



BPG Toronto 2009 Fall General Meeting Notices

We're taking our show on the road!

In October this year, BPG Toronto will be staging two Fall General Meetings. Our regularly scheduled General meeting will take place on Wednesday, 21 October, 2009, at the Pavilion Royale in Mississauga.

To better serve our members in the eastern part of our territory who may find it difficult to attend the Mississauga meeting, we will be staging our first ever satellite General Meeting on Friday, 23 October, 2009, at the CAW Union Hall in Oshawa.

In future it is very likely that we will want to hold additional satellite meetings in other areas. If you would be interested in having BPG come to your area and are willing to act as the local coordinator, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Mississauga Fall General Meeting

- Date: Wednesday October 21st 2009
- Time: Reunion: 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM (coffee & doughnuts)
Meeting: 12:30 to 2:30 PM
- Location: Pavilion Royale 5165 Dixie Road Mississauga Ontario
- Agenda: Presidents Message - Raymond Bertrand
Pension Committee Update - Bob Farmer

Keynote Speaker: Maurice Callaghan – Maurice has been described “as one of Canada’s most gifted speakers.” With an impressive management background in marketing, labour relations, customer service, public relations, communications and over two decades as a senior manager with Bell Canada, Maurice delivers practical, proven approaches for personal and professional success and for turning change into opportunity. His unique insights and powerful beliefs inspire people to make significant improvements in their lives. A remarkable communicator, his compelling and humorous style captivates audiences and produces rave reviews. Organizations across North America have discovered that hearing Maurice is a life-altering experience.

Oshawa Fall General Meeting

Date: Friday October 23rd 2009
Time: Reunion: 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM (coffee & doughnuts)
Meeting : 10:30 to 12:00 Noon
Location: CAW Union Hall (wheelchair accessible), 1475 Phillip Murray Ave., Oshawa ON
Agenda: Presidents Message - Raymond Bertrand
PIC Update - Bob Farmer

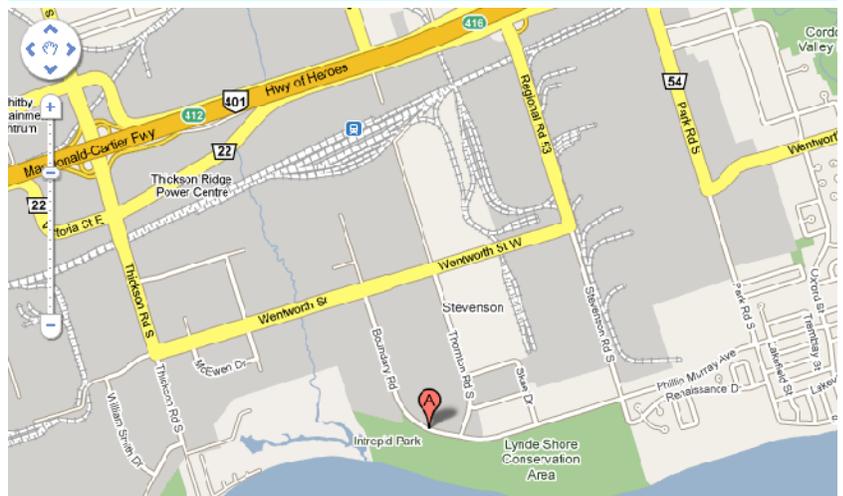
Keynote Speaker: Carol Ann Cole – Carol Ann enjoyed a 27 year career with Bell Canada and following a battle with cancer she decided there was more to life than climbing the corporate ladder. She walked away from what she affectionately calls her “big job at the Bell” and that’s when she began working on some of the things on what she refers to as her “bucket-list”.

Carol Ann is an author (her third book If I Knew Then What I Know Now will be published in October) a professional speaker and the founder of the Comfort Heart Initiative - a national fund-raiser which has raised over one million dollars for cancer research. She is a Member of the Order of Canada and has received numerous additional awards including the Golden Jubilee Medal; the CAW Woman of the Year; the elite Maclean’s Honor Role and the Terry Fox Citation of Honor to name a few. She is profiled in ‘Canadian Who’s Who’ and is listed in the 2005 edition of 1000 Great Women of the 21st Century’ published by the American Biographical Institute in Raleigh North Carolina. Carol Ann is a proud member of BPG and has served with distinction on the BPG Board for over five years.

