.

“When we started out we had paper charts and we longed for something more legible, more complete and more accessible, so computerization seemed like the way to go,” said Lewis O'Brien, a family physician with the Algoma District Medical Group at the GHC.

Being only a mouse-click away from medical charts, test results, diagnostic images and prescription drug information saves time, reduces waste and duplication, and improves safety, he says.

Currently about half of Canadians have their health information stored in some electronic form, but that statistic overstates progress.

The real challenge is to link disparate systems so that every Canadian has a single electronic health record that stays with them for life and that is accessible (appropriately, of course) to all health professionals.

A point of definition: An electronic medical record is a file that exists in one location; an electronic health record exists when all the components are linked.

In Canada right now, about 50 per cent of citizens have an electronic medical record – meaning information stored in electronic form – but only 17 per cent have an electronic health record – one that contains all their essential health information.

According to Canada Infoway, there are electronic medical records in about 37 per cent of physician's

offices, 65 per cent of hospitals and nearly 100 per cent of pharmacies.

Expanding those numbers is relatively easy but it's not cheap. Over the past seven years, more than \$3-billion has been invested in electronic health records and twice as much again is probably required to complete the task.

Physicians have been slowest on the uptake: Some balk at the cost, while others are set in their paper ways.

The provinces have responded with incentive programs to speed the switch to electronic records. Some jurisdictions buy computers and software outright for physicians, while others require them to have electronic records to claim incentive payments for screening like Pap tests.

The final piece of the puzzle, the connections to get at the records, is the most complex. Because there are a multitude of systems around the country (and often within hospitals), it can be a challenge to get them speaking the same language.

There are also concerns over privacy: ensuring that electronic health records are only accessible to appropriate health professionals. This is done with passwords and varying levels of system access.

But, ultimately, Dr. O'Brien says, electronic records are far safer and secure than paper records.

Mr. Alvarez, for his part, says patients are increasingly demanding electronic health records because they know they improve their care. He is also confident that electronic health records will soon be the norm.

“Is the job done? Absolutely not,” he said. “But this is going to happen. We're past the tipping point.”

PENSIONS ARE A DEBATE FOR EVERYONE

By Sharron Callahan as published in the Telegram of February 5th, 2011

In response to Dan Kelly's letter to the editor, "Setting the Record Straight on Pensions," published in The Weekend Telegram on Jan. 15, I offer my support to bringing "the pension discussion back to reality."

I would add that there needs to be free and transparent sharing of information about the government proposals being advanced and what would appear to be back-room discussions by business lobby groups with a self-serving interest that does nothing to advance the interests of the ordinary retired citizen of Canada. There needs to be a public debate about improvements to the CPP system.

The public needs to know what is being discussed between federal and provincial government officials and between federal officials and the business, banking and investment communities of our great country.

This discussion must be conducted in a reasonable and respectful manner and must avoid stereotyping and misrepresentation of so-called "gold-plated pension plans" of public sector workers.

It is true that a small number of retired government politicians and senior level bureaucrats may have inflated pensions, but these are not the ordinary citizens of our country. Maybe Mr. Kelly would have been well advised to first have read The Telegram article "The Re-Invention of Retirement," January. 18.

While this article is written from a global perspective, it is also a fair representation of the changing dynamic of retirement in Canada.

The reality for public sector pensioners in Newfoundland and Labrador is quite different from the one portrayed by Mr. Kelly.

Recently, the member organizations of the Pensioners' Coalition in our province have been raising the issue of the management of our

provincial pension fund in the public domain, especially since our provincial government, for 22 years, has stalemated productive discussions to remedy the inappropriate usage of our pension fund dollars and past government decisions to take holidays on their agreed contributions and their imposition of wage freezes and wage roll-backs.

For many provincial government pensioners, inflation has eroded pensions to the point that some are facing severe hardship.

For others who retired during the wage freezes of 1989 to 1997, pensions are depressed for the reasons indicated above, all through no fault of former public service workers. Eroding value Consider the fact that a fixed pension income loses 30 per cent of its purchasing power every 10 years. A public servant in our province who retired in 1982 with a pension of \$17,500 now has the purchasing power of that pension depressed to just \$7,289 today.

Our members appreciate that improving pensions will be difficult but improvement must be encouraged and supported in the best interests of the ordinary citizen of our country and must involve those organizations that represent these retired groups in Canada.

Governments must stand up for its citizens. Canada cannot afford not to put more dollars into CPP, given the issues of poverty we hear so frequently about in our land of plenty.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association and the members of our affiliated Pensioners' Coalition insist there must be a public debate and transparent disclosure of proposals under discussion.

Only retired persons know the impact the proposals for reform will have and these ordinary men and women who are now retired, or will soon be, demand respect from all persons engaged in this important debate.

BACK TO SCHOOL AT 82

Excerpt from an article by Barb Sweet, published in the Telegram on February 24, 2011

Sitting in the front row of a Memorial University geography class, Herb Burton is surrounded by students young enough to be his great-grandchildren.

And he's more than twice as old as Prof. Josh Lepawsky.

Slight, white-haired Burton is among a class of roughly 70 students, mostly in their late teens and early 20s.

And while they are taking the course for credit, Burton is only auditing it, meaning it won't count towards a degree.

But he wants to change all that and has been lobbying the Department of Education and MUN to bring back free tuition for seniors.

Burton, who took some marketing courses years ago while employed with Brookfield Dairy, wants to get a Bachelor of Arts degree, and argues many retirees can't do that because of the financial burden.

MUN dropped free tuition for seniors in 1996 because of fiscal restraint, said spokesman Ivan Muzychka.

"Memorial's tuition is already very low, and while the issue comes up occasionally, the university is not considering reinstating the waiver," he told *The Telegram*.

Burton said the classes — he's already audited several, including English, Philosophy and Sociology — keep his mind fresh and helps him stave off dementia-type diseases.

In 2007, *Science Daily* and other media reported the University of California-Irvine's discovery that learning appears to slow the development of two brain lesions that are the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease, suggesting that the elderly, by keeping their minds active, can help delay the onset of the degenerative disease.

"If I give up, the Government is going to be paying \$5,000 a day to look after me for dementia," said Burton, who finished his working life in chaplaincy at Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick.

Lepawsky said older students like Burton make the classes better.

"It's potentially a much richer source for discussion," he said.

"A lot of the events that we are talking about in the Geography class — because it tends to be very current-event oriented — current events have histories. But the older folks in the class lived through them as opposed to just reading about them in a textbook."

At 38, Lepawsky admits to sometimes being a bit nervous around much older students.

"What do I really know? I've only read about these things, too," he laughs, when talking about their first-hand knowledge.

He agrees there should be a tuition break for seniors.

"It seems like as a public institution there is a responsibility to the community, and people post-retirement have contributed their entire working lives to the tax system which supports public education. It's hard to imagine it would be some kind of burden on the system," Lepawsky said.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Education acknowledges Burton did meet with senior officials and was advised by former Minister Darin King that MUN is responsible for admissions and developing any tuition incentives for seniors.

However, the Department said it's following up with MUN on whether there are ways to collaborate to promote seniors' learning.

2010

Convention Partners



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