



Bell Pensioners' Group

Together, Protecting our Pensions and Benefits

Ontario Central Chapter

April 2015 - Newsletter

P.O. Box 5, Stn "D", Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1

www.bellpensionersgroup.ca

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Let's Celebrate - Its our 20th Anniversary!

We are celebrating our 20th anniversary this year. We plan to mark the occasion by recognizing some of our founding members and past chapter leaders at our Annual General Meeting on May 6th 2015. Please join us then to meet and reminisce with former colleagues and the people who built BPG. We hope that many of our founding members can attend the AGM so we can recognize their efforts and express our appreciation. Since the crisis that initiated the creation of BPG was 20 years ago many of our current members have not heard the story of how BPG came about. So we asked Dan Braniff our founding President to capture the story of the genesis of BPG for the record. Dan consulted with others to produce a very informative document. An edited version of Dan' article is provided as a special supplement to this newsletter. It is important that our members understand how and why BPG came into existence and that we learn from the past and remain vigilant in our efforts to protect our pension and benefit plans

Today BPG is a professional and widely respected organization recognized by both Federal and Provincial governments as well as other pensioner organizations. But more importantly BPG has developed and maintains a healthy relationship with Bell Canada which is marked by mutual respect and consideration when discussing Pension and Benefit related issues. Officially we meet with Bell twice a year and throughout the year there is an ongoing dialogue on issues of mutual interest. In addition, Bell assists us in communicating with members and non-members by including BPG articles and notices in their "In Touch" newsletter to pensioners. In recent years Bell senior management has also participated in many of our General meetings keeping us informed as to what's new at Bell as well as providing pension and benefit information and answering member's questions.

BPG Ontario Central 2015 Annual General Meeting—Wednesday, May 6th

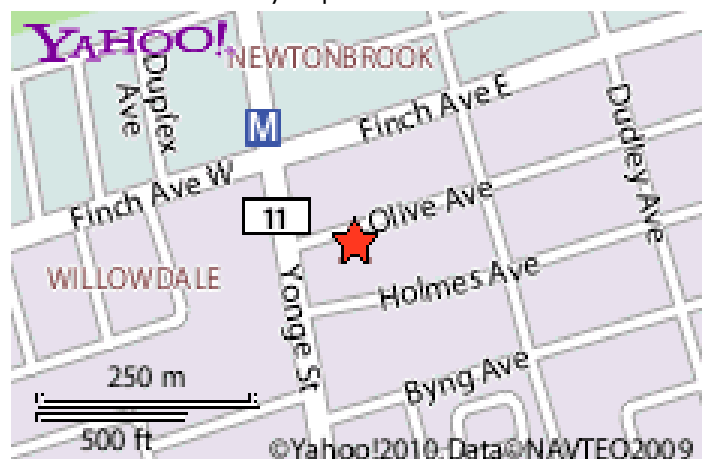
The AGM will be on Wednesday, May 6th 2015 at the Willowdale Baptist Church, 15 Olive Street, North York (Yonge & Finch). The front entrance to the Church is actually on Holmes Avenue. We encourage those with access to the TTC to use Public Transit in order to preserve the available parking for those from out of town.

Please note that if you use a GPS or Google Maps to find the location ensure you pick **Olive Avenue in North York** not Olive Ave in Toronto.

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Meeting Agenda

Reunion, Registration and Refreshments	11:00 am to 12:00 pm
Chair opening Remarks and Election of Corporate Directors	12:00 pm to 12:15 pm
Treasurer's and Auditor's Report - Glen Simpson	12:15 pm to 12:45 pm
Recognition of 20th Anniversary Special Guests	12:45 pm to 13:00 pm
BPG's 20th Anniversary - How we got started - Dan Braniff	13:00 pm to 13:30 pm
Bell/Sun Life Ins - Pension Longevity De-risking Policy - Bell HR	13:30 pm to 14:00 pm
BPG President's Report - Dan McDonald	14:00 pm to 14:30 pm

President's Report

Hi everyone,

This year marks an important milestone for the Bell Pensioners' Group - our 20th anniversary! I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all those involved in creating and supporting our organization over all the years. On Page 7, of this Newsletter, we feature an article about the history of BPG as documented by Dan Braniff, our first president.

