



# Bell Pensioners' Group

Together, Protecting our Pensions and Benefits since 1995

## **OTTAWA CHAPTER, INCLUDING ONTARIO EAST, NORTH & OUTAOUAIS Spring 2024 Newsletter**

Dear BPG Members,

As I prepare this newsletter introduction on the first day of Spring, it appears that we had spring temperatures in late February and now we are back to winter temperatures. I hope you and your loved ones are doing well.

Your Corporate and Ottawa, Ontario East, North and Outaouais Chapter leadership teams have had a very busy first quarter. We have introduced a new web site and member Portal, a new credit card payment service and migrated our membership data to Quick Books making our accounting system standard across all seven chapters. Plans are well underway for our chapter's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on May 8<sup>th</sup> at the Nepean Sportsplex. More details with the complete AGM agenda will follow in a separate invitation. Meanwhile, please save the date.

In this first Newsletter of 2024, you will find:

1. President's Message
2. New Web Site and Member Portal
3. Travel Insurance
4. Message from Steve Longeway – 2024 Nominations Committee Chairperson
5. New Chapter Members
6. Your BPG Ottawa, Ontario East, North and Outaouais Chapter leadership team
7. Key BPG information

On behalf of the Ottawa Ontario East, North and Outaouais Chapter leadership team, I want to thank you for your support, and we look forward to meeting and chatting with you at the AGM on May 8<sup>th</sup>. Like previous AGMs, it will start with registration and social hour at 8:30 AM and the formal meeting will start at 9:30 AM.

Claude Elliott and your BPG Ottawa, Ontario East, North and Outaouais Chapter team

### **1. President's Message**

I seem to start my messages with a comment on the weather. This will be no different. This winter, Canadians have experienced every type of weather system possible, massive snowstorms in the Maritimes, record breaking warm weather in central Canada, cold and snow in the prairies and lots of rain on the west coast. It has been frustrating for skiers, snowmobilers, ice fishermen and many others who like to enjoy a traditional winter.

Environment Canada says the average temperature for December, January and February has been more than five degrees warmer than historic norms. Those numbers are even more remarkable given that it combines weather station data from everywhere in Canada. Despite the wild weather, the BPG team has been busy working on the strategic plan objectives.

Just recently the team introduced a **new website** that now includes a **dedicated portal that is accessible to members only. Members can now use a credit card payment application to renew their membership and can even turn it into an annual subscription with no need for the membership primes or the treasurer to remind the member that their membership needs to be renewed.** The team will also consider posting articles and information in the portal that only members will be able to access. This will be **another added value component to the membership.**

The transition from local tracking of payments and membership info is gradually transitioning to a **centralized database within Quick Books Online (QBO).** The transition has been challenging but the team is nearing completion with the smaller chapters now fully transitioned.

The introduction of a **group travel insurance program** has been quite successful. Approximately 4,000 members have taken advantage of the plan. The jury is still out on ease of making a claim. Informal feedback would indicate that some folks have had no problem in making a claim while a few have had some challenges. Hopefully, Manulife's claims processing organization will resolve the issues over time.

Several pensioners have been asking if they can **opt out of any dental insurance coverage to take advantage of the Federal dental plan.** We have asked Bell if this is possible. They have agreed to investigate the options and get back to us with their findings. They have, however, cautioned us that it will take some time since they want to be as thorough as possible to ensure that they don't provide incorrect guidance. As soon as we hear back, we will share the information provided by Bell.

I am happy to say that pensioners, survivors and estates (Bell Canada only) who were **receiving pensions in 1997 have had their pensions corrected to account for the error Bell Canada made in calculating the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for 1998.** The Statement of Claim filed with the courts was never turned into a Class Action lawsuit. Our lawyers will soon be filing a Motion of Discontinuance to cancel the Statement of Claim.

There is **one outstanding issue and that is the legal fees BPG has incurred in pursuing the legal actions. Given that Bell refused to correct the error on at least 5 occasions, we have asked Bell to help in defraying our legal costs. Obviously, legal fees could have been minimized had Bell agreed to pursue a solution earlier than they did.** They initially refused to help with the legal fees. They have since offered a token amount that will not make a dent in the outstanding fees. We recently met with Bell, no lawyers present, to pursue this further. There is a glimmer of hope that they may offer more but time will tell.

