

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2010

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National Pensioners and
Senior Citizens Federation



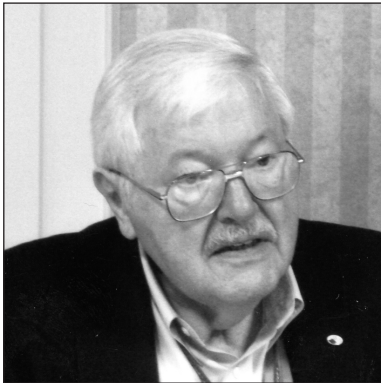
La Fédération National Des
Retraîés et Citoyens Agés

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE NEED INPUT !!!!



Art Kube

The NPSCF Executive's lobby of Federal Members of Parliament was very successful: not only were we able to meet with a good number of Liberal and New Democratic Party Members of Parliament, but for the first time since the Conservatives formed the Government, we met with a cabinet minister. We spent over an hour with the Honorable Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State in charge of seniors. Ms. Ablonczy was very attentive and had a very good grasp of seniors' issues. Our main points of discussion were: pension insurance; increases in the Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS); and the doubling of the Canada Pension Benefits. We also discussed the need to provide assistance to

seniors' organizations to help them to engage in programs where "seniors can help seniors" with health literacy, social connectiveness and Age Friendly Community planning participation. Ms. Ablonczy promised to keep us in the loop and consult us. She also indicated that the Government might assist us in setting up seniors' health literacy and program development clearing house in Ottawa.

.... Continued on page 4

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New mail out for fall edition

THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS AND SENIOR CIIZENS FEDERATION INCORPORATED

National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation Executive

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**“Don’t Plan For Seniors,
Plan with Seniors”**

THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS AND SENIOR CITIZENS FEDERATION INCORPORATED

OBJECTIVES

The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation is an organization devoted entirely to the welfare and best interests of Canada's elderly.

1. To promote and establish and foster Seniors' Centres (called Clubs or Groups) and Regional and Provincial Seniors' groups throughout Canada.
2. To provide education for persons in the retired and senior citizens age group and other individuals interested in aging, and the status and well being of seniors.
3. To reach out to seniors who are lonely, or isolated, or at risk.
4. To provide programs which promote healthy active lifestyles for seniors, thus sustaining mental and physical health.
5. To assist in developing the knowledge that seniors should learn during their aging process, through promotion of educational experiences.
6. To research the aging process, and any problems and benefits pertaining to the aged that might be of interest to the Federation and to use the knowledge gained from that research to educate seniors and any other party or parties who are or might become interested in these concerns.
7. To provide opportunities for seniors to utilize their volunteer and leadership skills for the benefits of all persons.
8. To consult with other private and public organizations which offer similar services in order to gather any educational information that will add to knowledge and be of use to seniors and the public.

**** Notice ****

The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation is an organization devoted entirely to the welfare and best interests of Canada's elderly.

All editorial matter published in this NPSCF newsletter represents the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the publication's editor or the NPSCF. Statements and opinions expressed do not represent the official policy of NPSCF unless so stated.

Holidays

**On holidays we fain must go,
And always we look forward so
To travelling far into the world
To see the sights of which we've heard.
We hurry off as if on wings
To see all those fantastic things!**

**Hot and tired home we creep
With aching head and swollen feet,
Cramping back and neck akink,
Stiff of limb and eyes ablink,
Hoping that at home we may
Get rested from our holiday.**

"Have a great summer holiday"

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE NEED INPUT !!!!

At the Executive meeting in Ottawa we decided on Ottawa as the next convention city and the dates being October 21st, 22nd and 23rd. This brings me to the main point of this editorial, namely a request, especially to our smaller affiliated groups, to submit resolutions to the convention. We need to know what your group or club thinks and would like to propose on issues like pensions, healthcare, taxation, elder abuse, the environment, housing and home support, the economy and other important issues affecting our daily lives. It is important that we, as seniors, continue to participate in public policy discussions or else others will debate these issues and act on them in ways which, in many instances, are detrimental to us seniors. Even if you're not able to send a delegate to the convention, we urge you to submit resolutions, and I assure you that these resolutions will come to the floor of the convention. We need your input.

