

Prime Time

WINTER 2026



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Plan Retirees
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Protecting our College Pension Plan and other related pension
benefits for the benefit of current and future retirees.



In This Issue	
<i>Article</i>	<i>Page</i>
President's Greeting	2-4
New Board	5
Introducing Candace Fertile	5-6
COLA 2026	7
News from Other Groups	8-10
COSCO	8
BCITRA	8
CCARE	9
UFVRA	10
Adrienne Chan at COSCO's 75th	11
The Pension I Brought With Me	12-13
Travelling This Year	13
Connections	14

From the Editor

Another winter issue of *Prime Time*. Highlights in this issue are Candace Fertile's letter to members of CPPR introducing herself as the new retiree trustee and new director of CPPR and George's updates on everything CPPR has done over the past few months. Ken Shaw's article about the challenges of deciding how best to deal with funds in a pension to which he contributed before becoming a member of the college plan is very informative, and if you know anyone faced with these kinds of decisions, please share the article. We also have updates from other groups and Adrienne Chan reports on her attendance at last fall's COSCO conference.

Whether you're shovelling snow, watching daffodils emerge, or sipping something cool on a beach, I hope you find this issue of the newsletter interesting and worthwhile.

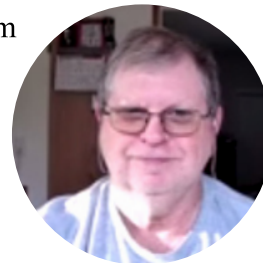
Mary L. Griffin, Editor

Members of the CPPR are grateful to live, work, and be in relation with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across many traditional and unceded territories, covering all regions of British Columbia.

We are honoured to live on this land and are committed to reconciliation, decolonization, and building relationships in our communities.

President's Greeting

Happy New Year from Prince George everyone! I hope you've all enjoyed great holiday seasons and are looking forward to your 2% pension increase and enhanced health & welfare benefits. I thought I'd start off the year 2026 with a report on the AGM last November. We were pleased that so many guests attended: plan partners Leanne Bowes from PSEA and Sean Parkinson from FPSE, Bitu Jenab and Melissa Molberg from the Board (Exec Strategy Officer and Board Secretary); our Public Sector Retiree Group (PSRG) partners, Gord Ditchburn from Municipal, Wilf Broderick from Govt Employees' Retirees, and Carolyn Malm, Tim Anderson and Lisa Hansen from Teachers; reps of Greenshield (Shelly Lamont and Anna Wijesinghe) and Belair Direct (Travis Melynychuk); and COSCO's president Leslie Gaudette.



Last year, we accomplished a lot. We reconnected with SFURA and Langara (welcoming Carl Schwarz and Alan Cooper as affiliate reps), added Camosun (Nancy Sly) and UFVRA (thanks to Adrienne Chan and Ian McAskill, who are stepping back from CPPR to get their new RA off the ground but who have left us with a template of how to start a RA – if anyone is interested, please let me know!). With BCIT and Kwantlen RAs we now have six affiliates!

Following up on the strategic planning process we completed last April, we tapped into Danny Bradford's extensive experience and put together a presentation about the Plan, the role of bargaining in making improvements, and CPPR's advocacy work.

President's Greeting Cont.

This year, Board members will be taking this presentation, or a modified version, to our former unions and institutions to recruit new members (**actives can now join for free after a bylaw change approved at the AGM**) and remind everyone that retirees' views need to be kept front of mind. We've recently been involved in consultations with the Board of Trustees on allocation of excess interest surpluses in the IAA, and on benefit levels. We'll have better benefit coverage this year than last, and we'll be involved in advocating for more changes to improve the plans. Keynote speaker Martina Franchi, Senior Director at benefit consultant WillisTowers Watson (WTW), talked about the survey that was done, showing support for increasing vision, hearing and paramedical coverage, reducing the deductible and using savings to keep premiums relatively stable. The result is the improvements we're now about to enjoy.

Terri Van Steinburg introduced Leslie Gaudette, President of COSCO. We'd dropped off COSCO's radar for a bit owing to the retirement of a former liaison. But Linda Forsythe and Terri have stepped up, and Linda's presentation of COSCO's activities, including a very successful conference in October on the organization's 75th anniversary, and its continued advocacy work on the rights of the elderly, health and welfare benefits, drug costs, housing, transit and income security. It's great to have them working on our behalf on so many important issues.