**The pensions administered by Bell continue to perform very well.** In BCE's Q4 results, they stated that they would continue to take a contribution holiday in 2024 assuming that: *"... the pensions remain in funded positions with going concern surpluses and maintain solvency ratios that exceed the minimum legal requirements for a contribution holiday to be taken for applicable DB and defined contribution (DC) components."*

I have, in previous messages, indicated that we would be issuing a **survey** to gauge the satisfaction and input of our members. Given the significant amount of work expended by the team over the last year, we will be delaying that strategic imperative for the time being so that our volunteers can catch their breath. However, if you have an issue, a concern or a suggestion, please don't hesitate to contact your local chapter and share that with them. Depending on the input it can either be addressed at the local level or at the national level.

I think I have exhausted all I have to say for this update. Given that the spring equinox will have passed when you read this, I wish you a warm and enjoyable spring. And for the total eclipse of the sun on April 8<sup>th</sup>, please take all necessary safety precautions when viewing the event.

Antonio (Tony) Lépine  
President, BPG

## 2. New Web Site and Member Portal

BPG introduced a new Web Site and Member Portal on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. To access the members' portal, you must be a BPG member in good standing and your membership paid up for 2024. If not, you will be instructed to renew your membership.

Follow the instructions on the website. We have also provided a "Help" tab on the main menu of the website that provides additional learning resources.

**First, go to the BPG Website address: [Bell Pensioners Group / Groupe Pensionnés Bell |](#)**

There is a LOGIN button in the top right-hand corner of the website. **Your login user id will be your email address and your password will be your BPG member number.**

Once you log in, **we suggest you change your password. Click on Account. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and select Change Password.**

Once you have logged in, you will see a lot more information for members only, including on your chapter site. Check out the National Homepage as it will provide the latest news and will direct you to the discounts and services section. Links and Member Resources will provide access to valuable information. Chapter local events will be highlighted on your chapter site.

### **Some Navigation Tips:**

1. Ensure you have the most up to date browser.
2. Holding down the "CTRL" button plus the "R" button simultaneously will refresh your browser.
3. Clear your cache on a regular basis.
4. Use the back and front arrows to move through the screens.
5. Click on the main menu selections for dropdown menus.
6. Use the Home icon for returning to Home
7. The blue menu is for the National site.
8. The yellow menus are for the Chapter sites.
9. Use the Search key for searching for key words.
10. If you need assistance please send a message to [ottawa@bellpensionersgroup.ca](mailto:ottawa@bellpensionersgroup.ca)

### 3. Travel Insurance



Travel Insurance - Exclusively for BPG members....

A reminder for all existing travel insurance policy holders: You must renew to keep your travel insurance policy active or forfeit eligibility into the program. In addition, you must be a BPG member in good standing to be eligible for this offer.

**For those who enrolled into the Manulife Travel Insurance program in 2023, renewal forms and instructions will be emailed to you during the month of April.** This will be your opportunity to renew for one more year as well as make changes to your coverage should you wish to do so.

It's at this time that you will have the ability to:

- Renew your policy for another 12 months exactly as-is;
- Renew with a different individual/family option;
- Renew with a different trip duration; or
- Renew with a different coverage option of All-Inclusive or Medical Only (this change requires a change in policy number).

**New BPG members have ONLY 60 days to enroll after becoming a member. For more information, please contact:** [ManulifeGroupTravel@canamti.com](mailto:ManulifeGroupTravel@canamti.com)

**Note:** Manulife identified a list of providers that they will no longer deal with. Log into the Manulife site and this list can be found under your claims history at the bottom under Wellness centre. For legitimate providers, look under Wellness centre in the main menu.

**If you have any issues, please call Manulife directly not BPG.**

**The \$20 investment for your BPG membership provides access to extremely competitive travel insurance rates as well as keeping you well-informed on your pension!**

### 4. Message from Steve Longeway – 2024 Nominations Committee Chairperson

I would like to personally thank all those who have come forward and accepted positions with BPG. Your generosity will not go unnoticed by the membership. Over the first few months this year, we have received inquiries and interest from our membership and, as such, we have been active and successful in attracting new volunteers to join BPG. We still have a vacancy open as we continue to search for a qualified person to take over the position of **Director at Large – Legal Matters**. As usual I have supplied a

short outline of the job qualification and if you or someone that you may know of is interested, please contact me at [steve.longeway@gmail.com](mailto:steve.longeway@gmail.com)

**Position available: Director at Large - Legal Matters**

Your responsibilities as Director at Large – Legal would be to acknowledge and follow the BPG Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy and participate in the management and oversight of the affairs of BPG. Attend meetings of the Board of Directors (BOD) of BPG on a regular basis and serve on at least one BPG committee. The Director at Large – Legal would be asked to advocate on behalf of the interests of the membership. You would be asked to participate in a knowledgeable and responsible manner in the decision-making activities of the BOD; work with and interpret legal advice provided by our legal firm; provide strategic advice and guidance to the Board on pertinent issues based on your knowledge and experience; and take on the responsibility for managing tasks as required at the discretion of the Board.

