



Bell Pensioners' Group

Together, Protecting our Pensions and Benefits since 1995

OTTAWA CHAPTER, INCLUDING ONTARIO EAST, NORTH & OUTAOUAIS

Fall 2023 Newsletter

Upcoming Meeting

October 25th, 2023, at the Nepean Sportsplex

Dear BPG Members,

I hope you and your families enjoyed a great summer.

The daylight hours are slowly getting shorter, and the leaves are starting to change colour. Despite the summer-like temperatures we've enjoyed in the National Capital region of late, it's starting to look and feel like Fall.

At the beginning of the electronic Newsletter we send to you, you'll see your personal BPG membership number, along with the year during which your membership fee is paid. You are a member in good standing up until the end of the year shown. We encourage you to pay your membership fee by E-transfer if possible as this reduces the amount of work for our treasurers. E-Transfer payments can be sent to treasurerbpgottawa@gmail.com.

Having your membership number readily available makes it easier for you to enroll in the travel insurance program offered by Manulife.

In this Newsletter you will find: ...

1. The President's Message
2. The Pension Committee update
3. Vacancies at the Ottawa Chapter that need to be filled by BPG Volunteers
4. A list of new Members
5. A brief History of our Ottawa Chapter

On behalf of the Ottawa BPG Leadership team, I want to thank each of you for your ongoing support. I look forward to seeing you, sharing a coffee, and chatting at our next face-to-face Fall Meeting on October 25th at the Nepean Sportsplex. Hope you'll mark the date on your calendar!

Claude Elliott

Chair BPG Ottawa and North East Chapter

President's Fall Message:

WOW! What a summer. Nature threw everything it had at us. I hope you weren't adversely affected and if you were that things are being corrected quickly and to your satisfaction.

The many BPG volunteers have been busy working primarily on **Strategic Plan** items. The BPG document repository, known formally as the VGM, is being cleaned up. Thousands of documents are either being cleared or zipped. **Development of a new website with a member only portal is progressing and will be available for general access later in the fall.**

The Manulife travel insurance offer has been quite successful with over **3,000** members subscribing to the offer. Given the declining number of defined benefit members, **the board has expanded the membership eligibility to include defined contribution members.**

For members who have **auto and/or home insurance with The Personal**, you will be getting a **small refund** given the good performance of the plan as it relates to Bell and Bell pensioners in October.

Discussions on resolving the **1998 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)** error continued during the summer. Some progress was made after members of the executive team met face to face with Bell's pension team. Bell has proposed a solution, but the manner of implementation has yet to be resolved. To that end, our lawyers filed a motion to have the class action certified. A judge has been appointed and a case conference is scheduled for late September. Thank you to the named plaintiffs for stepping forward. They have been very patient with the process. **See the latest update below.**

On the topic of COLA, a small group of pensioners covered by the Terra Nova Tel pension, under the Bell Aliant pension, will be getting a small increase. The Terra Nova Tel pension does not have an indexation option, so those pensioners have not been beneficiaries of any COLA adjustments since they retired. No doubt, every little bit is welcomed.

Enjoy the remaining days of summer and have a great fall season.

Antonio (Tony) Lépine

BPG President

Summary of Bell's Action Plan to resolve the 1998 COLA Error:

The Bell Pensioners Group is pleased to let you know that Bell has decided to correct the 1998 Pension Indexation error as requested. Please see the Bell proposal.

The plan applies to individuals who received a pension in 1997.

Active pensioners or surviving beneficiaries:

- Active eligible pensioners/beneficiaries will receive a 2% indexation for 1998 (instead of 1%) which will increase the monthly pension amount
- Retroactive amounts for the period from 1998 to 2023 will be paid with an annual interest rate of 2.2% added
- Eligible retirees/ beneficiaries will receive an adjusted pension starting with the October 2023 payment
- The retroactive amounts will also be paid at the end October 2023

Estates of eligible employees/beneficiaries who died after January 1st, 2020, or later:

- Those estates will receive a retroactive amount in the name of the estate
- Payment will be mailed in November 2023

Estates of pensioners/beneficiaries who died prior to January 1, 2020:

- The estate executor will need to contact the Benefits Administrator
- Bell Canada will issue nationwide newspaper and radio advertisements with information on how to contact Bell
- The notice period will be 2 weeks long

Bell Canada will establish a call centre to take calls and answer questions.