Membership Update

Currently your chapter has 3668 paid members which represents a net increase of 112 members since last year. We actually welcomed 192 new members into Toronto Chapter, but we also lost 121 mainly due to death or non payment. We currently still have 88 members on our database who have not paid their membership fees for 2009 and they are no longer in good standing.

Map directions for Oshawa Meeting



In This Issue

General Meeting Announcements	1 & 2
Membership Update	2
Pension Reform Latest Developments	3
Board of Directors Nomination Notice	4
BOD Nomination Form	5
Jim Murray appointed to Advisory Council	6
Toronto Chapter Member Survey	6
Missing Members	6
Are You Aware	7

PENSION REFORM: THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Our last newsletter described the Federal government's initiative to rethink the Pension Benefits Standards Act (PBSA), which is the legislation that governs Bell Canada's defined benefit pension plan, among others. This legislation prescribes the timing and the size of contributions that plan sponsors must make, with the explicit purpose of ensuring that the pension plan is sufficiently funded to meet all its pension obligations.

Previous articles have described some of the considerations that go into making sure that pension plans are fully funded, and what happens when they are not. This article is to update you on the developments of the legislative review so far, and BPG's role in that review.

The BPG has met with the government officials who are drafting the legislative amendments. We have met them separately, and also together with representatives of other pension plans. Our comments were made on behalf of not only the thirty thousand Bell pensioners, but on behalf of the 150,000 pensioners who are represented by the Canadian Federation of Pensioners.

In these discussions we stressed that it was critical to amend the PBSA so that it could protect the pension promise; we pointed out a number of shortcomings of the current legislation, and the manner in which these shortcomings could be relieved. As you are aware, seven large sponsors of defined benefit pension plans, collectively known as the "Consortium", have joined together to make their own proposals for legislative change. We have discussed with the government how some of the Consortium proposals would increase the risk to pensioners; and that it would therefore be dangerous to accept those proposals.

In order to allow the government to better understand the extent of the increase in pensioner risk that the Consortium proposals would impose, BPG asked an actuary to quantify the impact of those proposals in terms of the funding requirements for the Bell Canada defined benefit pension plan. We have discussed the actuary's conclusions with government, and have shared the actuary's report with them.

The actuary looked at the pension plan report filed by Bell for its plan as of the end of 2007, which is the most recently filed plan report. The actuary compared the solvency liability of the plan, as filed by Bell in that report, to the solvency liability of the plan that would have been calculated under the proposals made by the Consortium. Specifically, the actuary considered the impact of two proposals:

- The elimination of the indexation provisions for purposes of determining funding obligations.
- The change of discount rate in the calculation of a plan's liability.

The actuary concluded that these proposals would have yielded a calculated liability of \$8.8B, rather than the \$11.8B calculated by Bell under today's rules, a difference of approximately 25%. About two-thirds of that change comes from the removal of the indexation provisions.

This analysis means that, if the Bell Canada plan were to wind-up, it would actually be unable to meet about a quarter of its obligations while, according to the proposed rules, it would be considered as "fully funded".

When we talk of increasing the risk to pensioners, we are referring to the risk of a plan not being able to meet its obligations if it were to be wound-up, that is, if the assets of the plan were to be dispersed to plan members and the sponsor were to cease making contributions. Obviously, Bell Canada's pension plan is NOT being wound-up. Nor is there any indication that Bell Canada is in any danger of being forced to wind-up its plan. If we could assume that Bell and its pension plan would remain in perpetuity (or at least until the last DB beneficiary dies), then the "risk" disappears.

However, there are no guarantees: the news concerning Nortel and its pension plan make that reality all too clear. The Nortel situation points out the shortcomings of existing legislation. Even the current rules are not strong enough to protect the pension promise. Weakening the rules further, as the Consortium proposals would do, would make the situation even worse for pensioner security.

This is the message that we have been delivering to government, both in our discussions and in our written submissions to them.

It is too early to get a reading on what the government will do as a result of their investigation into the pension legislation. Their intention is to put any legislative amendments before the House by the end of the year. One can surmise that a Fall federal election may well mean an adjustment to that timetable. In the meantime, the BPG will continue to pursue the matter with government, and with the political parties.