**5. New Chapter Members**

Therese Audette	John Close	Sergiy Karpus	Edward Seabrook
Stephen Blanchard	Douglas Cooper	Suzanne Kinnear	M. Catherine Sherwood
Myriam Boyer	Robert Cummins	Doreen Laviolette	Christine Short
Colum Brady	Diane Desilets McDonald	Deborah McDonald	Douglas Shurtliff
Robert Brock	Stuart Erskine	Nicole McNamara	Shelley Sissing
Elizabeth Bulloch	Jeffrey Fairs	Richard Miller	Charles Slade
Neil Cameron	Gregory Fraser	William Miller	George Sowinski
James Carty	Julie Griffith	Michael Mooney	Len Streefkerk
Bonnie Cattanach	Denyse Griffiths	James Perry	Jeffrey Sullivan
Daniel Chapman	Gisele Gunderman	Kathryn Purcell	Nancy Truesdell
Louise Chartrand	Jean Henderson	Edwin Ralph	Colleen Turner
Theresa Cheeseman	Wayne Jerome	Alexa Ryan	Suzanne Veillette
Bruce Cheeseman	Christopher Jones	Gary Sandelli	
Bruce Chisholm	Anne Marchand	Jeff Scrivens	

**6. Your BPG Ottawa, Ontario East, North and Outaouais Chapter leadership team**

Thanks to the members who have joined the Chapter team of volunteers. The **Succession Planning** position still needs to be filled. Please contact our Chapter Chair, Claude Elliott, at [chairbpgottawa@bell.net](mailto:chairbpgottawa@bell.net) if you think you might be interested.

(\*New Member)

<b>Chair</b>	Claude Elliott	<b>Communications</b>	Susanna Cluff-Clyburne
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Ron Haag*	<b>Meeting Planner</b>	Millie Garbuio*
<b>Past-Chair</b>	Marlyn Easterbrook	<b>Records Management</b>	Brian Mclean
<b>Succession Planning</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Membership</b>	George McDougall
<b>Secretary</b>	Marg Eades	<b>Past Treasurer</b>	Ernie Goldberg
<b>Co-Treasurers</b>	Michelle Dupuis/Hana Ghadban	<b>Web Masters</b>	Terry Acker / Walter Arksey
<b>Member-at-Large</b>	Harvey Hillier		

## 7. Key BPG information

BPG is great at keeping its members informed of the latest news and provides articles of interest that we feel our members would appreciate. **Check out the BPG National website at:** <https://bellpensionersgroup.ca/>

Want some social interaction in these trying times? Be part of the BPG Facebook community where you can hear the latest and greatest and connect with old friends at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BellPensionersGroup>

### **In Touch:**

The latest issue of In Touch will come out in **June 2024** – [bce.ca/intouch](https://bce.ca/intouch)

### **Important Numbers:**

1. Bell Benefits Administrator at 1-888-400-0661 or <https://www.benefits>
2. Bell Employee Services at 1-888-391-0005 or [employee.services@bell.ca](mailto:employee.services@bell.ca)
3. The Personal Home or Auto Insurance, visit [thepersonal.com/bell](https://thepersonal.com/bell) or call 1-888-476-8737
4. Manulife Health and Benefits through Bell Canada, [manulife.com/signin](https://manulife.com/signin)
5. Manulife Group Travel Insurance, **exclusively available to BPG members only** at [ManulifeGroupTravel@canamti.com](mailto:ManulifeGroupTravel@canamti.com) or 1-888-332-3007

### **BCE News:**

**Have You signed up for BCE News to keep informed about the latest news? If not, here is the link:**  
<https://bell.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=29919>

### **McMaster Aging Portal:**

Your source for healthy aging information you can trust.  
<https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/>

### **The Retirement Hub:**



<https://retraite-retirement.service.canada.ca/en/home>

### **The Personal Blog:**


<https://www.thepersonal.com/blog?province=Ontario&langues=English&provinceConfirmer=true&grp=groupnotselected>

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## COMTECH FIRE CREDIT UNION

1 YEAR TERM DEPOSIT	18 MONTH TERM DEPOSIT	5 YEAR TERM DEPOSIT
4.65%	4.50%	4.00%

Rates valid until April 30, 2024

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

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