Our Government Relations Committee remains active with both the Federal and Ontario governments, expressing concerns about their Target Benefit Plan (TBP) proposals. Of particular concern to BPG is the manner in which consent will be obtained from plan members to move from a Defined Benefit (DB) plan such as ours to a TBP. The Ontario Government proposes to use a 'negative option' form of consent whereby a plan merger or conversion would proceed unless not more than one-third of retirees objects. This deemed consent model is harmful to pensioners. We believe that pensioners must be expressly asked, on an individual basis, whether they agree to a plan conversion or merger. It's not yet clear what type of consent model the Federal Government will pursue. We'll be reviewing the federal budget (due out in April) and the Conservative election platform to see whether either makes reference to the TBP initiative and, if so, whether there is any mention of the consent mechanism. We will keep you posted.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to those members of our Board of Directors whose mandates are ending this Spring: Robert Guay, Chair of the Montréal Chapter; Jean-Luc Geha, Director at large and member of the Audit committee; and Michel Doyon, Chair of the Audit Committee and Pension Committee Representative (PIC) for Québec. Their dedication and skills, along with the contributions they have made to our Board, committees, and chapters are truly appreciated by all of us. At the same time, I would like to welcome the new Directors who are joining the Board: Peter Dilworth who will join the Audit Committee; Gayle Duchene who will replace Patte Seaton as Secretary; and Dave Palmer who has taken on Chair accountability for the Pension Committee. I am very pleased to announce, as well, that Patte Seaton will take over the Vice President accountability for Ontario.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we conducted a membership survey at the beginning of the year seeking your views about the services BPG provides in order to help us better serve you. We are very pleased with the response rate and I would like to thank all of you who took the time to complete the

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survey. We are currently compiling the results which we'll share with you at the upcoming Spring or Fall meeting in your area. I look forward to seeing you there.

Dan Mc Donald, BPG President

Chapter Chair Report

It has been a busy winter and those with internet access have seen our appeal for members and renewals as well as volunteers to help run the chapter. This has been quite successful with many new members as well as an injection of new talent at both the chapter board and the corporate board level. We cannot overemphasize the contribution of our volunteers who donate hundreds of hours of their precious time each year.

Our Annual General Meeting will once again be at Willowdale Baptist Church in North York on May 6th before Victoria Day as many requested. Our members in the West end will be happy to learn that we have found a suitable meeting spot for one of our Fall Meetings at the Northumberland Recreation Centre near Dixie and Burnhamthorpe on October 28th 2015 and we will return to Oshawa on October 26th 2015 at the Unifor meeting Hall. More information will be provided in subsequent newsletters.

We would like to welcome the following **new members** who have joined our chapter in 2015:

First Name	Surname	City	First Name	Surname	City
Karen	Andrews	TORONTO	Grace	Mancuso	MISSISSAUGA
Karen	Ball	SCARBOROUGH	John	Manerus	BRAMPTON
Grace	Bateman	BARRIE	Betty	Mark	NEWMARKET
Hildegard	Braunstingl	AURORA	Jack	McCulloch	PETERBOROUGH
Kelly	Brown	KIRKFIELD	Scott	McLarty	BARRIE
Charles	Campbell	PORT PERRY	John	Moniz	AURORA
Maureen	Caslor	BRAMPTON	Mike	Nicoloff	TORONTO
William	Chapman	COLBORNE	Valerie	Nippard	PORT HOPE
Patricia	Clanfield	ETOBICOKE	Susan	Paton	MISSISSAUGA
Pauline	Clark-Yeo	OSHAWA	Hugh	Pilkington	TORONTO
Perry	Cucci	OSHAWA	Wayne	Pyne	MEAFORD
Keith	Cuthbert	STOUFFVILLE			NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
Harold	Davidson	NEWMARKET	Edward	Rougoor	NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
Ellen	Diehl	WINNIPEG	Willis	Roxas	TORONTO
Peter	Dilworth	OAKVILLE	Nigel	Rozario	ETOBICOKE
Doug	Dutton	MOUNT ALBERT	Catherine	Rye	AJAX
David	Edick	WHITBY	Bernard	Sabolsky	BRANTFORD
Nora	Ferguson	NEWMARKET	Dave	Smart	DUNDAS
Jim	Ferrier	BARRIE	Paul	Smith	MIDHURST
Susan	Fletcher	MIDLAND	Donna	Smith	PICKERING
Vincent	Galati	TORONTO	Carmelita	Smith	AURORA
Mary	Gawrylash	STONEY CREEK	Ken	Stringer	CALEDON VILLAGE
Lauren	Hand	KESWICK	George	Summerland	SUNDERLAND
Howard	Heideman	ORANGEVILLE	Dan	Swalm	AJAX
Carol	Holmes	BARRIE	Heather	Taylor	NAUGHTON
Richard	Lee	BOWMANVILLE	Mary Jane	Tiller	VICTORIA
Robert	Long	TIMMINS	Anna	Tobia	ETOBICOKE
Bryan	Loxton	HUNSTVILLE	Mariko	Uyematsu	MISSISSAUGA
Jeannette	Lundy	BARRIE	Brenda	Van Rossum	TORONTO
Douglas	MacGregor	PICKERING	Edward	Wanless	TORONTO
Susan	MacNeil	SCARBOROUGH	Dorothy	Watts	TORONTO
Mario	Mancini	MILTON	Audrey	Wright	SCARBOROUGH

