

PENSIONER

NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 22, Number 3

Convention Edition

August 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Sharron Callahan

I hope that all your plans for a wonderful relaxing summer have been what you had hoped they would be and that you have had multiple opportunities to enjoy time with family and friends, probably some time at the cabin, an occasional BBQ when the weather permitted, or even some sightseeing around our wonderful Province or farther afield to parts of Canada or elsewhere.

This summer I have been privileged to do some personal travelling, having been to Scotland for a World Conference with Girl Guides of Canada, to Nova Scotia where I have family, to Toronto, and finally to Florida, this time for a relaxing family holiday. Even though the summer has been personally delightful, your Association and our Coalition partners, however, have remained busy, preparing for the next onslaught of our issues, starting early in September when we resume our public meetings on the Southern Shore.

Return visits to other key locations across the Province will take place after the Convention, during the week of September 26-29. Planning for these local meetings has already begun and more information will be made available at the

Convention, through local media, and through the local organizing committees. The presentations that Ralph Morris and I did in the first round of these meetings have now posted to our website at www.nlpspa.ca

Planning is well underway for our Association's AGM and Convention, September 18 (AGM) and 19-20 (Convention), at the Holiday Inn, St. Johns. This Convention will be a turning point for us as we update you on all that has been happening and engage your support and involvement for the remaining three to four weeks of key activities leading up to the provincial election on October 11. We expect to have strong support from the unions at this Convention; we will launch our election theme; provide you with an election strategy lapel button; and, also provide you with some very interesting presentations to help you make healthy lifestyle and living choices. Information to register is contained further in this newsletter.

So mark your calendar for these crucial dates in September and come join us for what will be the rallying point for all public sector pensioners for the next month as we challenge all those seeking election to political office to state their position on your pension concerns. Public sector pensioners are a force to reckon with and WE WILL BE HEARD.

Sharron Callahan, President

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.

Executive:

President – Sharron Callahan
Vice President – Bernard Cook
Treasurer – Tony Patey
Secretary – Ann Bell
Past President – Robert Langdon

Directors:

Bill Shallow
Dorothy Robbins
Eric Salter
Freeman Pope
Ralph Morris
Rick Bouzan
Tom Mills
Wesley Roberts

Staff:

Jerry Vink – Executive Director (Editor)
MaryAnn Chafe – Office Clerk (Layout and Design)

Contact Us:

446 Newfoundland Drive, Suite 206
St. John's, NL, A1A 4G7
Telephone: 754 – 5730
Toll Free: 800 -563 – 4188
E-mail: pensioners@npspa.ca
Website: www.nlpspa.ca

Advertising Policy:

The Association reserves the right to refuse advertising, or to edit them in consultation with the advertisers. The Association does not endorse or promote any product or service presented in paid advertisements unless so specified.

THE ENEMY AT THE GATE

By Jerry Vink, Executive Director

In this edition of the newsletter, there is an article by Lana Payne that notes that we are constantly reminded by government and business leaders, as well as by pundits with conservative credentials, that “society cannot afford pensions”. A similar concern is identified by Tony Patey in his contribution.

Pensions, especially Defined Benefit Pensions are under attack from many quarters.

Yet, what is the true story?

Despite statements by spokespersons of Boards of Trade or Employers' Councils, the Canada Pension Plan and other well-managed public and private pension plans seem to be fulfilling their mandates. They are proving that DB pensions are not pipedreams and can ensure that pensioners have a reasonable retirement.

To counter these assaults, this year's NLPSPA convention is dedicated to defining our challenges.

One challenge is to defend those benefits that you paid for through your monthly contributions. Although your pension is not in danger, the same cannot be said for the medical and related coverage. These services can easily be amended to include users' fees or co-payment provisions.

Another challenge is to assist those who are coming after us. As we delve deeper into the history of our pension plans, questions keep cropping up. *Ex Gratia* pensions, transfers of unfunded liabilities and similar practices must be brought to light.

There is a third challenge. As Canadians, we are committed to a caring and just society based on respect. Thus we have to speak out on matters that are important to everyone. This includes how people are treated when they become sick and old, housing for those who are poor, decent nutrition for everyone, Long-Term Care, health and retirement benefits and health and social wellness.

