

National Pensioners and
Senior Citizens Federation



La fédération nationale des
retraités et des citoyens âgés

Winter 2011

NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 Issue 4



Tis the Season - This is the time of year that makes us aware of the less fortunate. Please give all you can over the holiday season to make someone else's Christmas memorable.

Season's Greetings to you and your family for a safe and healthy holiday season.

THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS AND SENIOR CITIZENS FEDERATION INCORPORATED

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



President

Barry Thorsteinson

NPSCF Applies for Pan-Canadian Project on Elder Abuse

On November 25th our Federation applied for a three year, \$750,000 project to be funded by the federal government under the New Horizons Seniors Program. Our application will be reviewed, along with all other Pan-Canadian proposals submitted. The review period is 4 to 5 months with approved projects to commence in the spring. This autumn's call for proposals is exclusively directed by the government towards elder abuse; we would have preferred a broader program.

Our proposed concept would start in the first year with the establishment of an office in Ottawa and staffed by an Executive Director with clerical assistance. The work would then include the gathering of a library on current writing on all areas of elder abuse including best practices in training. From there, state of the art training modules will be written and tested for optimum effectiveness.

The development of our materials will address all areas of elder abuse including emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual, neglect, and financial abuse. The training will address awareness, detection, assistance and remedial topics and include an interface with other community agencies that have contact with seniors.

The work of the project will be overseen by an Advisory Committee of 3 or 4 volunteer activists from the Federation who will set goals, approve the final materials to be used and monitor progress and results. There will be a rigorous evaluation process built in to identify improvements to be added as required. The backbone of the project will be the recruitment of about 120 volunteer seniors across Canada to deliver the training during the second and third years running. They will be trained in the use of the new modules by the Executive Director or outside occasional trainers. All expenses of the staff and volunteers are built into the program funding.

At this time I would like to thank our partners for their outstanding co-operation with our project. We have Provincial organizations from B.C to Newfoundland and Labrador who have signed letters of support. This was a crucial and necessary component of the application. In addition, we have letters of support from other professionals working on behalf of seniors. Our NPSCF executive all helped to secure these letters in time for the deadline for filing the documentation. A full list of all participants would take too much space here.

We have asserted in our proposal that we have the ability to reach seniors on the broadest basis possible with the participation of our provincial partners and affiliated clubs. We hope to have good news when the approvals are announced in the spring. Thanks to all of you for your strong showing of willingness to be part of this very ambitious initiative.

THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS AND SENIOR CITIZENS FEDERATION INCORPORATED

Website: www.npscf.org
Toll Free: 1-877-251-7042

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 ****

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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.

Deadline for NPSCF Newsletter
submissions is
March 1, 2012



2nd Vice-President
Sheila Righi

Housing, Pensions and Health

Affordable housing is a concern not only for Seniors, but "Low Income" families. We have seen right across Canada the "Occupy" signs in our parks, where tents and other paraphernalia are set up by the "Protestors", requesting better housing and living conditions. City officials telling them to get out, remove their tents even calling on the "Police" if need be to remove them.

A judge from Ontario stated "Anarchism" has a long political history, but Canada has not chosen Anarchism. On the other side how do ordinary Canadians get their message to the Government?

Their concerns need some serious discussion by our Government, otherwise using more stringent and stronger measures to remove them will surely cause retaliation as "Occupy Protestors" say this will not deter them.

For Seniors the "Old Age Pension" and "Guaranteed Income Supplement", do not meet the cost of "Living Standard". Our Government continues to give themselves a raise in pay, while citizens living in "Poverty" receive no help.

N.P.S.C.F. must continue to advocate on behalf of our Senior population as Seniors are living much longer than they did 20 years ago.

Their needs to be better support Programs, homecare, home support, Health and Housing and pensions. We must insist "Seniors" are involved when planning these programs, not others planning for Seniors.

We also need other affiliated organizations to join with us, to help implement changes that will benefit "Seniors" and other citizens of society.