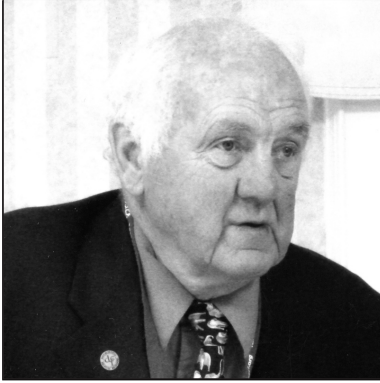
The issue of pensions is starting to gather some momentum. Recently I participated in a town-hall meeting organized by the Federal Government on pension reform. The vast majority of people who spoke supported our position of expanding public pensions. There was no sentiment to leave income security to the private sector, especially after the catastrophic performance of the financial sector in the last few years. It would be wise for the Federal Government to heed the advice of these town-hall meetings and move decisively on pension reform. If implemented pension reform could wipe out future poverty among seniors and reduce the great number of seniors who rely solely on OAS and GIS. The issue which seems to be the sticking point is the increase in the OAS and GIS, because that is where the urgency exists. Poverty and homelessness among seniors is on the increase, especially among older women. Unfortunately not enough voices are speaking up for seniors who are in poverty. Our organization feels it's a national disgrace for a rich nation like ours to have poverty among children and seniors; therefore, the priority in pension reform should be for increases in the OAS and GIS. What we have seen, however, is the opposite, like the Harmonized Sales Tax which will hit poor seniors hard

So get these resolutions in and hopefully we'll see you in October in Ottawa.

Art Kube,
President of NPSCF

***A man is not old as long as he is
seeking something***

Past President's Message - Art Field



Art Field

This government in Ottawa will not give seniors a decent raise in their pensions or GIS but can pay former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney 1.8 million for his legal costs related to the public inquiry probing (his) the former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney financial relationship with Kartheriz Schieber, who has been sent to jail in Germany for 8 years for tax evasion.

Also the cost of the Oliphant Commission was over \$12 million and they also paid \$65,000 legal fees for Fred Doucet, Mulroney former senior advisor.

But this government will not look after seniors that need help. Some of our seniors are using food banks because they are short of money.

I saw an article in the Toronto Star that private hospitals in Alberta, and B.C. are going bankrupt. In B.C. some patients are suing the B.C. government for reimbursement of fees they paid for surgery normally covered by Medicare.

In Quebec the Premier, who is a liberal, and used to be a Tory is going to charge \$25.00 per visit to see a doctor.

It is amazing that Federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff says that sounds fine by him. This contravenes the Canada Health Act where it says any kind of user fee is outlawed. I don't think Marjorie Begin, who was health minister in Trudeau's government, would agree with leader Ignatieff's position on this. A Toronto physician, Michael Rachles, pointed out that the real cost in health care are those services that lie outside of Medicare proper, mainly drugs. Provinces can control health care costs if it would use its bargaining power to lower prices.

Budget Analyst out of Federal Washington, DC offices, reveals part of the problem in the following statistics. These drugs are sold out of COSTCO.

1. Celebrex – (100 mg) Consumer price 100 tablets \$130.27. Cost of ingredients \$.60
2. Claritin – (10 mg) Consumer price 100 tablets \$215.17. Costs of ingredients \$.71
3. Lipitor – (20 mg) I take these 100 tablets \$272.37. Costs of general ingredients \$5.80

This is some examples why drugs are so costly – high profit for drug companies, and drug stores. (These are American statistics).

Pensions.

Pension Plans are going broke because companies are not paying their share into their plans. Now some people are saying public pensions are too rich so they want workers to take less, even though they work to earn a good pension. The (CLC) Canadian Labour Congress, is going across the country in a campaign to upgrade the CPP and OAS and GIS for all retirees

.... continued, Art Field, Past President

Their campaign asks everyone to send a message to your Member of Parliament.