The forces that want to dismantle our “caring” society and replace it with an ego-centric one must be opposed by a commitment to foster a humane society. That is probably the greatest challenge and one that our past work for the common good qualifies us to speak out on.

CPPIB AIMS TO BE A SELLER, NOT A BUYER

Tara Perkins, Globe and Mail, Friday, May 20, 2011

The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board intends to be a seller, not a buyer, in the year ahead, as the deal-making market shifts into high gear.

CPPIB took part as a buyer in the largest global private equity transactions of both 2009 and 2010, with the takeovers of Tomkins PLC and IMS Health Inc. And it is in the enviable position of being one of the few pension funds that is not currently grappling with a funding shortfall, meaning that it still has the ability to chase riskier investments. But its executives say they plan to focus on managing the assets that they already have, and selling some that they are ready to part with, in fiscal 2012.

That's because the return of credit and liquidity is causing a bidding frenzy for assets, raising prices and decreasing the potential investment returns, said Mark Wiseman, CPPIB's executive vice-president of investments. And a steady run in the stock markets is leading to higher price expectations among sellers.

The latest example of that was this week's initial public offering of LinkedIn Corp. The social networking company's shares soared above \$100 (U.S.) in their first day of trading, up from their IPO price of \$45.

"When markets are like that, and as buoyant as that, it's a good time to be a seller," CPPIB's president and chief executive officer David Denison said in an interview.

If conditions continue, then CPPIB will look at taking some of its private-equity investments public, he added. The pension plan began investing in private equity in 2001, and had \$22.7-billion

worth of assets in this class as of March 31, which was the end of its 2011 fiscal year.

That's up from \$14.1-billion at the end of fiscal 2010.

Another sign of the current deal-making environment occurred this month, after the end of CPPIB's latest fiscal year, when Microsoft Corp. announced its \$8.5-billion (U.S.) deal for Skype Technologies. CPPIB had been part of an investor group that bought a 65-per-cent stake in Skype from eBay in late 2009, and the pension fund has now more than tripled its money on its original \$300-million investment.

Two areas where CPPIB will not be a seller are real estate and infrastructure: The board buys those assets with a desire to hold them for decades, said Mr. Denison, who was paid total compensation of \$3.05-million, including bonuses, in fiscal 2011. That was up from \$2.99-million the prior year, according to the annual report released Thursday.

Mr. Wiseman received \$3.14-million in the latest year, while chief investment strategist Donald Raymond was paid total compensation of \$2.19-million.

The pension fund's total assets rose to \$148.2-billion in the year ended March 31, up from \$127.6-billion a year earlier, as its investment portfolio returned 11.9 per cent. That performance was down from the prior fiscal year, during which the portfolio returned 14.9 per cent. But between investment income and CPP contributions, the fund took in an all-time record of \$20.6-billion in new assets in this latest fiscal year.

Notice

As required by Article V (3) of the Constitution, notice is hereby given that the 21st Annual General Meeting of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association will be held on Sunday, September 18, 2011 at 7:00 pm at the Holiday Inn, 180 Portugal Cove Road in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO FIND A FAMILY DOCTOR?

By Lisa Priest, *Globe and Mail*, Monday, May. 30, 2011

The Question

Three years ago my family doctor stopped practising medicine and made no effort to help me find a new physician. One potential new doctor refused me because I was over 60. Another said only new patients with chronic diseases were being accepted. A third interviewed me and she practises at a clinic halfway to Banff (I'm from Calgary) but she is all I could get. What is the best way to find a family doctor?

The Answer

Let me get this straight: You were too old for one doctor and not sickly enough for another. Now you've found one but face a long commute. Your situation makes all this talk of patient-centred care seem absurd. While doctors aren't technically allowed to refuse someone based on age, they do have the right to define their practice.

You have hit a reality faced by many Canadians: Doctors are not only in short supply but many focus on certain areas, such as low-risk obstetrics, sports medicine and palliative care as part of their family medicine practice. You're either in or you're out.

Here's a tip to increase your chances of finding a doctor: Look in July when a new crop of family physicians graduate. You can often locate these doctors through a university's department of family medicine, the college of physicians and surgeons in your province and in some cases, the health ministry. Start by going to websites that list graduating and experienced doctors taking new patients. Links can be found at tgam.ca/findadoctor.