For additional information on pension plans, please consult our article titled "Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Pension Plans" in our last newsletter or visit our web site at: <http://bellpensionersgroup.ca/index2.php?lang=en&chapt=Corporate>

BPG Board of Directors 2010 Nomination Notice

The terms of several of the current Directors of the Board of BPG will expire in early June 2010. This is to advise you that elections for the Board of Directors will be held at all Chapter Annual General Meetings, which will be held in the spring.

Some of the existing members of the Board will decide to serve again, while others may not. The nomination process is an important tool for recruiting new candidates to fill our Board positions. The issues of today for pensioners require strong leadership and energy, in order to ensure that BPG survives and continues to address the needs of its members.

The BPG bylaws require a minimum of seven Directors and allow for a maximum of eighteen. Board members are elected by the membership at large. (Chapter Chairs are elected by the members of their own Chapter and are automatically appointed to the Board. There are 5 Chapters, located in Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec, Southwestern Ontario and Toronto.)

The main role of a BPG Board member is to help set strategy and manage the affairs of the organization. In addition to the commitment of several hours per month, Board members are expected to participate in monthly conference calls and attend two Board meetings per year in Montreal. Chapter Chairs have the additional

responsibility for the Chapter administration, which includes local meetings and the distribution of bulletins. Other Directors may serve in officer positions or as the head of a special committee. Aside from the monthly conference calls, communication between members of the Board and also between local Chapter committees is largely done through e-mail. Hence computer network access is a necessity.

BPG members are invited to submit names of interested parties, who have indicated their willingness to serve as a Director at Large for a two-year term, beginning in June 2010. Both the nominated candidate and the nominator must be a member in good standing of BPG.

A nomination form is attached to this bulletin. All nominations must be received by December 31, 2009. No nominations will be accepted after this date.

A Nominations committee, composed of Pam Went (Past President) and Raymond Bertrand (President) will review submissions and present a slate of nominated candidates for election at the Chapter meetings in the spring.

BPG 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATION FORM

This form should be used to submit a candidate for the position of Director at Large. One form is required for each candidate submitted. Both the nominator and the nominee must be members in good standing of BPG and the nominated candidate must have agreed to allow his or her name to stand for election. Please complete the requirements below and mail or e-mail this information by December 31, 2009 to:

Pam Went
3282 Williamson Rd
RR#4 Cobourg, ON
K9A 4J7
or
pamwent@bellpensionersgroup.ca

NOMINATED CANDIDATE

The following candidate has agreed to serve as a Director at Large of Bell Pensioners' Group

Name.....

Address.....City/Town.....

Province.....Postal Code.....

Telephone.....e-mail.....

NOMINATED BY

Name.....

Address.....City/Town.....

Province.....Postal Code.....

Telephone.....e-mail.....

Jim Murray appointed to Ontario's Advisory Council on Pensions and Retirement Income

On July 30, 2009, Ontario's Minister of Finance announced the 13 members of the new Advisory Council On Pensions And Retirement Income. Jim Murray, outgoing representative for Ontario pensioners on Bell's Pension Information Committee (PIC), has been appointed as one of the members of the Council.

The government of Ontario has stated that, "with the number of seniors projected to more than double in Canada over the next 30 years, it is moving ahead with long-term reforms to strengthen the pension system for Ontarians and increase Ontario's competitiveness. The members of the Council, who all have significant knowledge of pension issues, reflect a range of stakeholder perspectives. Together, they will provide ongoing advice to the minister on pension reform proposals and help keep the government informed on stakeholder viewpoints."

Jim Murray has been the PIC representative for Ontario pensioners for the last six years and

has played a central role on BPG's pension committee. He has primed the preparation of the majority of BPG's position papers on pension reform over the last few years. Recently, Jim became acting president of the Canadian Federation of Pensioners, a growing network of pensioner groups (including BPG), that together represent 150,000 retired individuals across Canada.

According to Jim, his nomination to the Council "is a significant recognition that pensioners are now considered as key pension plan stakeholders...rest assured that I have been appointed to the council to be the voice of/for pensioners and I will take every opportunity to make sure we are heard." Jim's nomination is a recognition of his very real qualifications and rewards the leadership that BPG has demonstrated in getting the pensioner accepted as an important stakeholder in the pension process.