Canada is at a crossroads, just like it was forty years ago when it was time to do something about our health care system. Today, we need to do something about retirement income, and we need to do it soon.

Get the facts on our solutions!

The federal government must:

Phase in a doubling of payouts from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP).

Immediately increase Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for all retirees.

Create a national pension insurance fund to ensure that workers' defined benefit pensions aren't at risk when employers go under or speculative bubbles go bust. The United States has a pension guarantee fund covering up to about \$50,000 of pension income.

All that's needed is some leadership from the federal government. Which is why we need you, to tell your Member of Parliament, that you support the Canadian Labour Congress' campaign for "Retirement Security for Everyone!"

We made Canada a better country when we moved forward together and created a health care system that works for everyone.

Let's do it again and give every Canadian the chance to retire from work and live their last years in dignity.

.... continued, Art Field, Past President

Buying Canadian – Building Communities Matters

When you purchase the items you do today, do you think about where they come from? Do you think about who made them? Do you think about where they are made or grown?

With the state our economy is in today, these questions are more important than ever.

Why do we “**BUY LOCAL**” To help our local economy and the people in “**Our Community**” of course.

If we only purchase and import goods from out side our community, our friends and neighbours who grow and raise our food will suffer. Those who manufacture furniture and other products will no be able to make a decent living. those who build housing and other structures will be in the same position.

Purchasing Goods and Services from Canadians is important. In doing so, we give Canadians work and keep the money at home “**Not sending Canadian dollars to another Country. Canadian Made Does Matter**”

“There must be strong Canadian Content regulations to ensure that Canadians get the jobs resulting from our own public purchases.”

We need a “**Buy Canadian Act**” similar to the American “**Buy American Act.**” This would guarantee priority for Canadian workers and companies to provide goods and services required for government programs and procurements. The U.S. government requires a minimum of 60 % American content for all federally funded public transit projects. We should do at least as much to support Canadian jobs.

Japan and Korea “**DUMP**” the cars made in their countries into Canada by the hundreds of thousands and limit the number of cars made in Canada to only a few hundred. They have **closed economies.**

Buy Canadian legislation would simply put us in line with other nations around the world, and spending our money at home just makes sense.

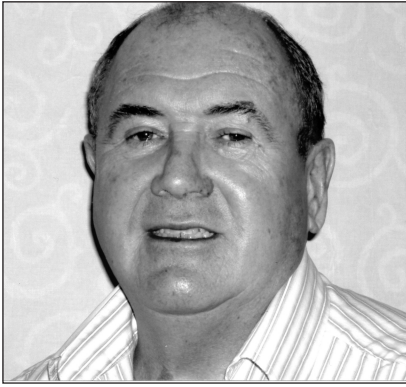
In closing I urge you to call or write your M.P. on problems that seniors are having or let your M.P. know your position on things that are going on that affect you.

In closing.

The starting point for all achievements is desire. Keep this constantly in mind.

submitted by Art Field

Greetings from your 1st vice president: John Gatens



John Gatens

Greetings; I find it difficult to write original articles since the newspapers are filled with opinions and so called facts. In this modern world of electronic devices and gadgets which boggle the mind of many seniors, I am going to rely on my own observations and relay them as I see them.