Did you know, you may advertise in this newsletter?
Business Card \$ 25
One Quarter Page \$ 40
One Half Page \$ 75
One Full Page \$150

Seniors are an Asset not a Burden to Society



3rd Vice President

Mary Fleck

Seniors Housing

We senior citizens; as young people usually rents until we could afford to either purchase or build a home of our own. Most of us, with a lot of hard work, did achieve owning our own home eventually.

Now, as an aging population, many of us being widowed, or without our partners, find it difficult to maintain these homes. Maintenance includes repairs, taxes, insurance, paying for electrical power, and general "up-keep". Along with other expenses, purchasing food, cost of pharmacare insurance and the list goes on and on!

Our next step is to go in with family, which isn't always what we would like to do; we want, in some way to maintain our independence. A low cost apartment seems like a good ideas, right?

Probably the best move would be into an established seniors apartment; if there are any available in your area. This of course, is assuming we do not have a restricting disability.

Some problems do exist with senior apartment housing which must be carefully looked at.

#1 - Are there elevators, for those living above the ground floor? You may want to go shopping and do not want to "lug" your purchases up a couple of stairways (or even one).

#2 - Is there an automatic generator, one that does not require a manual start up? This is Canada, where power losses do occur along with the blizzards! During a power loss we still need heat, warm food and drink.

#3 - Are there fire drills practised on a schedule? We have to know all the escapes routes.

#4 - This is a "sometimes" problem, and all seniors do not object; some do! Because these apartments are not always filled by seniors citizens, they are sometimes rented to younger people, or people having trouble getting along in regular apartment buildings. These are situations we must all be aware of, and be agreeable to, they do exist.

#5 - There is a great need for subsidized assisted living seniors apartments, at least on the East Coast. These are especially needed for those having more extreme disabilities, where one may be using crutches, or a walker or wheelchair. Because of this, there are more modifications to be made to the apartments, thus they are more expensive. This, of course is a further financial problem to the senior citizen, and brings the need for subsidy to the seniors.

Problems and all ... these are some of the ways we can retain our independence and privacy when we no longer feel we can run a home and household.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all.



**MESSAGE FROM THE
SECRETARY**

Fern Haight

FROM MY HOUSE TO YOURS

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY AND
HEALTHY NEW YEAR

Another year is winding down and of course that leads into the festive time of the year, Christmas. This can be a wonderful time of the year because normally we take time from our busy schedule to spend with family and friends. What can be more rewarding and cherished than time with one's loved ones! Of course during the sharing of time, we have a tendency to lavish our loved ones with gifts, a very common practice. Then after the festivities are over and January rolls around, all the bills arrive and that is when the harsh reality and bitterness of all our exorbitant spending hits home.

Most of the following year is spent paying for the outlandish spending done during the holiday season. Is this really necessary? Would your loved ones really be happy having a gift you bought on credit and which takes a year to pay for?

There are ways to make this more doable. Communicate with loved ones and tell them in these hard economic times it is necessary to cut back. Decide to draw names amongst your family. There are lots of other ideas out there and they can be a whole lot of fun. Come up with a decision that is affordable, one which doesn't leave you with pangs of anxiety once the air clears and reality sets in.

Does the best gift always need to be monetary? I don't believe so. The best gift you can give is a gift of love. Be thoughtful and show that you care and do things for one another that portrays your kindness and consideration. These gifts of love and kindness will be gifts the receiver will cherish and they will be remembered till their dying day. Remember your loved ones all year round, not just at Christmas time. Give them the love that comes right from your heart. One's love and caring actions are much more valuable than all the material things that money can buy. This Christmas don't put yourself in financial jeopardy, just give a little love.

Have a happy holiday season and do take care, care of yourself and all the others that are near and dear to you.

Join NPSCF or up-date your information; please see page 10 & 11.



**FROM THE DESK OF THE
TREASURER**

Sandy Carricato

Thank you to all of the committees and volunteers that gave their services at convention. We couldn't have done it without you. The coordination of a convention is a tremendous amount of work and complications that arise are so unpredictable but must be dealt with. To any delegate that experienced any difficulty, I can only express my regrets. There is always room for improvement and that is always our goal.

The NPSCF is currently in the process of trying to secure funding for education in elder abuse. It is a topic that needs to be discussed and exists in all socio economic environments.