Can You Help us find these folks ?

As usual we have lost track of a few members and would appreciate hearing from anyone who may be able to help put us back in touch with any of the following: Edith Hall, Claresholm, AB; William Hillis Oakville ON; Ralph Jones, Cobble Hill, BC; Barbara Murphy, Gravenhurst ON; David Owen, Thornhill ON. Please remember to inform us if you move.

Toronto Chapter Member Survey

In July we conducted a survey of members who have an email address to better understand their use of the Internet, Email and Forums and also took the opportunity get some feedback on the BPG newsletter and Website, We sent the survey to 2094 email members and 555 responded for a 26.5% response rate. The following is a short summary of our key findings.

Internet Usage/Forum

While slightly less than half of our email members access their email and the internet several times a day the rest use it less frequently and many are not too comfortable navigating. It appears that most people were not interested in Forum type discussions and were not aware of the forum. It does not appear that our members are ready to embrace the use of a forum at this time. It's just not their cup of tea, so pursuing this initiative at this time would be a waste of resources.

When we send out newsletters and other information we should provide a link directly to where the information can be retrieved rather than expecting our members to make 2 or 3 navigation steps. Some of our email members have difficulty finding the newsletter so we need to simplify access. Hopefully this will also improve the renewal rate for email members which always lags the postal members.

Newsletter

People are pleased with the newsletter and it's content and there were suggestions for content. A few commented on the layout of the newsletter on the internet. It seems that while a layout in columns for those who receive print copies is okay we need one without columns for internet members.

Other Issues

Many raised the issue of the outdated dental benefits for pre 2000 retirees. Our mandate is to preserve benefits however we need to address this issue so it is better understood. Some people wanted us to have more social content and even to make members lists available. Again the latter is not possible due to our privacy policy, but we may be able to provide information about those organizations whose prime goal is to provide a social outlet for retirees, as is done by other chapters.

General Meetings

As one would expect many cannot attend the General meetings and some would like to see us split the meetings to the East and West of Toronto. While we have visited many locations in the East none have been suitable. Satellite meetings are being planned for communities outside Toronto and other solutions will be sought for sharing the General Meetings to our members besides the newsletter.

The Organization

In general people are very pleased with the organization and the efforts of Corporate and Chapter volunteers. There appears to be some need to better inform our members of the work of some of our committees particularly the Membership and Communications committees.

Summary

In summary the internet based survey tool was fairly easy to use, the most difficult part was determining what to ask and how to construct the response choices. Considering that it only cost us about C\$25 for a one month membership to use the Survey Monkey tool it was an efficient way of soliciting input from our members and we have gained better insight into how we can use this tool in the future. The survey results are available at the following link which can also be found at the chapter website:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=P7xzO0qR5UNvQwPyvVZ4JCtWcy6AKNviq_2bgNOd4ORHA_3d

Are You Aware

COLA Calculation on Temporary Pension — If you opted for a temporary higher pension prior to age 65, your COLA allowance will be calculated and compounded annually based on the total pension amount you are receiving. However when your pension is reduced at age 65 the compound amount of COLA will be re-calculated based on your new, reduced pension amount. This means your accumulated COLA amount will be reduced accordingly. There are sample calculations in the Benefits handbook that spell out what payments are made before and after 65 and how COLA is calculated.

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- The annual fee of \$20.00 covers the period from January 1 to December 31.
- Fees for new members, received after Oct 1 2009, will be applied to 2010. Amounts over \$20.00 will automatically be credited to future years.
- Please make the cheque payable to: Bell Pensioners' Group
- If you have already paid for 2010, please use this form to recruit new members.

Place an "X" beside appropriate option. Please enclose cheque for \$20.00.

New Application : I wish to become a member of the Bell Pensioners' Group

Renewal: I wish to renew my current membership for the 2010 year

Family & Given Names:		Initials:
Address:		Month/Year Retired /
City or Town:	Province	Postal Code:
Telephone:	Email:	
I would like to receive my newsletters by:	Email <input type="checkbox"/>	Mail <input type="checkbox"/>
Signature:	Date: (dd/mm/yy)	

Please mail completed form along with your cheque to: Bell Pensioners Group, P.O. Box 5-Stn "D"
Etobicoke, ON, M9A 4X1