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Please Help us recruit more New members

Further to our recruiting activities you can also help us recruit new members by referring to the link below which provides a list of retirees that have retired since 2009 and who are not yet members. Please review this list and if you know someone on the list, please encourage them to join BPG.

<http://bellpensionersgroup.ca/index3News.php?lang=en&id=509&chapt=OntarioCentral>

Ottawa Chapter AGM, Wednesday 20 May, 2015, TIME: 9:30 AM. - 12:30 at Nepean Sportsplex (Salon), 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2G 1W2, Registration: begins at 8:45 a.m.

Southwest Ontario Chapter AGM, Tuesday, 5 May, 2015, Start time - 9:30 AM at Conestoga Place, 100 Manitou Dr., Kitchener, Ontario.

Titus Ramkhalawansingh, Ontario Central Chapter Chair

The BCE-Sun Life Pension De-risking Agreement

As many of you may already be aware, BCE made an announcement in early March that it had entered into an agreement with Sun Life Insurance to take on the longevity risk for \$5 billion of the Bell Canada Pension Plan pension liability. This agreement further advances Bell's overall pension de-risking strategy. Called a longevity swap/insurance, the agreement involves a monthly 'swap' between real pension payments (from Sun Life) and expected pension payments (from the Pension Plan), calculated using a mortality table agreed to by both parties.

Quite simply, the Bell Canada Pension Plan is buying insurance against members living longer than expected on \$5B of pension liability, thereby adding an extra layer of financial protection to the pension promise. Under this transaction, Bell is *not* transferring \$5B of assets to Sun Life. In fact, a relatively small amount of money will be exchanged between the parties over the course of the agreement.

Notably, the agreement does not have any impact of any kind to retirees' monthly pension amounts and pension benefits, as applicable. Bell retains responsibility for the Pension Plan and pensioners will continue to receive the same monthly pension cheques from Bell as they did prior to the agreement.

We encourage you to come out to the Spring Annual General Meeting in your area. A pension expert from BCE will be there to present further details about the agreement and answer any questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you there!

As well, more information about the agreement is available in a Question and Answer document on the BPG website.

<http://bellpensionersgroup.ca/index3News.php?lang=en&id=629&chapt=OntarioCentral>

The BPG Board for 2015-2017

Further to the adoption of the most recent by-laws governing the operation of not-for-profit organizations, the Board may consist of 7 to 20 members, ideally reflecting the proportional representation of members as of the 31 of December 2014, 55% from Ontario and 45% from Québec. The Board currently has 16 members, representing a 62/38% regional split. When we will have filled up the vacant positions, we will reach a 58/42% split.

Six seats are reserved for directors elected by each chapter (three in Ontario and three in Québec). These direc-

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tors are the Chapter Chairs. The remaining seats are filled by nomination to the Board and approved by the members at the general meetings. Board members may serve three consecutive terms of two years.

We currently have 3 positions that are due for replacement on the Board this year which includes the position of President. In order to alternate between the Provinces, the next president should come from Ontario. We are also actively seeking replacement for some chapter chairs (Ontario Central and Ottawa/East and North Ontario). The Chapter Chairs will remain in their position up to the time that we find a successor.

If you believe in BPG mandate and appreciate the work being done, we need you to become engaged and we urge our many talented retirees to volunteer and leverage their knowledge, their skills and their leadership to help all of us. If you feel you can contribute, please contact Louise Touchette at ltouchette22@gmail.com.

You will find below the list of candidates recommended for the Board of Directors from 2015 to 2017 and a brief CV for the new candidates identified with an asterisk.

BPG members will be asked to approve, by a show of hands, the election of these dedicated volunteers at the upcoming general meetings to be held in May and June 2015.