A young new doctor can be appealing to the 35-and-under patient as the relationship could last for most of your life. Young doctors can also be good for those in middle age and up; what they lack in experience, they more than make up for in freshness and enthusiasm.

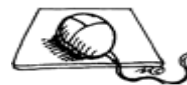
Another strategy is to contact family-medicine practices that operate out of teaching hospitals, because they often take new patients. Under this arrangement, you will always be seen by a resident, who is a medical doctor training to become a family physician. The relationship will typically last two years until the next resident takes over, but they are supervised by an experienced physician.

Once you have found a doctor, call the office and request a first appointment. Bring a list of medications and their doses. List your allergies, and have dates of hospital admissions and past operations handy.

"The meet and greet is a way for both to test the waters," said Teresa Killam, a Calgary family physician. "Is this relationship going to work? Are we compatible? Physicians do want to know specific expectations and ideas patients may have."

They also want to know if you are seeing other health-care providers and what supplements you are taking. No doubt, they will want to know what happened with your last physician. Be honest but choose your words carefully: if too critical, you may get red flagged as a potentially problem patient. And you don't want to do anything to jeopardize being accepted into a medical practice.

"There has to be a connection and like any dynamic, not every one is workable," said Dr. Killam. "Some people will connect well and some people won't."



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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

HOW TO SEARCH FOR A FAMILY PHYSICIAN ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS

(Extract from the CPSNL Website)

Lisa Priest's preceding article touches on a difficult topic, the need to find a new family physician when you lose your present doctor for whatever reason.

Most people do not think of this dilemma until it happens to you. Therefore be prepared.

In this province the best source to find out if there are doctors available to become your new family physician is the Website (www.cpsnl.ca) of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has a special section that you can access on their Home Page entitled "Find Family Physicians Taking New Patients".

The site proposes four steps:

Step 1:

To search for a family physician accepting new patients, select a community or neighbouring community from the pull down menu.

Step 2:

Click on the community of your choice.

If you do not select a community, the directory will display a list in alphabetical order of all family physicians in the province who are accepting new patients. You can scroll through the list using the arrow keys displayed on the screen.

Step 3:

Click on the physician's name to get his or her practice address and other contact information. In some cases, there may be only one physician in that community who is accepting new patients. In others, there may be up to nine or 10 names.

Step 4:

The physician information screen will also show the degree or degrees the physician holds, where he or she completed medical school, graduation year from medical school and the physician's license number.



Globe and Mail, Monday June 20th, 2011



Rally



*Calling All Provincial Public Sector
Pensioners and Workers*

When: Monday, September 19, 2011
Time: 11:30AM
Where: Front of Confederation Building
Speakers: Coalition and Union Leaders

WE WILL BE HEARD

NOT ROSY FOR ALL

By Lana Payne, Columnist, The Telegram, Saturday, July 16, 2011

Charles Dickens would not lack for material. The class struggle he wrote about in the 1800s is played out every day on the business pages of Canada's newspapers.

In so many fundamental ways, not that much has changed from the days when he wrote those infamous words, "Please sir, can I have some more?"

The unfettered rich class is still telling the rest of us what we deserve or don't deserve. Hardly a day goes by when a business leader, CEO or tycoon is not preaching to the masses about what society can afford or can't afford. His salary, bonuses and stock options are rarely questioned as affordable, fair or just.

The discussion in the mainstream media is rarely about growing income inequality and how those at the top, including corporations, are just not paying their fair share.

The latest is the attack against deferred wages or pensions for working people in both the private and public sectors.

While CEOs and executives have one or even two gold-plated pension plans, the people who work for them are told retirement security is just not for them.

Society just can't afford pensions, we are told. Yet somehow society can afford obscene corporate profits and unchecked and reckless corporate tax cuts.

Sometimes the message is disguised in the debt-hawk doublespeak we get from the St. John's Board of Trade. Other times, it is a very clear vitriolic attack against pensions issued by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

But the target is the same: workers and their pensions.

Part of the campaign to dismantle pensions is to pit government workers against those in the private sector. The theory is if we are busy defending, there is less time to counter an effective offence that highlights the real problems in our economy.

That is the mind-blowing amount of wealth being produced in our economy and how that wealth is being shared, or rather not shared.