Ageing, as I see it, has dramatically changed. Statistically if you live beyond age 65 the chances of reaching 85 is highly probable. We are now seeing many more seniors living beyond 100 years it is believed that future seniors will live much longer and with modern science and breakthroughs in medicines, and surgery techniques it is quite possible that thousands of future seniors will live well beyond 100 years. Now the problems raise their ugly head and that is the quality of life. Getting back to my observations.... My old mom is 93 and still lives in Scotland in her own little house within a senior's village. She enjoyed a full and healthy life up until about her eighties then the slow killer struck! She had a bad fall and at that time she lived in her old house alone and wasn't found until the next day by one of my sisters. Now to set the stage for my story, my mother is one of the lucky seniors because my three sisters all live very close to her and are constantly in close touch with her on a daily basis. That fall prompted them to seek different accommodations for her subsequently the "senior's village" merely minutes from where two of my sisters live. In her eighties my mother had a knee joint replaced and continued to enjoy her independence living alone doing everything for herself, I forgot to mention she was, and still is a very proud and independent woman, however, during the last few years she has had FALLS both in her home and outside which rapidly aged her. Each fall naturally concerned my sisters for her welfare and they insisted she have someone to come to the home and dress and bathe her each morning. My mother reluctantly agreed, now she is over ninety years old. My mother now had that emergency button round her neck to press in the event she needed assistance, or had a fall etc. Despite all of these precautionary steps my mother continued to have those dreaded FALLS aging and further debilitating her and sending her to hospital for emergency treatment. Quite recently my mother had another fall that sent her to hospital, this time she was kept in for weeks because she had developed pneumonia and they now had serious concerns about her ability to live in her own house. After assessment it was decided she could continue to live in her own place, "Incidentally it would have killed her to be sent to a facility to be outside her own environment" It was now decided that she had to have someone come in every morning for dressing, bathing and breakfast, someone to come in at lunch and supper, and finally someone to come in for a bed "Tuck In" and ensure she takes her medication. My mother again reluctantly agreed to the conditions and is once again home in her own little house. My sisters continue to make and supply most of her meals and because she wont take meals supplied from the system which incidentally she would have to pay for. She is according to my beloved sisters back to her grouchy ways.

I now understand why they say that Falls are the greatest cause of deaths among seniors and that they slowly suck life's blood from them and surely affect their quality of life. So anything we can do to help prevent falls should be done.

I believe my mother has been extremely fortunate in that she has had the continued ongoing loving close relations with my sisters to whom I owe a debt of gratitude, and I should mention her granddaughters without whom my mother would have fallen victim to the faceless nameless and for the most part, couldn't care less, system that deals with seniors in most parts of our world. I can only thank them and bless them for being there for her.

2nd Vice Presidents Report

Sheila Righi



Sheila Righi

First our weather here in this part of “Saskatchewan”, is cause for depression for me, and makes it difficult to focus on brighter days ahead. We get three days of rain and or snow, one day of sunshine then back to rain and cold temperatures, certainly not conducive to agriculture, which is the main source of income in this area.

On May 25, 2010 Industry Minister Tony Clement was interviewed on , “CBC The Current,” re: Disability at risk for 1.1 million Canadian workers, Unsafe Long Term Disabled Benefits. Canadian Workers are recording their exposure to the toxic insurance in long term disability benefits. Diane Urquhart and Independent Financial Analyst, who has been working with National Pensioners and Senior Citizens, has been researching “Toxic Insurance”, and wants to get information out to encourage Canadians to find out whether the long term disability benefits provided by their employer or union are safe. After becoming ill or injured in an accident, will you become a victim or your “Disability Plans”, fine print. To save money, Employers and Trustees for Union Health and Welfare Trusts, take the risk of offering disability coverage by paying income and medical claims from employers operations and money within the Health and Welfare Trust. Employees receive their communications printed on the companies insurance letterhead, which appears all is quite legal, but if the employer restructures or declares bankruptcy, or your Union Health and Welfare Trust closes or becomes insolvent your disability benefits and income can end.

Currently in Canada, Toxic Self-Insured Long Term Disability Benefit Plans have no regulations, no auditing, no financial disclosure and no minimum funding requirements. A long term disabled employee of “Nortel” says his advise to Canadians to vigorously opt out of Toxic Insurance plans at your work place and proceed to protect yourself with alternate personal, “Disability Insurance.” Do not rely on your employers.

The M.P.’s and Senators of our Country have the information, the tools, and the power. Will they vote to protect all Canadians who are currently disabled or may become disabled while being exposed to “Toxic Insurance”. Bill C-501 protection for all retirees, severed and disabled employees?

Many of our Seniors will not benefit from this but our “Support” has to be there for those who will be a senior or those who will be 65 years of age soon. The basic dignity of persons with disabilities should be protected.

