

The Ottawa Valley Branch Report

Spouses Pension Advocacy Committee

Steve Fahie, Webmaster for Ottawa Valley Branch, has been active in an advocacy group called the Spouses Pension Advocacy Committee (SPAC). This is a grass-roots effort to lobby the government for removal of various clauses in Federal Superannuation Acts that deny survivors pension benefits if the pensioner's marriage occurred either after 60 years of age or following retirement, depending on the Act in question. This had been identified by FSNA as one of their "Key Issues" during the Fall 2008 Federal Elections. The Committee members are for the most part also FSNA members, but are acting as individuals and not on behalf of FSNA.

On January 11, 2010 Steve attended a news conference on Parliament Hill held by Peter Stoffer, NDP Member for Sackville-Eastern Shore. Mr. Stoffer was urging the Government to take action to remove these clauses, and include it in the next budget. He is the NDP critic for Veteran's Affairs, therefore his Bill C-210 had been to remove the clauses from the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act. After consultations with SPAC, he has decided to expand the scope of his Bill to include all of the Federal Superannuation Acts, once Parliament reconvenes. Mr. Stoffer and the Committee consider these so-called "gold-digger" clauses to be antiquated, discriminatory and out of touch with today's social realities. The Federal Acts impacted

are the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, the RCMP Superannuation Act, the Judges Act, and the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act.

You can find out more about the Committee's activities at the group web site,

<http://groups.google.com/group/spousespensionadvocacycommittee>

When this page comes up, go to the 'Pages' link on the upper right-hand side for a description of the committee and more informative links.

Ottawa Valley Branch website

Your OVB website includes not only branch news but links to national office information, other branches; pension and medical & dental plans; membership information and links to information on seniors and retirees, entertainment & sports as well as health specific websites. www.fsnaottawavalley.ca Of course, you're also welcome to call any Board member, listed on the back page, if you have a specific question.

An Apology from your Membership Chair

Please accept my apologies for your receiving a letter saying you owed for 2009, after you had paid. Allow me to explain what happened.

In November 2009 we had over 200 members paying by cheque, whose names were sent to me by our national office as a file called "members outstanding". This means these members have yet to pay for 2010. However, included in this group are members owing for 2009, 2008, 2007 and 2006. I had created a separate file of all owing for the past years and it was supposed to be mail-merged with the letter you received. Unfortunately it got mail-merged with the original file containing all the members owing for 2010 and that is why you got the wrong letter.

With regards to the note at the bottom of that letter, relating to having Dues Deducted at Source, this was from our President, Jim Piche, in an effort to reduce my time. Sometimes this is in excess of 40 hours a week, as a volunteer. My wife is patient, but only to a point!

Here is a brief look at how my time is spent on membership. The bulk of the time is spent on attempting to find members who have changed their address and not advised us. This requires checking the Ontario obits information, also using Canada 411, and contacting nursing homes and long term care facilities in the areas where the members were last known to have been. Some members do not pay because they no longer wish to be a member. It would help if these members simply advised me. The next greatest time is spent on contacting members who are delinquent. During late November and December there is a fair block of time spent on the mailings of reminders, and then the membership cards.

In an effort to speed things up I have been using mail-merge to create the letters and envelopes, but one still has to stuff the envelopes and seal and stamp them.

Several members have paid twice for 2009. I have created a file for these members, and when it is membership time for 2011, I intend to advise those members at that time that they are already paid.

Thank you all for your patience,
Larry Palmer

2009 Annual General Meeting



Constable Angie Atkinson, of the Carleton Place detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police, describes the Drive Wise program to OVB members.

Over 80 OVB members listen as President, Jim Piche, gives his annual address, explaining his participation in national FSNA issues.



Limited Usage Drugs Under the Ontario Health Care Plan

If you are currently taking a particular prescription medication that isn't working as well as another might, and this other drug is not on the OHIP approved list, talk to your doctor about a change. If he feels that it might be a better drug for you and he prescribes it, there's a good chance that OHIP will cover it. See below for details.

- A) If you are over 65 years of age and your doctor prescribes a drug, it will be paid for by OHIP.
- B) If you are a Home Care patient (any age) and your doctors prescribes a drug, it will be covered.
- C) If you are in a Nursing Home or covered by Social Services and your doctors prescribes a drug, it will be covered.
- D) If you have no coverage or are without work (at any age), if a doctor prescribes a drug, it will be covered. A small deductible will be charged according to your ability to pay.

For more information, contact Ed Rockburne, your PSHCP/PSDP representative



In Case of Emergency

Are you familiar with the acronym 'ICE' in relation to your cell phone? We may have covered this in a branch report a couple of years ago, but it bears repeating.

You are in an emergency situation and hospital staff or emergency personnel need to call your family member or friend. You are not capable of giving them this information. Recently, emergency staff are starting to look for contact information on our cell phones. If you have these numbers stored on your phone as ICE 1, ICE2, etc. they can quickly and easily notify your family or friend that you are in hospital.

If you are like some of us, and don't use your cell phone very often, your biggest challenge will be to find the instruction manual so you can put these numbers in your phone!

Laughter activates the immune system and decreases stress hormones

- A little boy was overheard praying: 'Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am.'
- A flight attendant's comment on a less than perfect landing: 'We ask you to please remain seated as Captain Kangaroo bounces us to the terminal.'

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