Let them eat cake

Incredibly last week on the same day that a super-wealthy, retired CEO of a giant oil and gas company attacked workers' pensions in a Globe and Mail commentary, a second article lamented poor economic growth, while corporate profits in Canada soar.

Despite what the article referred to as sluggish growth in Canada's GDP (Newfoundland and Labrador is the exception), the picture for corporate profits remains "rosy." A 52 per cent year-over-year increase in profits makes rosy somewhat of an understatement.

And yet we have a federal government that continues to hand out tax cuts to corporate Canada like candy to a baby and preaches austerity to the rest of us. Folks, there is something really, really wrong with this picture.

An economist with Gluskin Sheff and Associates noted in the article that this was "absolutely wonderful news for the capitalists." No doubt it is.

It is also mind-boggling. And it is this dramatic shift in how we share, or don't share, the wealth from our economy that has the United States in such an economic mess.

Joseph Stiglitz, a professor at Columbia University and a Nobel laureate in economics, recently wrote about what he called the "ideological crisis of western capitalism.

“I was among those who hoped that somehow the financial crisis would teach Americans (and others) a lesson about the need for greater equality, stronger regulation and a better balance between the market and government. Alas, that has not been the case. On the contrary, a resurgence of right-wing economics, driven, as always, by ideology and special interests, once again threatens the global economy.”

Canada, under Stephen Harper, has now embraced those right-wing economics that Stiglitz refers to. Like some voices in Canada, Stiglitz has been very critical of the so-called austerity plans touted in some parts of Europe and in North America.

“The financial markets and right-wing economists have gotten the problem backwards. They believe austerity produces confidence and that confidence will produce growth, but austerity undermines growth, worsening the government’s fiscal position,” he notes.

Politicians and policy makers have already forgotten the lessons of the 2008 financial crisis, says Paul Krugman, economist and New York Times columnist.

Corporations and bankers have returned to their heyday while workers are still paying a very steep price for something they did not cause.

Interestingly, Charles Munder, the vice-chair of the U.S. mega-corporation Berkshire Hathaway (the chair is Warren Buffett), recently noted that the economic problems in his country were caused by a combination of “megalomania, insanity and evil in ... investment banking, and mortgage banking.”

The debate last week in the United States around the debt ceiling, the refusal by the Republicans to agree to a fairer taxation system is a very big indication that the “insanity” is still in high gear.

But it’s not just a U.S. problem. Canada is dangerously following down the same path. As noted by economist Jim Stanford in a recent commentary, Canada’s 50 most profitable corporations raked in an astounding \$80 billion worth of after-tax net income in 2010.

And Stephen Harper gave them a \$6 billion tax break. Go figure.

The richest corporations are dominated by two sectors. Yep, you guessed it: financial and resource sectors — banks, insurance companies, mining, and oil and gas.

So folks, the next time a CEO attacks a worker’s pension, the next time a business organization says we can’t afford something, respond by questioning the stunning and spectacular profits taken out of our economy, including right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, by mining and oil companies and ask, are we really getting our fair share of these resources? I can guarantee that we are not.

And the days of begging for our just share should be good and over. I believe Charles Dickens would agree.

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 18, 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



THE ROAD AFTER 50

By Peter Buckingham, Anthony Insurance

Turning 50 isn't the cause for concern it used to be. In fact, the freedom associated with early retirement and the end of childrearing and mortgage payments is allowing a whole generation to take advantage of middle-age wanderlust.

This fall, 50-somethings in Newfoundland and Labrador will take to the road to enjoy the changing leaves and crisp, sunny, autumn days. If you plan to be among them, there are, of course, some points to consider before hitting the highway.

As you are planning your vacation, remember to get advice from your insurance company on coverage in the jurisdiction in which you'll be travelling and also for your vacant home if you're planning to be away for a lengthy period.

Ensuring your car is roadworthy is essential; in particular, arrange to have your vehicle's oil changed and the coolant and air conditioning systems inspected. Or, if you plan to rent a vehicle, securing appropriate insurance protection is equally important.

Take the time to plan your route completely before departing. Verify directions and roadways, especially if you'll be driving after dark. A membership with the Canadian Automobile Association is a good idea. In addition, always let someone at home know where you are throughout your travels. Arrange for a family member or friend to be on the home front to receive phone calls or emails. If you find yourself deviating from your route, let them know. They should also have your detailed itinerary including names, addresses and telephone numbers of every place you will be staying, photocopies of your passport identification page and, if you are flying, any flight/ticket information.