In closing my wish to all is to have a good summer, good health and stay active.

Respectfully Submitted
Sheila Righi

REPORT FROM 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT Mary Fleck



Mary Fleck

Here it is, the middle of June and summer is trying very hard to raise her beautiful head. She just has to try a bit harder!

The world news is not great. The terrible, uncontrollable oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico with globs of oil spreading up onto the beautiful white sands of Panama City and on to the shores of Louisiana.

There are more uprisings between North and South Korea and turmoil in the Gaza Strip.

Then .. the “Natural” disasters. The quote sign is there because we wonder how many are really natural or are they caused by human error or human greed. Dig, dig, dig for more oil! Never mind if fish spawning grounds are destroyed. Ignore the disruption to wild life.

This same greed of some people has disrupted the lives of many hard working, thrifty people. People who worked, saved, little by little and when there was enough some invested what they deemed to be in safe stocks. All this thrift and savings in order to have enough money in their old age to remain independent and not become burdens to their children or to the state.

Some of us don't have to try to imagine the feeling of these folks. Some among us have and still are experiencing the shock of knowing this money earned and saved has gone from their accounts and into the “Golden Handshakes” for the very ones to blame for the terrible deed!

Personally, I did find a reason to be very pleased with people in general.

While in Ottawa in March for our meeting with parliament and MPs from each party, I had a “mishap”. Before I go into what happened I wonder if you remember the news accounts of the young man in New York City who came to the aid of a lady being accosted by another man. The young man was shown on news clips laying on the street beaten, he was kicked by passer bys or being stepped over. No help offered.

When I fell, people gathered the contents of my purse including my cell phone, found my scratched-up glasses and assisted me. An usher came out of a church and started to call 911 for an ambulance, I asked him not to (I wasn't sure if I would be covered out of province), so a “cabbie” came forward and said he'd take me. He did, but first shut off his meter. He refused any money and he took me right to the admission desk and disappeared.

In the hospital everyone was so considerate. From ward clerk to aids, nurses and doctors and technicians thoughtful and pleasant. They gave me a DVD of the x-rays for my own doctor, they also made a phone call to the hotel so I could let them know where I was and what happened.

In a short time Sheila arrived, thank goodness. I do not know a soul in Ottawa and I was so happy to see her standing there within a very short time!

When they were finished with me, Sheila and I returned to the hotel for our lunch. Would you believe that my sandwich came all cut up into quarters, making it easier for me to pick up with one hand.

Even the airline was most considerate, I was met with a wheelchair, taken through security and wheeled on to the plane. In Halifax I was met with a wheelchair, my luggage was picked up for me. It was nearly unreal.

See what a wonderful country we are in! Maybe not perfect, but ... people care about people!

All this from a CANADIAN BY CHOICE!! God bless us, everyone.

*I would like to extend a Great Big THANK YOU to
my friends of the NPSCF Executive, for their concern and
care during my resent mishap in Ottawa.*

Thanks again – Mary Fleck

Winnie Fraser MacKay

- Member at Large



Winnie Fraser MacKay

AGING GRACEFULLY

"Seniors" anything but frail

The general perception of aging is, people are unable to cope. We hear a variety of ageism statements for example, you're frail, weak, too old to be driving your vehicle, or you are manor, long term care material.

I am a member of the Geri Collation representing seniors as an advocate to improve the image of aging .I attended a face to face meeting in Toronto and our goal is to increase interest (or at least decrease bias against) fields with a focus in care of older people.

What we want Canadians to know is the majority of seniors are active and healthy members of the community.

The paradox of aging is, you have a visible deteriorating body but in most cases that co-exists with a very vibrant mature and wise inner self, in actuality 7 to10% of seniors are frail but the majority of seniors are able bodied and well.