Many of you know that my beloved Mother-in-Law lives with me. The reason that we wanted her with us is because of what we hear and read about many of the nursing homes. Not all of the homes or personal care workers are neglectful or abusive, but just the idea that it could happen to Mother was something that we couldn't bear.

Elder abuse can take place in a residential setting, or in the community as well. It is estimated that between four and ten per cent of senior's experience some type of abuse.

There are many types of abuse but physical abuse is the one that can often lead to death. Physical abuse can include physical or chemical restraints such as medications. Many seniors are pushed, hit, and are handled in a very rough and brutal manner.

Psychological abuse is playing with the minds of our seniors. Many of the people entrusted with their care are using confining situations, such as keeping them from seeing other family members and friends or isolating those that nurtured and loved us. Their children and care givers are verbally abusive, intimidating, and are diminishing the sense of self-worth of their elders or those they care for.

The most horrible to comprehend is the sexual abuse that takes place. In Toronto a 71 year old woman with advanced dementia was raped in her bed. It is currently being investigated. Her friend and guardian said "I trusted them to take care of her". I tried so hard to find the right home for her and everyone said this was the best." This woman couldn't defend herself she was immobile and couldn't communicate what was happening to her.

In Moncton a 77 year old woman literally rotted to death in her living room chair, her daughter and sole caregiver, watched her sit there for five months, as gangrene consumed her feet and legs. The mother helpless and isolated, ate, slept, urinated and defecated in the chair. How could you let that happen to your Mother!

We have Brian a 69 year old with dementia and lives in a nursing home in Strathroy Ont. His wife believes that he was given a drug called Haldol, a powerful anti-psychotic drug and because of being

administered that drug he suffered a seizure and is no longer able to walk around, and has to stay in bed or in a wheel chair.

Sylvia Bailey suffered two strokes, grew frail and could no longer walk on her own; when a bed opened up at a municipally-operated home, the daughter accepted. Bailey used a wheel chair. The first time she fell out of it was in December of 2009. The force of the fall blackened her eyes. She fell three more times within three months, one day the daughter went to visit her Mother and Sylvia was screaming in pain. Sylvia screamed in pain for 24 days. Never having been given an X-ray Sylvia's leg started to turn black and green an X-ray was taken and Sylvia had a fractured tibia. Sylvia died March 30 of that year.

Financial abuse is the most common form of elder abuse. Most often the crime goes unreported. The victims feel ashamed that they were gullible or that their own family would take advantage of them. This kind of abuse is the misuse of an older adult's funds and assets without that person's knowledge and/or full consent. Particular attention must be paid to elders who are not mentally capable of making a decision.

We know this is happening, we read about some of the cases. We have a problem in our society. What can we do to protect ourselves and our loved ones?

- Believe the person. This can be difficult to do because you might think the perpetrator to be a nice person.
- Do not judge the person. Listen, tell them you care and offer them support.
- Educate yourself on resources available to older persons who are being abused. Call your local community information centre,
- Do not deny what is going on. This person needs your help don't isolate them even more.
- Understand that making efforts to change an abusive relationship is extremely difficult. The abused can be afraid and not certain what to do.
- Encourage the person to seek help and assistance. Offer your help.
Do not confront the perpetrator yourself.

We are being physically, financially, sexually, mentally and abused through negligence. We hear just about the reported cases. We are afraid, ashamed or passive and we need not be. The community needs to come together and help the most vulnerable in our society!

REQUEST FOR DONATIONS

As the treasurer for the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation one of my duties is raising funds.

We would appreciate any donations that our Clubs/ Groups and individual/ family members can make.

Please send your donation to:

NPSCF Treasurer
Sandy Carricato
2389 Head Rd
Port Perry On
L9L 1B4

NATIONAL PENSIONERS AND SENIOR CITIZENS FEDERATION INC (NPSCF)

The NPSCF financial year is from January 1st through December 31st (the calendar year). Club and Group dues are to be paid each year in January and are based on the listing below.

Please complete this Submission Form (Club/Group address and contact) and submit your dues as early as possible.