Prepare a list of important or emergency phone numbers or email addresses to take with you. And make sure your passport is still valid; if it isn't apply for a new one three to four months before you plan to travel. You should arrange any other necessary travel documents or visas for the countries you plan to visit as well. If you take

prescription drugs, make sure you have enough for the duration of your trip. Always carry prescriptions in the original labelled containers. Check into health insurance coverage to see that you are adequately covered – you may need to purchase additional traveller's insurance.

As far as accommodations go, it's best to stick to reputable locations. Research hotels/motels and bed-and-breakfasts along your route before you leave to ensure you won't be disappointed.

And, finally – have fun! There are so many ideas for road trips. You might decide to stay close to home and seek out areas of Newfoundland and Labrador that you've never seen before. Or perhaps you're more adventurous and wish to see a new part of the world. Popular websites such as travelchannel.com or travelideas.com can give you some insight into new locales waiting to be discovered. Whether it's the Great Ocean Road in Australia or the Pacific Coast Highway in California, there are a multitude of roadways for you to explore.

Self-talk works: And you thought that talking to yourself was a sign of "old age"

The following is a short article by Michael Kesterton, which appeared in the Social Studies section of the Globe and Mail, May 27, 2011. Does it apply to you?

"Researchers believe self-talk can help everyone improve performance in a variety of settings," according to Psych Central News. Their findings, from a meta-analysis of 32 sports psychological studies, will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. "Researchers learned there are different types of self-talk. ... For tasks requiring fine skills or for improving technique, 'instructional self-talk' like technical instruction (such as beginner freestyle swimmers repeating 'elbow-up') is more effective than 'motivational self-talk' (e.g. 'give it all'), which seems to be more effective in tasks requiring strength or endurance, boosting confidence and psyching up for competition. ... The investigators also discovered that self-talk has a greater effect on tasks involving fine skills (such as sinking a golf ball) rather than gross skills (e.g. cycling), probably because self-talk is a technique which mostly improves concentration."



21st AGM & Convention: Well Being for Tomorrow
September 18-20, 2011
Holiday Inn, Portugal Cove Road, St. John's, NL

Sunday, September 18, 2011

6:00 – 7:00 Convention Registration

7:00 Annual General Meeting

Monday, September 19, 2011

7:30 - 4:00 Registration/Information Desk
View Exhibits

8:45 Delegates Convene

9:00 ***Official Opening***
Welcome & Greetings

9:30 - 10:30 ***Keynote Address***

10:30 -11:00 Break/Visit Exhibits

11:00 -11:30 ***Election Strategy 2011***
Presenters: Sharron Callahan,
President, NLPSPA & Ralph
Morris, President, NAPE Local
7002

11:30 - 12:30 Rally at Confederation Building

1:00 – 2:00 Lunch

2:00 - 3:00 ***Identity Theft: Royal Newfoundland***
Constabulary
Facilitator: Ralph Morris

3:00 - 3:20 Break/Visit Exhibits

3:30 - 4:30 ***Seniors as Caregivers: Seniors***
Resource Centre
Facilitator: Tom Mills

6:30 Reception & Cash Bar

7:00 Banquet
Entertainment by Sheila Williams

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

8:00 – 8:45 Registration/Information Desk
View Exhibits

8:45 Delegates Reconvene

9:00 - 10:30 ***Emotional Impact of Deciding on***
Long-Term Care: When is that
Decision Right?
Presenter: Dr. Patrick O'Shea
Facilitator: Neil Hamilton

10:30 - 10:50 Break/Visit Exhibits

11:00 - 12:15 ***Wills/ Estate Planning/ Advanced***
Health Directives
Presenters: Maria Kyriacou,
PLIAN & Darrin Chislett, NL
Credit Union
Facilitator: Blandina Snow

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch
Entertainment by Perlin Players

2:00 - 3:00 ***Financial Considerations of***
Retirement
Presenter: Beth Porter, CA, CFP,
Noseworthy Chapman
Facilitator: Bernard Cook

3:00 - 3:20 Exhibits/Prize Draws

3:30 - 4:00 ***Plenary/Closing***

Register early for the NLPSPA Convention by calling
709-754-5730, 1-800-563-4188,
or email: pensioners@npspa.ca