There are certain measures that seniors must take to stay healthy. Most importantly seniors must know their medications and not be afraid to ask their doctors questions. It is their right to know about their health in general. There are a variety of drugs on the market that seniors should avoid and Geriatricians don't approve of eg; benzodiazepines, this includes most sleeping pills

Seniors are most likely to fall while taking the drugs and they increase confusion. Other drugs to resist are codeine which doesn't relieve pain as well as morpheme and has more side effects and the over the counter Gravol which increases confusion. Demerol, older anti-depressants and cold remedies should also be used with caution.

When seniors are admitted to hospitals for lengthy stays they are often put on Benzodiazepines and most seniors stay on the drug when they go home, this is especially dangerous because this drug is so addictive. As people age their social circle sometimes shrinks, their friends die and their world can become smaller. It is so important for seniors to keep an active social life by balancing exercising their brain and body. It is important that seniors physically exercise thirty minutes three times a week. Exercising their brains can sometimes be challenging especially if you live alone. A number of games are geared to more than one individual eg. scrabble, bridge etc. However more seniors are becoming more computer friendly giving them the ability to participate in such activities.

A few years ago while I was attending a workshop on healthy aging and the speaker Dr Tim Stultz a Geriatrician ended his presentation with this question "If I can promise everyone in this room another twenty years of life but you would be sick and bed ridden most of those years or another five years of life but you won't be sick which would you choose?" The people in attendance 65-95 replied in chorus loudly the second choice "Five years and healthy"!

As an advocate for seniors and in my own research on aging gracefully with dignity and in promoting healthy living I become more aware of today's seniors issues.

I find it shocking that with Canada facing a growing aging population that we continue to have a serious lack of services and a shortage of professionals, who can provide a specialized care that older adults need.

I look forward to your comments and advice on how we as seniors can assist to improve the image of aging. Have a wonderful summer.

Submitted by
Winnie Fraser MacKay

Greetings from Jack Morrison, Member at Large

PENSIONS

Whose problem is it?

The immigrant who comes to Canada, the uneducated citizens of Canada that work for minimum wage or just above minimum wage? They work for 40 or more years because that is the only work they can find or are qualified to work for.

How do these people save 20% - 30% for retirement like the government suggest when their income goes to shelter, utilities, food and clothing and most days there is not enough for their basic needs.

How do you save for your retirement?

Government's answer is "it is not our fault that you did not make enough money".

Or is it the worker that has invested money for their retirement in the stock market only to have most of the investment wiped out because of a major crash, as in 2009? What happens to these people who thought ahead only to be left with little or nothing to live on?

The government's answer is "not our fault that you did not invest your money wisely".

Or is it the worker who has a company pension and benefit? This person chose to invest in the program instead of additional wages, only to have the company take away the benefits and greatly reduce the pension because they cannot afford to pay anymore or have gone bankrupt but not before its executives are paid huge bonuses!

The government's answer is "not our fault that your company has bargained in bad faith. It is the company as there is no law to state otherwise".

Have you noticed that the government is quick to blame others for these problems? They are not willing to pass laws to prevent these problems from happening as they sit on their big fat pensions that were made possible by the people above. When will they open their eyes to see the real world and not just their own?

The MP's have listened they have just voted themselves a 10% increase in pensions \$114,000. a year for 10 years of service!!!

Jack Morrison

From the desk of the Treasurer Sandy Carricato



Sandy Carricato

The Ontario government is attempting to cut the cost of generic drugs. If Ontario can pull this off, other provinces will not be far behind, because they are all struggling with rising health-care costs, including the cost of drugs.

Ontario could see the costs of its Drug Benefit Program for the sick and elderly increasing at double-digit rates. So four years ago, (George Smitherman) the health minister at the time came up with a plan to curb these rate increases. The plan took aim at brand name multinationals, generic manufacturers and the pharmacies that sell drugs.

These multinationals are known as Big Pharma.

The move to clamp down on the prices charged by generic drug firms makes sense. Over the last 10 years expenditure on drugs has been rising at an average of 11-12% a year, way above inflation. These increases are unsustainable, putting enormous pressure on both public and private plans.

We have to ask ourselves ‘Why are drug costs rising so fast?’