Annual Club/Group membership dues:	Select	()
Club/Group under 100 members	\$35	()
Club/Group from 100 to 500 members	\$50	()
Club/Group from 501 to 1,000 members	\$75	()
Club/Group with over 1,000 members	\$250	()
Donations would be gratefully accepted.	_____	()

The NPSCF depends on your financial support in order to continue and expand our advocacy efforts.

TOGETHER SENIORS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or write the Treasurer.

THANK YOU

Continued on next page

Visit our website: www.npscfc.org

**Please print all information clearly and submit
with your payment directly to:**

**Sandy Carricato
NPSCF Treasurer
2389 Head Rd
Port Perry ON L9L 1B4**

Phone: 905 985 8170

Email: sandy.carricato@gmail.com

**We need this information in order to keep our records up to date.
The names and phone numbers of your executive board members
would also be appreciated. On occasion this information is helpful.**

CLUB # CLUB NAME

CONTACT ADDRESS

PROV POSTAL CODE

PHONE NUMBER

**Individual/Family membership is \$25/\$35 respectively and
application/payment may be submitted on this form**

If you have any questions please feel free to write or call the TREASURER

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS ISSUE



Member at Large:

Winnie Fraser Mackay

Poverty – Senior's

Where do we as Senior's really stand in our battle to end Poverty in Canada?

The statement made by Senator Art Eggleton our guest speaker at the NPSCF Convention in October states Canada can't afford Poverty and more public awareness would pressure politicians into dealing with this issue.

The Canadian government has already spent several years and thousands of taxpayers' dollars on many, many studies and in 2009 released a litany of recommendations to try and lift people out of poverty. Did this happen ... NO!!

Here are some of the questions frequently asked from our general public bureaucrats and our politicians.

Who are the Poor?

How do we define Poverty?

Is there a Canadian working strategy on poverty that is effective?

What do you think?

Just ask your local antipoverty groups, senior's associations and club members and let us know through this newsletter what your findings are.

Who are the poor? The poor are people of all ages from the infant to the very old, men and women. They are among us, a part of us and yet we ignore them, pretend we do not see them or blame them for their condition of poverty.

How do we define poverty? An easy way to pretend we do not have poverty is to define the socio-economic conditions of poverty in such a way as to almost eliminate its existence. Some economists have argued that there is an absolute dollar amount that can define those who are poor, that poverty is not a condition that is relative to the rest of society. If we were to make this argument then the poorest people in the world would be the same with the same income and living conditions no matter where they live, in Africa, Asia, South America, Canada or Europe.

This is clearly an absurd approach and one that has been rejected by the vast majority of those concerned with the issue of poverty. Poverty is measured in every society based upon its own values of the society it wants and the people that are excluded from the social and economic life expected to be there for all. A child in Canada does not have to be in the identical social and physical situation as a child in Darfur to be deemed to be poor. Most Canadians recognize that we have many people who are poor but because we have failed to agree upon a definition as a nation we do not agree on what the count is of (even how to count) those living in poverty.

Canada and the provinces have failed to develop a national strategy to end poverty but at least a number of the provinces have begun to recognize that they must develop their own strategy for their own population regardless of what the federal government does – or doesn't do.

Major increases in housing, energy and food costs are driving more and more people into poverty and homelessness. Nowhere is the pressure greater than among elderly, single or widowed women who don't have access to private pensions and often very little or no Canada Pension Plan entitlement. Poverty determines all aspects of their physical and mental health and strongly recommends that the Guaranteed Income Supplement be greatly increased especially to surviving spouses who face the same continuing living expenses with their income cut in half. There are many other ways your Government can combat poverty such as fuel subsidies for seniors and low income families and an increase in the minimum wage.

The following are examples of the above questions.

Please work with us so we can lobby our politicians both provincially and federally with your support and participation.

This topic requires a great deal of follow-up over the next year (2012); so please forward your concerns and I will include them in the next edition of this newsletter or on the website.