Current Directors

Ontario		
Patte Seaton	VP - Ontario	2015-2017
Gayle Duchene *	Secretary	2015-2017
Penny Gilray	Treasurer	2014-2016
Sue Dawes	Director at large (Government Relations)	2014-2016
Marg Eades	Director at large (Pension)	2014-2016
Dave Palmer *	Director at large (Pension)	2015-2017
Peter Dilworth *	Director at large (Audit)	2015-2017
Québec		
Dan Mc Donald	President	2015
	VP - Québec	2015-2017
	Director at large (Communications)	2015-2017
Yvan Dutrisac	Director at large (Benefits)	2014-2016
Louise Touchette	Director at large (Nominations)	2014-2016

Chapter Chairs (elected by the members of their respective chapters)

Ontario		
Marilyn Easterbrook	Ottawa/East and North Ontario	2014-2016
Titus Ramkhalawansingh	Ontario Central	2014-2016
Don Graham	Southwestern Ontario	2014-2016
Québec		
Jean-Luc Taschereau *	Montréal	2015-2017
Claude Vachon *	Télébec	2015-2017
Jean Lamer	Québec	2014-2016

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Gayle Duchene

Gayle retired from Bell in late 2000 after 22 years of service where she held numerous management positions starting as Facilities Assistant in 1978 and retiring as General Manager, Direct Marketing, Consumer and Business. Post retirement she used her operational experience in leadership roles at Inslogic, Minacs, British Telecom and at MTS Allstream (2003–2008).

In 2008 Gayle became involved with the hospice palliative care world when she trained as a hospice care volunteer at Dorothy Ley Hospice in Etobicoke. She completed a Masters in Ministry and Spirituality at Regis College, Toronto School of Theology and also received certification as a bereavement educator at University of Toronto. Currently, Gayle is a residential care volunteer and trainer at Kensington Hospice in downtown Toronto. During the last two years she has served as administrative support to the co-ordinator of Keep the Promise (KTP). KTP is a two-year campaign to work with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Campaign 2000 and other partners to reignite the commitment of Canadians and our governments to end child poverty now.

Gayle joined the BPG Board in April 2015 and will be recommended as BPG's Secretary at the 2015 Annual General Meetings.

Dave Palmer

Dave retired from BCE in 2011, after a career with Bell, Stentor and BCE spanning more than 33 years. Dave joined Bell's Comptroller's organization in Montréal in 1978 before moving to Ottawa/Hull to take on roles in the Engineering Economics, Marketing and Regulatory organizations. During the final twenty years of his career, Dave held various roles in the regulatory sphere, which involved (a) seeking the CRTC's approval for things of interest to Bell; (b) reflecting CRTC policies and rulings to those within Bell who were responsible for compliance; and (c) advocating Bell's views in CRTC policy proceedings.

Dave is also active in the running community, both as a participant and as the volunteer Chair of the Run Ottawa Board of Directors. Run Ottawa is a not-for-profit organization that offers events for the running community, most notably Ottawa Race Weekend, which attracts some 50,000 participants.

Dave joined the BPG Board as well as the Pension Committee in December 2014 and became Chair of the Pension Committee in February 2015. He will be recommended as a BPG Director at Large at the 2015 Annual General Meetings.

Peter Dilworth

Peter retired from the Bell family at the end of 2014 after more than 30 years of service. He held numerous senior level positions with Bell and Bell Aliant throughout his career, and was Vice President – Finance and Chief Procurement Officer of Bell Aliant at the time of his retirement. He started his career as a Station Repair Technician working in the Peterborough area in the early 1980's. In 2001 he was appointed Vice President, Planning and Resource Management. His experience varies from Operations Finance, Engineering Economics and Regulatory Finance, Strategic Planning, Real Estate, Environment and Corporate Responsibility and Procurement and Supply Chain. Peter has served on a number of boards over the past two decades including at Northwestel (2002-2007) and at the Greater Peterborough Innovation/DNA Cluster (2004-2013) where he chaired the Audit and Finance Committees at both these organizations.

Peter joined the BPG Board in March 2015 as a member of the Audit Committee. He will be recom-

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mended as a BPG Director at Large at the 2015 Annual General Meetings.