The four public sector retiree associations continue to work together on matters of mutual interest. We've branded ourselves as the Public Sector Retiree Group and released a video in July, interviews of recent retirees on what PenCorp doesn't tell you before retiring. The group will continue to work together, though we'll miss the voices of Terry Erskine at MPRA, Brian Green at BCGREA and Tim Anderson at BCTRA.

23 December 2025 11:55 pm
Light Pillars Prince George
Photo: George Davison



President's Greeting Cont.

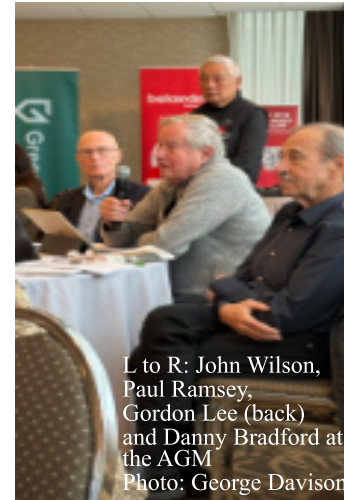
We're also playing a larger role in CURAC, with Gordon Lee on a couple committees and Ian McAskill on the planning committee for this year's AGM that will be hosted by SFURA in New Westminster May 20-22.

Finally, we said goodbye to Paul Ramsey whose 9 years as retiree trustee ended last August 31, though he had even longer service on CPPR's Board promoting and enhancing the voice of CPP retirees in the jointly-trusted plan that he, as then Minister of Finance, set up in 2000. He will be missed. Happily, Candace Fertile

has been appointed to the Board as the retiree rep by the BCGEU & FPSE & we look forward to her keeping us in the loop! This year's Board meetings will be on January 29 (byZoom), April 14 (F2F and Zoom) at FPSE's Boardroom, June 11 (Zoom), September 24 (Zoom) and the AGM will be on November 4, again at the Holiday Inn on West Broadway (where members enjoy an 18% discount if you identify yourself as a CPPR member). Have a great 2026!

George Davison

AGM 2025 Remembered



CPPR Board of Directors 2025-26

Table Officers

George Davison	President
Mary L. Griffin	Secretary Past President
Danny Bradford	Vice-President
John Wilson	Treasurer

Directors

Dennis Anderson
Gordon Farrell
Candace Fertile
Linda Forsythe
Gordon Lee
Kate Ross
Ken Shaw
Carole Whitmer

INTRODUCING CANDACE FERTILE The New Trustee

Hello Members of CPPR,

As your new retiree trustee, I thought I would introduce myself. While the role of retiree trustee is new for me, I was a trustee from September, 2014, to August, 2023. When Paul Ramsay decided to leave the College Pension Board of Trustees, I was asked to take his place. It's impossible to fill Paul's metaphorical shoes. His contributions to the board (and members) are vast. But I will do my best.

Before I became a trustee, I served on FPSE's Pension Advisory Committee for about nine years. It was an excellent way to learn something about the pension world, and I was fortunate that FPSE also funded me to attend a week-long pension course at Winter School, held at Harrison. All of that experience and

Institution Based Retiree Associations affiliated with CPPR who are able to send non-voting representatives to CPPR Board Meetings

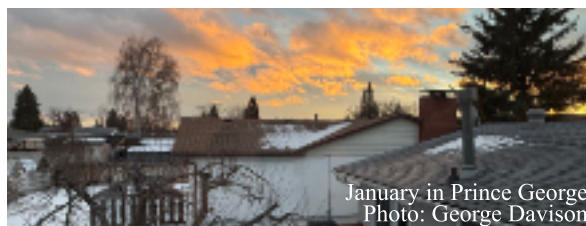
BCITRA (*BCIT*), CCARE (*Camosun*)
KPURA (*KPU*), LCAR (*Langara*)
SFURA (*SFU*), UVRA (*UVV*)

Affiliated retiree associations are entitled to one vote at CPPR AGMs.

CPPR is affiliated with CURAC and with COSCO.

Gordon Lee liaises with CURAC on our behalf, and Linda Forsythe liaises with COSCO.

CPPR Director Candace Fertile also serves as the Retiree Trustee on the Pension Board of Trustees, and her first column for *Prime Time* follows.



education helped, but I really didn't know what it's like to be a trustee until I was one.

Perhaps the most important thing about being a trustee is the recognition that I am helping to create stability in the lives of retirees. And I'm helping to do it in conjunction with various groups: the trustees, the Secretariat staff, service providers, Pension Corporation, and BCI. While we may have some differences of opinion about steps, everyone is clear about the goal and works toward the goal.