I closing I want to thank all who were involved in the 2011 Convention without your great enthusiasm and participation we would not have experienced the great success that it was.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



**Opportunities and
Challenges of Increased
Longevity Conference**

**Sponsored by: Council of
Senior Citizens'
Organizations of BC
October 1 & 2, 2012,
Richmond, BC**

**Contact: Pat Brady -
patbrady@uniserve.com**

**Member at Large****Jack Morrison**

First I want to say that I thoroughly enjoyed meeting new friends. It's unfortunate that human nature has us gravitating to those we know but the convention was one that had us mingling right from the first night at the Meet and Greet. It was a great beginning.

Unfortunately at the end of the convention, just as we were adjourning, it was brought to my attention about a very controversial article written by the President of the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc.

In the article he referred to "those retired trade union members who by their actions and words display so much ignorance, but also of the NPSCF itself who apparently condones these actions". He insinuated that there was planning, conniving and threatening behaviour taking place at the convention in 2010. I attended this convention and I am a proud union member. BUT I'm not ignorant, nor have I ever threatened anyone. It simply is not my nature.

I'm wondering where I was when this inappropriate behaviour was taking place. I didn't witness it nor did other delegates that I asked. If we are to go forward, we must look past our minor differences and look at what is pulling us together, the problems that we as seniors have to deal with! It's unfortunate that a salutation such as "Sisters and Brothers" could cause such animosity. I was wondering what would have happened if we had some veterans as members and they addressed each other as "comrades" as they often do, what would the reaction have been!

The veterans that I wrote about fought for our rights and freedoms. They wanted to make this a country where all could speak out. Of course we must be mindful of the feelings of others, but that should not restrict us from debating the issues in a respectful manner. I have said my piece and hope that I don't feel it necessary to defend any of my affiliations again.

Many of you know that a major disaster took place in my life and that of my neighbours and friends in Manitoba. It was a dark and dismal time when we looked at the destruction that had taken place in the spring and summer of 2011. We are still reeling from the events that took place.

Unless you have lived through this kind of destruction, you have no idea of the pain that people go through.

Seniors have trouble coping with this kind of a situation more so than younger people usually. They depend an awful lot on others to help them through and if they don't have family nearby they feel helpless and depressed. They look at their destroyed treasures and memorabilia that they have accumulated over their lives and cry in desolation. Where do we go from here, many ask themselves.

There are government programs to help but many don't know how to access them and often there are time restrictions. As an organization (NPSCF) we should look into how we can make this an easier process, or have someone dedicated to work with seniors and others that don't know how to navigate through the red tape.

My wife and I are more fortunate and are moving on. It hasn't been easy but we can leave the restoration of our home to contractors as we winter in the warmer climate of Texas.

However we are not forgetting about the place we call home and the people that live there, they are in our thoughts day and night. We collectively will get through this and move on.

The Origin of the Twelve Days of Christmas

You're all familiar with the Christmas song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" I think. To most it's a delightful nonsense rhyme set to music. But it had a quite serious purpose when it was written.

It is a good deal more than just a repetitious melody with pretty phrases and a list of strange gifts.

Catholics in England during the period 1558 to 1829, when Parliament finally emancipated Catholics in England, were prohibited from ANY practice of their faith by law - private OR public. It was a crime to BE a Catholic.

"The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written in England as one of the "catechism songs" to help young Catholics learn the tenets of their faith - a memory aid, when to be caught with anything in *writing* indicating adherence to the Catholic faith could not only get you imprisoned, it could get you hanged, or shortened by a head - or hanged, drawn and quartered, a rather peculiar and ghastly punishment I'm not aware was ever practiced anywhere else. Hanging, drawing and quartering involved hanging a person by the neck until they had almost, but not quite, suffocated to death; then the party was taken down from the gallows, and disembowelled while still alive; and while the entrails were still lying on the street, where the executioners stomped all over them, the victim was tied to four large farm horses, and literally torn into five parts - one to each limb and the remaining torso

The songs gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The "true love" mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, it refers to God Himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person. The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge which feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, much in memory of the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered thee under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but thou wouldst not have it so..."

The other symbols mean the following:

- 2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments
- 3 French Hens = Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues
- 4 Calling Birds = the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists
- 5 Golden Rings = The first Five Books of the Old Testament, the "Pentateuch", which gives the history of man's fall from grace.
- 6 Geese A-laying = the six days of creation
- 7 Swans A-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments
- 8 Maids A-milking = the eight beatitudes
- 9 Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- 10 Lords A-leaping = the ten commandments

Seniors air Pension Gripes

Politicians aren't the ones who will feel the pain of small pensions, says a member of the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation.