Jean-Luc Taschereau

Jean-Luc retired from Bell in 2007, after more than 28 years of service. During his career, he held a wide variety of management roles, initially in Comptrollers, assuming various positions with the Investment, Costs, Manpower and Billing organizations. Jean-Luc was frequently called upon to spearhead strategic corporate projects, such as one involving a multi-disciplinary task force, leading to the sale of Bell's Eastern Arctic activities to Northwestel in 1989. He assumed the role of vice-president of Finance for the Operations division and then Wholesale, and played a key role in the creation of Bell Aliant in 2006. Over the years, his functions brought him in touch with every aspect of Bell's activities and he enjoyed lasting relations with his colleagues throughout Bell.

Jean-Luc joined the BPG Montréal Chapter as Vice President in March 2015 and will be recommended as the Chapter's Chair at the Chapter's June 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Claude Vachon

Claude retired from Bell Nordiq/Bell Aliant in 2008 as VP and Chief of Operations, with over 32 years of service. In the first part of his career, he held a variety of management positions for Network Operations in Montréal. Prior to Bell Nordiq, Claude has been VP of Operation at Northwestel for 6 years. At that time he was also appointed President of Ardicom, a partnership with aboriginal organizations.

Claude joined the BPG Télec Chapter as Vice President in November 2014 and will be recommended as the Chapter's Chair at their November 2015 Annual General Meeting.

BPG 2014 Audited Financial Statements

BPG's By-laws require us to provide notice that the 2014 Annual Audit has been completed. A copy of the report will be available at the AGM for anyone wishing to review. In addition a copy of the statement will be placed on our website as soon as approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting on April 23rd. A summary will be made available in the next Newsletter. Anyone who is unable to access the online document or review the document at the AGM may request that we print and mail a copy.

Special Supplement: BPG Genesis - A Reflection on our 20th Anniversary

Commemorating our 20th Anniversary: By Dan Braniff

On August 12, 1994 the global financial industry and policy holders were shocked by the announcement that Confederation Life, a 150+ year old insurance company with a previous AAA rating was to be liquidated. Bell employees and pensioners were stunned to realize that their Supplementary Pension Plan was not guaranteed and their retirement nest eggs could get scrambled.

Frantic callers to Bell Canada Benefits Administration were told that Bell accepted no responsibility, that they should contact the court-appointed Liquidator (Peat Marwick Thorne, PMTI) now KPMG. Calls to the Liquidator, (CompCorp) renamed ASSURIS) and the Superintendent of Financial Institutions were referred to Bell. This added to frustration, fear and in some cases, panic when we realized our life-time savings were indefinitely frozen.

As individuals, many of us wrote to Bell explaining our predicament. Bell's responses were consistently clear, "Bell accepts no responsibility" despite the fact that Bell chose the plan, the administrator, the terms and conditions. We argued that Bell had every opportunity before liquidation to advise plan members of the risks and options to withdraw or transfer funds. Bell suggested that plan members could have acted on their own as Confed's ailments were common knowledge (Trac Services, an insurance industry rating agency warned 2 years before

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liquidation that Confederation was in serious financial difficulties.)

Who could Bell plan members turn to? There was no one! Almost immediately the issue dominated discussions within the employee and pensioner social groups. Symbolic is the story of retiree, Neil Burgees, London Ontario who learned via the retiree grapevine that the Bell Old-timers-Owen Sound invited a guest speaker, Ian Leith, Nesbitt Burns to their monthly luncheon. Leith had run a classified ad in the Toronto Star that was sympathetic to Confed policy holders suggesting he might have a solution. Neil formed a London-Windsor car pool to hear first-hand what Leith had to offer. Attendees in Owen Sound were dumbfounded in the realization that their nest eggs were in serious jeopardy!

On November 23rd, 1994, a headline appeared on Globe and Mail's Business Section, "Bell workers to sue over group contributions" The story featured two London Bell retirees, Neil Burgess and Harvey Hall rallying pensioners to stand up and fight. I and many others phoned Neil saying, "Count me in". The clipping spread like wildfire. Organizational green shoots sprung up in Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, London and Winsor. In December, after collaborating with some of them I notified Bell Human Resources Administration that the Bell Pension Recovery Group (BPRG) now BPG, wanted to meet to discuss mutual interests and ideas that might be considered to address the crisis. We had a financial institution ready to take over the Bell plan. They immediately turned us down. Bell would deal directly with plan members and did not require our representation...while still insisting that Bell had no legal obligation to guarantee plan members against any default by Confederation Life in Liquidation.