For more information, visit our website at www.nlpspa.ca



2011

Christmas Dinner and Dance

*The Newfoundland and
Labrador Public Sector
Pensioners' Association's
Annual Christmas Dinner and
Dance will be held on
Thursday, December 8th
at the
Knights of Columbus
St. Clare Avenue
St. John's*

*Cash Bar at 6:00 PM with a
stuffed chicken breast dinner
and all the trimmings to follow
at 7:00 PM. Music will be
provided by Gary Lawrence.*

*The cost is to be announced.
To arrange for tickets (to be
purchased in advance) please
call the office no later than
December 5, 2011
at (709)754-5730
or 1 (800) 563-4188*

*Come join us for a wonderful
evening.*

Agenda: 21st Annual General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Sunday, September 18, 2011

1. *Call to Order/Welcome*
2. *Rules of Order for Meeting*
3. *Adoption of Agenda for 2011 Meeting*
4. *Minute of Silence for Deceased Members*
5. *Introduction of 2010 – 2011 Board Members*
6. *Adoption of Minutes of 2010 AGM*
7. *Nominations Committee Report – Tom Cooper*
8. *A. Treasurer's/Finance Committee Report – Anthony Patey*
B. Presentation of 2010 Audited Financial Statements –
Anthony Patey
C. Appointment of 2011 Auditor – Anthony Patey
9. *Presentation & Adoption of Annual Report - President Sharron Callahan*
i. Government Health Benefits Committee (John Downton)
ii. Government Pension Investment Committee (Eric Salter)
10. *Resolutions*
11. *Election Results*
12. *Other Business*
13. *Announcements*
14. *Adjournment*

Notice of Resolutions

The Constitution of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Sector Pensioners' Association provides the opportunity for voting members to bring matters before the Annual General Meeting by means of pre-submitted resolutions to be circulated to the membership thirty (30) days prior to the Annual General Meeting via the Association's newsletter and website. While resolutions may also be submitted from the floor, members are encouraged to pre-submit Resolutions so they may be circulated in advance for the informed consideration of those attending the AGM.

FIGHTING THE WRONG PENSION FIGHT

By Tony Patey, Treasurer, NLPSP, *The Telegram*, Saturday, July 16, 2011

Recently in *The Telegram*, there has been a lot of writing on the public sector pensions from people like Brian Jones, who refers to a public trough, or this chap from the Employers' Council who finds it easier to tear down the public sector pensions than building an employer's pension.

I realize that it is politically OK to beat up public servants or public service pensioners and easy, because they very seldom react or respond.

The problem is that all this rhetoric takes away from the real problem, the sad state of pensions in this country and how for years the employers' "could not care less" attitude and the employees' "I want everything today" attitude will cost us all big in the future — and that includes those of us who did plan for retirement.

First, let's get rid of the public sector pension issue and call a spade a spade.

The public sector pension is a good pension, but it's not a great pension as it does have some warts and wrinkles.

However, it is superior to what is offered in the private sector — only because what is offered by the private sector in general sucks big time.

That is the story on which people should place their focus and not try to give a false impression that someone is getting something for nothing.

Let's talk about the pension itself. This is not magic money paid out by the employer, no matter if it is public or private. It is deferred income based on a compensation package agreed on between employer and employee. The employer will pay a certain level of compensation to have a certain job done and the employee is paid a part in salary and a part in benefits. The percentage of each is determined by employer and employee. It does not change the fact the employer pays 100 per cent of the compensation, be it private or public or whatever. The difference is the choices you make and the choices you are offered.

Within the public sector, it was mandatory to be part of the pension and that is a good thing, as I know some may have made a decision to opt out 35 years ago and today would have nothing. As I understand it, most of the private sector does not offer an option of opting in or out of a pension plan and I surmise that is the problem.

This is wrong because, at retirement, these employees are left to their own devices and most end up at the public trough hoping to survive on CPP and OAS.

What the public sector employer and employees did was a good thing and it is paying off in the long run as public servants retire. Public servants are less likely to step up to the public trough and draw a full CPP into which they paid equally with the private sector employee and, of course, OAS and GIS are just clawed back.

Again a pooled pension fund is not magic and it is not out of reach of the private sector.