Ken Roberts said if ordinary Canadians had the same pensions that politicians do, there wouldn't need to be a discussion about pension reform. "Unfortunately, our politicians don't feel the pain."

Roberts was at the N.P.S.C.F. annual meeting in Charlottetown Friday where Liberal Eggleton delivered a speech about the need for additional pension money to ensure seniors don't retire in poverty.

Eggleton gave a 10 minute address to the federation, but the question & answer period lasted three times that long as members of the organization took turns at the microphones to ask questions about pension reform.

Roberts, who worked for Ford for 40 years, said he doesn't know what is going to happen to his pension, but politicians don't have to worry about theirs so taxpayers have to fight for change. He thinks it should be the other way around. "I'd like to see that change," Roberts said.

The Conservative government plans to implement a voluntary pooled pension plan under which employers can choose between several different funds and offer them to employees. Employees, not employers, would make contributions to the pooled plan.

Eggleton said not enough Canadians are building big enough nest eggs to retire and something needs to be done to change that. "I believe that the pension system in this country is stressed."

The government needs to nurture the parts of the pension system that work and address the parts of the system where it is broken, Eggleton said. "We need to fix our pension system."

During the discussion, some of the seniors raised concerns about voluntary or private pensions because they worried about Canadians being able to retire in comfort.

Another referred to Liberal Leader Bob Rae's time as premier of Ontario and talked about changes that affected pensions in that province, at which point someone call Rae a "born-again" politician" now that he is Liberal leader. Eggleton disagreed, "Call it what you like," he said.

It wasn't just the politicians the seniors targeted with Winnie Fraser-MacKay saying she hears from young people who tell her seniors are taking all the pension money. "You've got our CPP (Canada Pension Plan) and there will be nothing left for us when we get that age."

This article appeared in The Guardian Newspaper and was written by Ryan Ross

Submitted by Winnie Fraser-MacKay

Join NPSCF or up-date your information; please see page 10 & 11.

NPSCF Convention 2011





Senior volunteers receive well-deserved recognition

Thelma MacDonald is no stranger to kudos.

Her good, free work over the years has garnered notable recognition.

MacDonald, 72, of Souris is a former Eastern Kings Citizen of the Year. In 1991, she was inducted into the Order of Canada.

Yet such high praise, she notes, is certainly not required to fuel her more than half a century of volunteer spirit.

"You would do it anyway," a soft spoken MacDonald told The Guardian.

Still, the former mayor of Souris was clearly moved Monday when she was among five people named as 2011 Senior Islanders of the Year. The others are George Dalton of Summerside, Tina Davis of Stratford, Sheila MacKay of Bloomfield and Malcolm Patterson of Montague.

MacDonald fought back tears as she returned to her table after accepting her award during a ceremony in Charlottetown. She says the acknowledgement is particularly meaningful since her nomination came from the Silver Thread Seniors Club, one of many groups that have benefitted from her volunteer work. "I do appreciate it for sure," she said.

Still, her motivation to volunteer has always been the same. Simply put, she likes helping people.

When the native of Tracadie moved to Souris in 1959, she joined the Catholic Women's League. She has remained a volunteer for 52 years and counting.

Lord knows how many hundreds of fundraisers she has taken part in by baking and selling food as well as rallying others to chip in with money going to both local and Third World causes.

MacDonald extended to her volunteer reach to a wide range of work including literacy, Meals on Wheels, hospital board, Eastern Kings Exhibition, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Red Cross and rural beautification.

At her peak, she was spending more than 15 hours a week volunteering for this or that.

Today, she remains active as a Souris councillor and a volunteer with both the Silver Thread Seniors Club and the Catholic Women's League.

And she doesn't plan to stop lending a helping hand any time soon.

"Do what I can, for sure," she said.

P.E.I. Seniors' Secretariat chairperson Mary Hughes says the secretariat is pleased to recognize the important contributions that older adults make in improving life for others.