At this time we had no official organization structure. There were no funds, no constitution, no mandate, no liability insurance and no official plan. My oldest daughter, a lawyer who specialized in insurance cases at the time, drew up a statement of claim and advised us (no fee) with precautions to avoid being the target of litigation from Bell or our retiree associates. Realizing personal vulnerability we cautioned all our compatriots suggesting that given the stress factors, they may wish to personally back off. None resigned! These brave volunteers accepted unknown personal risks, gave generously of their time and paid expenses out their own pockets. Many had no personal stake in the recovery, having no exposure above the CompCorp Guaranteed limits. It was a classic all-for-one, one-for-all, grassroots reaction.

Bell would not meet or talk to us, not even answer phone calls and faxes. This was a major hurdle as legal action was out of the question, no mandate, no funds. Most of us considered legal action would be costly and drag out for years. It was a very last resort. Finally, in desperation, late afternoon Christmas Eve, 1994, I cold-called Robert Sanderson, Peat Marwick Thorne (PMTI later to become KPMG). Sanderson was appointed by the Supt. of Financial Institutions as President of Confederation Life in Liquidation. He immediately appreciated the urgency of our situation and said yes, he would meet with us. He offered advice on a number of issues. Most importantly, Bob encouraged our efforts to pressure Bell to assist recovery. Hearing that Bell refused to meet with us, President Sanderson confided that Bell coincidentally had also requested a meeting with him. He offered a combined meeting (subsequently scheduled for May 17). To prepare, Bob Wilson, Neil Burgess, Bill Tawse and I met with Robert Sanderson on Jan 4, 1996 to learn firsthand how Liquidation works and how BPRG might fit in. Edward Bossence, key man for the Liquidation process, was assigned to us for ongoing consultation. He would later appear at subsequent BPRG chapter meetings to update and answer questions from members.

The Meeting with PMTI, Bell and BPRG convened May 17, 1995. No progress on Bell top-up but it established our credibility with the Liquidator, the Court, Bell and later with 52 politicians. **It was a major milestone!**

Note: In retrospect it would have been irresponsible in 1994 for Bell to negotiate with a no-name organization, with no official member mandate, no structure and no constitutional ratification of purpose. I would have done the same!

May 11, 1995: The organizational structure and mandate of BPRG was approved and confirmed at Chapter meetings held May 31 – June 8, 1995.

Purpose and Structure of BPRG: The Organization represents the individual and collective interests of members during the liquidation of Confederation Life assets to ensure the maximum recovery of members' invest-

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ments (objective 100% principal and interest). Membership was defined as those who support the purpose and principles of BPG. Many were never employed by Bell or affiliates.

Founding Organization

Chapter Chairs Elected: (Also serve as Corp Directors)

London, Neil Burgess	Montreal, Rheel Proulx	Ottawa, Bill Tawse
Quebec City, Gaston Perrault	Toronto, Ken Beach	

Corporate Directors:

Ed Beaty VP	Jacqueline Boileaux Secretary	Bill Spratt
Bob McLachlan	Al Smith, Incorporation	
Dan Braniff, President		

Our relationship with the Liquidator strengthened, we were now in the inner loop on a continuous basis. Judge Lloyd Houlden started hearing from witnesses and stakeholders in preparation for his judgement. The process was complicated because of its size, with legal precedents and implications for so many Canadians. Subsequently, the Liquidator advised that there were sufficient assets to pay all claimants for invested principal without interest. Because the projected interest rates were at all-time highs, value was expected to compound to almost double value over a liquidation period of 5-8 years. BPG's firm position was that that our members deserved full compounded value. The Court (Justice Lloyd Houlden) was to rule. As BPG was the only organized entity, President Sanderson established us as de facto representation of all Confederation policy holders. It was critical that we kept the demand for compounded interest confidential. The unsecured creditors were not expected to embrace a ruling of this kind. Only BPG executive and those who needed to know were informed. Justice Lloyd Houlden set a legal precedent when he approved compounding interest as a part of legal settlement. To our great astonishment, unsecured creditors failed to appear during these proceedings. This was a monumental victory for BPG and millions of other policy holders worldwide!

The projected recovery including compounding interest was initially estimated to be in the range of 70-80%. The top up from Bell would be critical, but as policy holders BPG members were no longer facing disaster. Our steadfast objective was to achieve full 100% recovery of principal plus interest and expenses. Public support was imperative. We cooled the rhetoric and set specific targets. A balanced plan was constructed using a three-legged strategic platform: political, media and legal.