You will hear that we have an aging population; you will hear that people are able to leave hospital earlier with drugs to help them; and then there are the new miracle “me-too” drugs.

These so called miracle “me too” drugs almost the same as drugs already on the market, there might be a slight difference, it could be a different colour a different size, but therapeutically it’s the same drug. Of the drugs that Health Canada approves each year, 85% are “me-too” drugs. These drugs are never compared to any other drug already on the market, and it certainly doesn’t mean because it is new it has to be better.

Standing between you and the prescription drug is the doctor. So Big Pharma focuses on reaching your doctors and convincing her/him to prescribe the newest, most expensive drug. Drug companies spend large sums of money every year on every doctor in Canada in order to do this. This expenditure includes the cost of the sales reps who constantly visit doctors, bringing them information, brochures and free samples, free trips, conferences and payments for presentations.

This is how generics and cheaper brand names are being by-passed over in the rush to the ‘new’ and more expensive drugs. As patients we have to become more informed about drugs and what we are being prescribed!

Big Pharma is out to make mega profits on the backs of the sick and elderly.

Sandy Carricato

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Fern Haight



Fern Haight

FROM MY HOUSE TO YOURS

Summer will be here in another week and so will our longest day. Then the days will begin to shorten and we all know where that will lead us.

Our spring has been wet, wet, wet. We have had 12 inches of rain since April 1st.

We not only are making history with the amount of rain we are getting, history will probably be made in the farming industry. Many crops will probably not be seeded in 2010, including mine. It is too late now and of course still too wet. One thing in life we cannot control is

the weather.

This week I had another birthday. Something else we cannot control is ageing. Ageing is an automatic process, but there are many studies done on how to age well. If you think your old self is going to be just like your young self, only saggier and greyer, you will probably be sorely mistaken. We definitely will have to cultivate new strengths and find new strategies to live well in old age.

Research has surfaced a few principles to age by:

1. It may be too late to change, but now is the time to become who you are.
2. If you push yourself too hard to stay young, you'll get old faster.
3. To accept the indignities of ageing, you need to appreciate the advantages of being old.
4. If you have a life partner, you need to figure out whether she or he is a partner for life.
5. If you're lucky enough to live a long life, know that you likely won't be healthy.
6. You will regret things you didn't do more than things you did.
7. Now, when you're too busy for your friends, is the time you should be working to keep them and to make new ones.
8. The most valuable part of your retirement savings plan is your emotional circle, and it can't be bought.

A new strategy for ageing we might try is "laughercise".

Many studies have been done by Dr. Lee Berk, from Loma Linda University, California, regarding laughter and ageing. After twenty years of studying the impact of laughing on the human body, doctors describe "mirthful laughter" as "internal jogging" because it can lower blood pressure, reduce stress, boost the immune system, stimulates the appetite and lower cholesterol.

This means "laughercise" could be a way to reduce heart disease and diabetes and regulate the bodies vital functions. Repetitive laughter is similar to the effect of repetitive exercise. From these studies we can see laughter is especially important to the elderly, who may find it hard to perform more physical activities. So throughout the ageing process remember "Keep Laughing"

You don't stop laughing because you grow old you grow old because you stop laughing.

Have a great summer everyone. Stay safe and enjoy.
- Fern from Saskatchewan.

Pharmaceutical R&D Spending Drops to Lowest Level in 20 Years

Only 7.5% of brand-name drug companies' Canadian sales revenues spent on research and development

By Jim Keon

Research and development spending in Canada by brand-name drug companies has dropped to its lowest level in 20 years, according to the latest annual report of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB).

The PMPRB reports that in 2009, brand-name drug companies spent only 7.5 percent of their Canadian revenues on research and development in Canada, marking the ninth consecutive year that brand-name drug companies have broken their promise to spend at least 10 percent of their domestic sales on R&D.

The PMPRB report also shows that in 2009 the brand-name industry spent only 1.8 percent of its Canadian sale revenues on basic research that could lead to the discovery of new medicines.