"The recipients are remarkable examples of what is possible at any age or stage in life," said Hughes.

Here is a look at the volunteer work of the four other recipients:

Dalton volunteers with the Summerside and Area Historical Society and sits on the board of directors of the Eptek Art and Cultural Centre, City of Summerside Heritage Advisory Committee, Tryon Museum and the Bedeque Area Historical Society. Dalton has spearheaded support for the recognition of war brides through public events and lectures on P.E.I. and in other provinces.

Davis is a director of the Seniors Active Living Centre, a volunteer at Anderson House, a builder with Habitat for Humanity, a canvasser for the Canadian Cancer Society. She is also engaged in rural beautification efforts.

MacKay began a lifetime career as a volunteer at age 13 when she provided care for an elderly woman who was confined to a wheelchair. Today, she is an active member of the O'Leary Seniors Sunshine Club and helps to support the transportation needs of older adults in her community. She was a founder and president of the Maplewood Manor Auxiliary. She has also been a Brownies leader and a volunteer for literacy.

Patterson actively volunteers with the Canadian Cancer Society to support people to meet their transportation needs. He volunteered with a local school for 17 years. He is a literacy volunteer and an active supporter as past president and treasurer of a local seniors club.

The topics were **Silver Thread Seniors Club**, **Canadian Cancer Society**, **The Guardian**, **Summerside Canada** and **Catholic Women** This article appeared in The Guardian Newspaper and submitted by Winnie Fraser– MacKay.

Be someone who listens, and you will be heard.
Be someone who cares, and you will be loved.

Be someone who gives, and you will be blessed.
Be someone who comforts, and you will know peace.

Be someone who genuinely seeks to understand, and you will be wise.
Be someone kind, someone considerate, and you will be admired.

Be someone who values truth, and you will be respected.
Be someone who takes action, and you will move life forward.

Be someone who lifts others higher, and your life will be rich.

Be someone filled with gratitude,
and there will be no end to the things for which you'll be thankful.

Be someone who lives with joy, with purpose,
as your own light brightly shines.

Author unknown



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Senator says Canada can't afford poverty



Canada can't afford to have people living in poverty, says Liberal Senator Art Eggleton.

Eggleton said there isn't the political will to deal with poverty and increased public awareness about the issue would put pressure on politicians to do something about it. "We really can't afford poverty anymore."

Eggleton was in Charlottetown to meet with local anti-poverty groups to discuss some of the findings in a Senate report on poverty, housing and homelessness that was released in 2009.

The study involved two years spent gathering testimony from 170 witnesses, including people living in poverty, different levels of government and community organizations. It provided 74 recommendations to try and lift people out of poverty.

Eggleton said people need to understand poverty's true cost. "I don't think people understand that it really costs everybody."

It costs more to keep homeless people on the street than it does to house them because of increased spending on health care, shelters for the homeless, time spent in jail and other issues, Eggleton said.

Eggleton said billions of dollars are transferred to people in Canada through social programs, but it hasn't brought them out of poverty. "In fact, the system frequently entraps people in poverty."

During the discussion, Eggleton said 10 percent of Canadians live in poverty and one-quarter of those are children. "In most provinces now, we have double-digit rates of child poverty."

Eggleton said Canada is starting to become a more unequal society with a big divide between the rich and the poor.

Jane Ledwell, with the P.E.I. Working Group for a Liveable Income, said in working with people who live in poverty, she sees the personal costs it takes on them.

She talked about women who stay in bad relationships and don't leave because of their financial situations, or people who wait to have kids until they have financial security, only to get in trouble when their financial situation changed. "The stories come day after day of those unique individuals who are faced with challenges."

Ledwell said discussions about poverty get bogged down because the lines that mark poverty levels make the situation seem better than it really is.

Whatever that line gets set, it masks the number of people who are close to or dip below it and get by because of their family or community resources. "We have to look at these relationships and it's hard to get at that with policy."

This article appeared in The Guardian Newspaper and was written by Ryan Ross

Submitted by Winnie Fraser-MacKay

Saluting the National Pensioners & Senior Citizens Federation

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