Member fees would be matched to relative exposure. Those with no exposure above the level insured by Comp-Corp would be exempt from expenses associated with lawsuits. Those who risked net losses were assessed an additional surcharge on a sliding scale commensurate with individual exposure. A basic membership fee of \$20 per year would cover general expenses. A refundable surcharge was reserved for potential legal action but only if required. All expenses were to be refunded as part of the Bell ultimate settlement. Hardship cases were exempted from fees. Legal initiatives beyond general consultative advice would be subject to a motion approved by a majority of members.

Our volunteer legal expert (my daughter) established a model for hiring the best legal firm to match our situation. The successful candidate must display a successful track record of winning against a large corporation like Bell. There would be no conflict of interest, never having acted for Bell or had any aspirations for representing Bell or any affiliates. On June 9, from the short list of 12 finalists BPG's Legal Committee chose Koskie Minsky, Toronto.

BPG explored several options with Bell including a value-added proposition from McKenzie Financial to inject a cash infusion if Bell would pay an administration fee. We suggested employing a mediator to assist the negotiating process. All such attempts were rejected by Bell.

Our political action plan called for contacting all Federal MPs, as well as, provincial MPPs and MLAs, in Ontario and Quebec including Cabinet members, PM Chretien and Premier Mike Harris. Ottawa Chapter coordinated providing guidelines, schedules, coaching and follow up. All members were encouraged to participate, especially those who had political connections. Bob Wilson, Ottawa Chapter conjured a system that fired off an email to every MP in

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Ontario and Quebec alerting them to our dilemma asking for their assistance and support. Members enduring significant hardships would communicate with local constituencies detailing their individual predicaments.

The political project was a monumental success thanks especially to the coordination by Ottawa Chapter and overwhelming member participation. *Hopefully the chapters will chronical additional experiences from a ground-view perspective.* The first volley of political support was a blistering letter to Bell President McLennan from Mike Harris, Premier of Ontario, "The situation is troublesome" said Harris. "People who have made sacrifices over the years to be self-sustaining have become the victims of corporate bungling...What's Bell going to do to make this right?"

Ovid Jackson, MP Owen Sound Grey was my MP. Initial contact was with Lyle Love, Jackson's Constituency Manager. Lyle was very resourceful and stick-handled a very comprehensive action plan. Curly Wade and 7 local BPG members joined me. We made an indelible impression as each of us took a turn describing the personal impact on her/his family. Ovid interrupted the meeting by setting up a conference call with Hon Doug Peters, Secretary of State for Financial Institutions so we could share the emotional hardship firsthand with the federal Minister who ordered the liquidation. Doug Peters was sympathetic but offered no solutions.

Ovid suggested that we immediately prepare a petition to Parliament signed by our members and by anyone who supported the BPG manifesto. Lyle provided the format and asked that we fill the Parliamentary Gallery with supporters. Our members took over the House of Commons Gallery. Their enthusiasm tested the limits of quiet parliamentary decorum when our Petition was accepted by the House. A surprise followed when Ovid requested all our supporters to join together in the Parliamentary Press Gallery to witness my presentation that he had arranged in conjunction with the Petition. This was not on my agenda but the idea was compelling! Major media across Canada carried our story in detail. I had to stop the car multiple times on the way home to answer cell-phone queries from reporters including the Canadian Press. Soon afterward, Jean Chretien holding a copy of the Montreal Gazette visited Ovid Jackson's Ottawa Office praising his efforts as the kind of action that made Government proud!

Ovid and Lyle shared their achievement with Caucus members, thereby opening many constituency doors to our BPG ambassadors. Shortly afterwards, Ovid wrote Bell President, John McLennan. The result was a Feb 8, 1996 meeting in Jackson's Ottawa Office, Ed Beaty and Jackie Boileaux for BPG. Harold Giles, VP Human Resources, and Brenda Brown, Director HR represented Bell Canada. As Ed Beaty, BPG V P, recalls, Ovid read Mr. Giles the riot act about corporate responsibility. He informed Giles, "Our Liberal caucus wants to see a satisfactory solution for pensioners."

Early February, 1996, Harold Giles proposed various cost sharing proposals to Ed Beaty and me. We declined as our mandate demanded a minimum 100% top up. Mr. Giles expressed concern about meeting with Ovid Jackson on Feb 8. Could we please call him off? Again we thanked Ovid Jackson for the impressive impact he made! February 14, Valentine's Day 1996, while on a family skiing sabbatical at Lake Tahoe, CA, I received an urgent phone call from Harold Giles insisting we immediately begin serious negotiations toward a final settlement. He asked me to abort my pre-paid vacation. His explanation was that the Bell Board ordered him to, "**Fix it**".