Information sessions will be held in October and November for eligible individuals.

The plan was developed under the supervision of the Office of the Superintendent for Financial Institutions (OSFI).

BCE 2024 COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment):

Statistics Canada has published the year over year inflation rate for August. It came in at 4%.

As a result, BCE pensioners should receive a COLA adjustment as follows:

- *BCE Pensioners under age 65: 2%*
- *BCE Pensioners age 65 and over: 2.4%*

BCE Pensioners should receive confirmation from BCE in the coming weeks.

Update from the Pension Committee - Pension Watch

The Bell Canada Pension Fund continues to show a solvency ratio above 115%; a Pension Information Committee (PIC) meeting between pensioners representatives and Bell is scheduled for September 26 and detailed information will be available to pensioners later this fall.

BPG continues to work closely with its twenty-two (22) partners at the Canadian Federation of Pensioners (CFP) and the main focus will remain the protection of defined benefit pension plans, with a priority on the following strategic objectives:

- Monitoring the implementation over the 4-year transition period of the Federal law C-228, which brings pensioners to the front-line for settlement (like the banks), in the event of insolvency & bankruptcy of defined benefit (DB) pension funds;
- Ensuring there is informed consent from pensioners for changes to pension plans;
- Requiring full solvency funding for DB pension plans;
- Ensuring fiduciary responsibility of companies to limit for instance dividend payouts, executive bonuses, share buybacks, when pension plans are underfunded;
- Recommending a common language on pensions for better understanding by all stakeholders, including regulators and legislators;
- Fostering education on retirement income and pension security with younger active workers as well as pensioners;

WE NEED YOUR HELP – LOCAL CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

In order to maintain our success as a BPG local chapter, we need volunteers to fill the following positions that are currently vacant:

1. Newsletter Editor- as the editor, you are not required to write the newsletter but, rather, organize and format input from others.
2. Event Organizer – as the event organizer, you will coordinate meeting logistics and catering with the Sportsplex.
3. Co-Chair – as Co-Chair, you will work with the Chair with a view to assuming that role within a year.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these positions, please reach out to me, Claude Elliott, at chairbpgottawa@bell.net.

NEW MEMBERS

Gordon Edward (Ted)
Norton
Paul Holmes
Norma Armstrong
Basil Simpson
Doug Staver
David Van Bridger
Ken Carter
Rena Collyer
Frances Holmes
Colleen Twolan
Michel Cadieux
Leon Cote
Lorie Radtke

Douglas Robinson
Brenda Geen
Douglas Whately
Earla Hill
Carol Piontek
Wesley Thorne
Kathy Vizena
Donald Pumphrey
Christopher Rioux
Leanne Barry
Peggy McNulty
Rodney Green
Francine Galimberti

Shelley Fyfe
Marnie Sabatino
J. Paul Kee
Brenda Lilly
Claude Lalonde
Douglas Stephens
Peter Hudson
John Lacoste
Derrick Morrow
Arthur Bouffard
Bernard Berry
Patricia Roberge
John Brand
Gordon Walker

OTTAWA NORTH AND EAST – A BRIEF CHAPTER HISTORY

August 12, 1994 - Everyone was shocked to hear that Confederation Life, a 150+ year-old Insurance Company with a previous AAA rating was being liquidated. Bell Employees and pensioners were upset to find out that their Supplementary Pension was not guaranteed.

May 11, 1995 - The organizational structure and mandate of Bell Pensioners Recovery Group (BPRG) was approved and confirmed at chapter meetings held May-June 1995. The Ottawa Chapter Chair of the founding organization, Bill Tawse, led the Chapter until 1996.