In fact, some private companies do offer such pension plans — the problem is that not all do. The Employers' Council or the Chamber of Commerce or even the Small Business Council could offer a pooled pension fund. It would take a bit of effort, as it is not quite as easy as blaming someone else or knocking someone else's lot. There is no additional cost because the employer is still paying 100 per cent of the compensation but now it is just how much does the employee get today and how much is placed in a fund for retirement. This is not rocket science — it is just smart planning for the future.

I suggest the focus needs to be on the shortfalls of certain retirement planning and not just attacking those who have done it well. The private sector employer and employee need to get past this short-sighted approach dictated by greed and fear and just plan ahead. Then everybody wins.

So, back to the point, which is a better approach? Attack something that works or use it as a template to build a better retirement for all working Canadians? Give it a try.

NICKELS AND DIMES

By Jerry Vink

As you and most Canadians know, June and July were marked by a postal lock-out. Even at the time of writing this article, we are still dealing with delays resulting from that industrial dispute.

There are some, such as credit card companies, public utilities, and cable providers who seem to be unaware of what happened at Canada Post, but who are being rewarded for their ignorance.

Many younger persons do their banking and bill paying on-line. However, many of us, especially older persons such as pensioners pay their bills when these are delivered by mail.

These individuals got hit with a double whammy. Their payments sent at the start of the lock-out were considered delayed; then mailing the new bills were delayed by the companies pending the end of the disruption; and finally, when the bills did arrive, the next payments were considered overdue. This gave the credit card companies, the public utilities and cable providers the opportunity to charge you twice for late payments.

These costs can add up for consumers who pay their bills regularly. In one case that I am familiar with, the total came to about \$ 30.00 for an eighty-eight year old pensioner on a fixed income.

This particular person has mobility, visual and other health related impairments. She does not have a computer, has no idea what electronic banking and payments are, but she religiously pays her bills on time.

She and hundreds of thousands of others provide the credit card companies, public utilities and cable providers with millions of extra cash for doing nothing, other than sitting back and penalizing innocent bystanders in an industrial dispute not of their making. In fact, this gouging is abetted by government and industry regulators who refuse to get involved on your behalf.

Financial and other regulated industries have a legal obligation to accommodate people who are disabled due to illness or age. They could have couriered the bills and paid for couriered returns. Since this is an expensive proposition, they could at least have implemented a moratorium on late "charges".

They are not obliged to do this, rather they receive a windfall profit instead. They place the onus on you for paying on time, yet they do not accept the responsibility for getting the bills to you on time.

The amounts, except for credit card interests, are literally nickels and dimes (about \$1.50 to \$1.80 for utilities and cable). However, overall, these add up to millions of dollars.

Many people, including pensioners, accept this gouging unfairness and just pay the extra fees.

Since this extra profit is unethical, unfair and probably against the law if it involves discrimination based on disabilities and age, I suggest that you do something about it.

Obviously, let your Members of Parliament know. Secondly, do not just accept this abuse. Though the companies like to keep you "on hold" when you call, do so anyways. When you do speak to a live person, remind them that you are always punctual in paying and that you refuse to pay them for something that is not your fault.

My experience is that if you call, they will waive the extra fees. Make sure that you also remind them that the waiver should also apply to the second round of late fees due to the delay by Canada Post to clear up the back log in a timely manner.

Do not let them nickel and dime you while they make exorbitant profits at your expense.



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.

Volunteers in Action



Your Association and its Coalition partners recently completed the first phase in a campaign to ensure that pension redress will be a factor in the upcoming provincial election. This involved pensioner public meetings in various localities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

We want to thank the following volunteers, their local planning teams, friends and neighbours who helped make these local meetings a great success by reaching out to all public sector pensioners in their areas.

Annette Mooney,
Don Case,
Harold Manuel,
Ken Roebottom,
Tom Kendall,

Barry Knight,
Ed Smith,
Harry Cooze,
Leo Abbass,
Wes Roberts.

Beverley Fisher,
Francis Reid,
Hector Pearce,
Lillian Critch,
Rick Bouzan.

David Pittman,
Gerry Kennedy,
Ken Hoyles,
Patti Roberts,



Pensioners' Coalition Meetings: Tentative Schedule

The following tentative dates are being finalized for return meetings in the second phase of our election strategy. Planning for these meetings continues with the local organizing teams and once details are confirmed, we will provide more specific information. Please note your calendars accordingly and plan to attend. Your involvement is essential to pension remediation.