March 4, 1996, Al Smith, BPG Board Member, received Letter's Patent making BPG a legal corporation by order of Industry Canada. It took 14 months of constant follow up but BPG was finally a legal entity, ready to sign an agreement.

March 5-25, 1996: BPG VP Ed Beaty and I had numerous meetings and contacts with Harold Giles and Brenda Brown to consider various scenarios. At the final face-to-face meeting with numerous Bell officials attending progress stalled. Head legal counsel for Bell cautioned us about our not having legal counsel present. We assured them that our Counsel, Murray Gold, Koskie Minsky had been retained but we thought lawyers were a hindrance to good-faith negotiations during this stage. Murray Gold would meet Bell legal representatives after we came to a reasonable understanding. Bell huddled after which 5-6 legal-looking members of their team departed. Progress accelerated and conditions that met or exceeded our mandate were mutually agreed to with very little re-

Continued on Page 11

buttal. We reached tentative satisfaction toward meeting the BPG mandate. Monthly compounded interest would continue at the ongoing rate plus 0.25%. Bell would retroactively compensate BPG and its members for all legitimate expenses back to Liquidation date August 12, 1994.

March 27, 1996, we signed the BELL ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT jointly with Bell and the Liquidator. Shortly afterwards Harold Giles phoned to express Bell's satisfaction with the Agreement and the outstanding professionalism of BPG. His only regret was that Bell took so long. On a personal note he said if we ever needed anything I should contact him immediately, provided it did not cost him money! All parties were completely satisfied with the outcome.

There were no losers. In the final stage Bell and BPG were negotiating toward mutual goals. Most importantly there was a sense of trust as progress gathered momentum. In that spirit we joined forces afterwards to convince Revenue Canada to reverse its tax decision. Bell paid no tax on top-up costs.

Unanimously, the BPG Board decided that BPG would and should continue. The main reason was to be ready and able to take remedial action before a crisis occurs.

In his letter dated 1996/04/26, sent to all participants in the in the Bell Group, Harold Giles, Group Vice President, Human Resources summarized the implications of the Enhancement Agreement. Bell's contributions would total \$15,000,000 over five years - \$3,000,000 each year to reduce participant's losses.


The Confederation Life fiasco was unnecessary and could have been avoided through prudent timely interventions. According to ASSURIS the successor to CompCorp all outstanding obligations were recovered with exception of \$5 million paid by ASSURIS. We understand that Bell got its top-up costs refunded. On Nov 12, 2002, Approved unsecured creditors received a 5th interim distribution resulting in a cumulative dividend to date of 100 cents on the dollar.

BPG's 3-legged strategy: Political, Media and Legal proved to be paramount, but without the incredible teamwork the endeavour would have probably failed! It became the model for other group RRSPs.

Confederation could have survived with minimal discretionary assistance from ASSURIS along with guarantees from government, much less than was needed to bail out the auto industry during the 2008 recession. The greatest cost was that Canada lost more than an insurance company. Confederation Life was a world-scale institution. What price did we pay in lost jobs and related business? The disruptions to people's lives, the anxiety of employees and policy holders is immeasurable and will never be completely recovered. The enormous court and liquidation administration costs alone would surpass a prudently executed, recoverable bail out. It should never happen again, but what assurances are there that it won't?

A strong and prudent BPG is our best security. I urge you to give your voluntary Board and Management the kind of support you provided your founding executive. Our strength is a growing membership and ongoing vigilance.

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The Annual Fee covers the period from January 1 to December 31

There are two options for paying your yearly BPG membership fee:

1. **Paying by personal cheque** - Please complete this form and return it with your payment of \$20.00, payable to "Bell Pensioners' Group", or to "Bell Pensioners' Group (BPG) Inc.", P.O. Box 5, Stn. "D", Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1. (*Please do not send post-dated cheques*)
2. **Paying by credit card using our online application form** – To access the online application form just enter the following link into your web browser:

<https://bellpensionersgroup.ca/membership.php?lang=en&chapt=OntarioCentral>

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Please send your comments or suggestions to: ontcentral@bellpensionersgroup.ca or call

(905) 695-9230, (toll free call, 1+ (855) 691-2073) or write to; Bell Pensioners' Group (BPG) Inc., P.O. Box 5, Stn. D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1.

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