On March 4, 1996, BPG became a legal corporation upon receipt of the letters patent. We encourage you to read "Commemorating BPG's 25th anniversary" written by Dan Braniff which sets out all of the

actions undertaken by the founding BPRG group, ideally by clicking on “Commemorating BPG’s 25th anniversary”]

<https://www.bellpensionersgroup.ca/index3.php?chapt=ontariocentral&lang=en§ion=29>

The Ottawa North and East Chapter (formerly Ottawa Chapter) has been privileged over the years to have had a group of very hard-working and dedicated volunteers, including:

- Bill Tawse, who was part of the founding organization and chaired the Chapter until 1996
- Bob McLaughlin, who took over the reigns as Chapter Chair from Bill and continued through until 1997
- Dave Barr, who followed Bob and continued on as Chapter Chair until 2003
- David Fair who filled the Chapter Chair role from 2003 until 2008
- Mark Davidson who assumed the Chapter Chair position in 2008 through 2010
- Marlyn Easterbrook who held the Chair role for ten years - from 2010 until 2020
- Claude Elliott, our current Chapter Chair, who took over from Marlyn in January 2020

We want to extend our thanks to all our members who continue to support our chapter. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the volunteers who have so willingly and generously shared their unique skills and experience with us.

“Our best security is a strong BPG and our strength is in our membership!”

Check out our Social Media links

Facebook Page

Check out the BPG Facebook Page! It’s a great way to connect with friends and peers, share your stories, find valuable information, and keep in touch. Check out the great videos of Board volunteers and members sharing their thoughts on the importance of BPG at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BellPensionersGroup>

LinkedIn

Check it out and follow us on LinkedIn at:

https://www.linkedin.com/company/bpg-ontario/?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_search_srp_all%3BGf%2F%2F9RoVTF%2B4vXS67ndaJA%3D%3D

Subscribe to Bell InTouch Newsletter:

- On <https://intouch.bell.ca> click on the In Touch by email section in the bottom left corner to register your email address

- By email at intouch@bell.ca

- By telephone at 1-877-666-7474

For any questions related to your Pension or Benefits, contact Bell Employee Services:

- By email at employeeservices@bell.ca

- By telephone at 1-888-400-0661

- By mail at 1, Carrefour Alexander-Graham-Bell, A-4, Verdun, Quebec H3E 3B3

Bell Benefits Website:

<https://www.benefits-avantages.hroffice.com/>

Great news!
Your home and auto insurance plan has generated surplus earnings.¹

Over \$6.4 million will be redistributed to plan members in 2023.

Find out more
thepersonal.com/bell
1-888-476-8737

Bell

25 years of partnership

thePersonal
Home and Auto Group Insurer
Group rates. Preferred service.

The Personal refers to The Personal General Insurance Inc. in Quebec and The Personal Insurance Company in all other provinces and territories. The Personal® and related trademarks are trademarks of The Personal Insurance Company, used under licence. Certain conditions, limitations and exclusions may apply.
¹ A \$125 payment will be issued for each auto insurance policy in force on December 31, 2022, and a \$100 payment will be issued for each home insurance policy in force on December 31, 2022. The payments will be issued in October 2023 according to the client's payment method on file for each eligible home or auto insurance policy.

Your home and auto insurance plan has generated surplus earnings!

Did you know? In 2023, surplus earnings of over \$6.4 million will be redistributed to members of the Bell home and auto group insurance plan.

If you had a Bell home or auto group insurance policy in force on December 31, 2022, you'll receive \$125 per auto insurance policy and \$100 per home insurance policy in October. Stay tuned!

Learn more about The Personal: thepersonal.com/bell

**COMTECH FIRE
CREDIT UNION**

1 Year Term Deposit	18 Month Term Deposit	5 Year Term Deposit
4.60%	4.65%	4.25%

Rates valid until October 31st, 2023

Rates for new deposits only, renewals
not included

Rates apply to regular terms, TFSA, RRSP
and RRIF terms

Please call our Member
Support Center at
1 (800) 209-7444

9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Monday to Friday

WWW.COMTECHFIRECU.COM