September 7 (evening)	Ferryland
September 26 (PM)	Corner Brook
September 26 (evening)	Deer Lake
September 27 (PM)	Grand Falls
September 27 (evening)	Gander
September 28	Fogo
September 29 (PM)	Clareville
October 4 (evening)	St. John's
October 6 (PM)	Grand Bank

Confirmations and further updates will be posted to our website www.nlpspa.ca

INCREASE IN ONLINE SHOPPING MAY EXPOSE CANADIANS TO MORE RISK.

Reprinted from the Better Business Bureau Website

Shopping online is convenient, but not without its risks. While the vast majority of people are thrilled with their purchases, others have learned these transactions between buyers and sellers can be hazardous.

With so many Canadians turning on their computers for their shopping needs, the BBB offers the following tips to help prevent being taken in by unscrupulous online retailers, scammers and hackers:

- Use trustworthy websites – Shoppers should start with BBB to check on the seller's reputation and record for customer satisfaction. Always look for a "trustmark" from BBB Online and click on that seal to confirm that it's valid.
- Protect your computer – A computer should always have the most recent updates installed for spam filters, anti-virus and anti-spyware software, and a secure firewall.
- Protect your personal information – BBB recommends taking the time to read the site's privacy policy and understand what personal information is being requested and how it will be used. If there isn't one posted, it should be taken as a red flag that personal information may be sold to others without permission.
- Trust your gut – Offers on websites and in unsolicited e-mails can often sound too good to be true. Consumers should always go with their instincts and not be afraid to pass up a "deal" that might cost them dearly in the end.
- Beware of phishing – Legitimate businesses do not send e-mails claiming problems with an order or an account to lure the "buyer" into revealing financial information. If a consumer receives such an e-mail, BBB recommends picking up the phone and calling the contact number on the Web site where the purchase was made to confirm that there really is a problem with the transaction.
- Confirm your online purchase is secure – Shoppers should always look in the address box for the "s" in https:// and in the lower-right

corner for the "lock" symbol before paying. If there are any doubts about a site, BBB recommends right-clicking anywhere on the page and select "Properties." This will let you see the real URL (Web site address) and the dialog box will reveal if the site is not encrypted.

- Pay with a credit card – It's best to use a credit card, because the shopper can dispute the charges if he or she doesn't receive the item. Shoppers may also dispute if there are unauthorized charges on their credit card, and many card issuers have "zero liability" policies under which the card holder pays nothing if someone steals the credit card number and uses it.
- Keep documentation of your order – After completing the online order process, there may be a final confirmation page or the shopper might receive confirmation by e-mail – BBB recommends saving a copy of the webpage and any e-mails for future reference and as a record of the purchase.
- Check your credit card statements often – Don't wait for paper statements; BBB recommends consumers check their credit card statements for suspicious activity by either calling credit card companies or by checking statements online regularly.

In Memoriam

The members of the Western Branch were saddened recently by the passing of Keith Ambler, a founding member and one of the leaders in organizing local events.

The Executive found Keith to be very reliable, efficient, honest and dedicated in his duties as Secretary and a joy to work with.

We will miss him but we will always remember his favourite quotation at the end of a discussion when he would sum-up the contents by saying: "yea THAT'S IT yea"

Increased savings, enhanced coverage.

Just some of the PERKS of being
a NL Public Sector Pensioner.

Anthony Insurance has always been a 50+ value leader... with NLPSPA member PERKS *you get more.*

At Anthony, we appreciate your contributions. If you're retired – or plan to retire in the next 5 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 \$1000s.

☒ **Exclusive Auto Savings.**

As a NLPSPA Member you get an exclusive, additional discount on your auto insurance.

☒ **Maximum Home Savings.**

Get your exclusive member discount, plus your discount limit is increased to 55%.

☒ **Better Driving Coverage.**

For members only, we'll add Emergency Road Service protection to your auto policy.

☒ **Enhanced Home Protection.**

At no additional charge, your home liability protection is increased from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000.

☒ **Other Special Rewards.**

Combine home and auto to receive vanishing deductibles and more claims enhancements.

2011 Convention Partners



Gold Sponsors