The federal government has increased monopolies for brand-name drug companies no fewer than eight times since 1987. Canada's intellectual property regime exceeds our international trade obligations, yet these increasing monopolies have not resulted in the investments that Canadians were promised in 1987. What's worse, brand-name drug companies continue to lobby for longer monopolies that will increase Canada's prescription drug costs.

The PMPRB's findings and other information related to prices of pharmaceuticals in Canada are contained in a new report released today by CGPA. Copies of **The Real Story Behind R&D Spending by Brand-Name Drug Companies in Canada** are available at www.canadiangenerics.ca.

Some of the key findings of the 2009 PMPRB Annual Report include:

- Domestic R&D spending by pharmaceutical patentees represents just 7.5 percent of their Canadian revenues – far below the 10 percent threshold to which the industry committed in 1987 when market monopolies for brand-name companies were increased. The R&D-to-sales ratio is now at the lowest level since 1988.
- Patentees reported spending \$237 million on basic research in 2009, or 1.8 percent of their Canadian sales.
- In 2009, there were 22 new active substances introduced in Canada. Of these, only one was in Category 2, which the PMPRB defines as “one that provides a breakthrough or substantial improvement”. The vast majority, 21, were in Category 3, which the PMPRB states “provide moderate, little or no therapeutic advantage over comparable medicines.”

Jim Keon is President of the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association (CGPA)

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NEWS RELEASE
from Minister of State Ablonczy

news release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minister of State Ablonczy announces new National Seniors Day

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, June 16, 2010-Today, the Honourable Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State (Seniors), introduced a bill in the House of Commons entitled "Celebrating Canada's Seniors Act."

This bill supports the creation of a National Seniors Day to recognize the significant and continuing contributions seniors make to their families, communities, workplaces and society.

"Our government is proud of Canada's seniors. They built our country, and deserve our thanks," said Minister of State Ablonczy. "National Seniors Day will be an occasion to honour older Canadians and show our appreciation for their contributions to our country."

National Seniors Day would be celebrated every year on October 1, coinciding with the International Day of Older Persons. By designating October 1 as National Seniors Day, Canada can join other countries in reflecting on the vast contributions seniors make to the economic and social fabric of society.

Minister of State Ablonczy's announcement-a commitment made in the 2010 Speech from the Throne-came while she was joining Mr. Jean-Guy Soulière, Chair of the National Seniors Council (NSC), and other Council members at the NSC's annual meeting. Minister of State Ablonczy also announced the Council's new priorities and the release of its Report on Volunteering Among Seniors and Positive and Active Aging.

"Canada's seniors are more active, healthier and living longer than ever before, and therefore many will be working past the age of 60," explained Minister of State Ablonczy. "That is why I have asked the National Seniors Council to look at two new priorities: labour force participation and intergenerational relations."

.... News Release from Minister of State Ablonczy continued

"The Council was honoured to meet with a number of stakeholders across Canada last year, including many seniors and seniors' organizations, to find out how seniors can stay healthy, remain active and continue contributing to society," stated Mr. Soulière. "We are pleased with our report on volunteering among seniors and positive and active aging, and look forward to talking to Canadians as we tackle our next priorities."

Since 2007, the NSC has met with seniors and seniors' organizations across Canada in its examination of matters related to the well-being and quality of life of seniors, including the opportunities and challenges arising from a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse seniors' population.

The Government of Canada is working hard to help improve the lives of seniors on many fronts, including:

- * Appointing a Minister of State (Seniors)-someone who can bring the concerns of older Canadians to the attention of the Government and stand up on their behalf;
- * Providing significant tax relief to seniors and pensioners through measures such as income splitting and increasing the Age Credit; and
- * Supporting the New Horizons for Seniors Program, which helps seniors use their leadership, energy and skills to benefit communities across Canada.

The NSC was created in 2007 to provide advice to the federal government on matters related to the well-being and quality of life of seniors. For more information on the Council or to view its newest report, please visit www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca
<<http://www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca/en/home.shtml>> .

For more information on the Government's programs and services for seniors, please visit www.seniors.gc.ca.



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May 2010

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