I was an instructor at Camosun College in the Department of English for over twenty-five years. I also taught at the University of Victoria, Royal Roads Military College, and the University of Alberta (where I did my Ph. D.).

Introducing The New Trustee cont.

At Camosun, I taught English literature, composition, and creative writing. I loved it. I was also involved in union activity, serving on our Executive in various roles.

Given the nature of my work and personal inclination, reading and writing have been a huge part of my life, and they will continue to be. When I was a little girl I developed my life-time goals: to read all the books in the world and visit all the countries. I quickly learned the first is impossible (my neighbourhood public library did not have every book published in English), and I now know there are countries I will not visit for a variety of reasons. But my love of reading and travel mean I am never bored. In 2025, I visited Italy, France, and Greece on three separate trips. I've been to these countries before numerous times, and no doubt will go back. My favourite thing to do is just walk around and experience the city life (last year, it was Verona, Paris, and Athens). I also love art galleries, but I am increasingly frustrated by people standing in front of great works of art and taking selfies. They aren't even looking at the art. And it's terrific to be in a house in the countryside in any country and just slow down and walk and pet horses, dogs, cows, and goats if I am lucky enough to come across some. I've petted llamas, alpacas, koalas, camels, monkeys, and once even put my hand in the pouch of a kangaroo (I was feeding her at wildlife sanctuary in Tasmania).

Tennis is also a big part of my life. I play two to four times a week all year. It's social, it's fun, and it's a bit of exercise which helps balance my interest in wine (and cheese—no wonder I like Europe so much). For total relaxation give me a spy or detective novel or a good television show (I'm a *Slow Horses* fan). And I have two cats, one a sleek black beast dedicated to destruction and the other a sweet tabby fluffball.

Life in Victoria is ideal. I am a lucky person.

In pension news, retirees are likely happy that the COLA adjustment is 2% effective January 1, 2026. One of the College Pension Plan rules is that the maximum capitalized value of the COLA cannot exceed the amount in IAA (Inflation Adjustment Account). That rule, as do others,

helps to maintain the stability and sustainability of the plan. Other pension plans have different ways of ascertaining COLA.

Also given the chaos in the world these days, the board and the various entities involved in pension management are pleased that the pension promise is being honoured. And we will all work hard to maintain that situation.

I was asked to include a picture, but I don't have one (I do not take selfies). But there will be a picture of me eventually on the website. (And that's a slightly sneaky way of getting people to take a look at the pension website, <https://college.pensionsbc.ca> which is a tremendous source of information.)

Sincerely

Candace Fertile



January on Mayne Island
Photo mlg

COLA 2026

From
Pension Life and the Plan Website and

“... a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 2.0 per cent effective January 1, 2026. The COLA is equal to the percentage change between the average Canadian consumer price index (CPI) from November 2024 to October 2025 and the average CPI from November 2023 to October 2024. ...

While not guaranteed, COLAs help maintain the purchasing power of your pension by keeping pace with inflation.

Once COLAs are granted, they become part of your basic pension. If you retired partway through 2025, your COLA will be pro-rated based on the number of months in 2025 you received a pension.” (*Pension Life and Plan Website*)

“Retired members from other BC public sector pension plans may receive different COLAs because each plan calculates COLAs in slightly different ways.” (*Pension Life and Plan website*)

from
CPPR Treasurer John Wilson

For more detailed information on the calculation of COLAs, visit
<https://college.pensionsbc.ca/adjusting-for-inflation>

m/g

The College and Public Service pension plans use the same approach as the Canada Pension Plan. The Canada Pension Plan uses an averaging approach, which has a smoothing aspect, so sudden ups and downs are not reflected with greater impact. The Teachers and Municipal pensions use a point in time approach, which is more volatile.

(*John Wilson*)

News from Other Groups

COSCO's Preparing for its AGM

The executive is working on the report of the Conference celebrating our 75th year. It was held last fall in Richmond. Copies will be available soon.

We are also working on our AGM scheduled for Friday February 13th. Anyone from CPPR interested in attending, please contact me so I can have you put on the list.

We have worked to connect with and include groups from the diverse seniors' organizations from around the province. We have a DEI committee (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion). Started during the

time of COVID we have been able to reach out to groups outside the lower mainland, mainly on zoom. In fact, our Health Committee chair is from Prince George.

We sit on other committees, namely the National Pensioners Federation, the Office of the Seniors Advocate, the BC Health Coalition and the Poverty Reduction Committee. We also have been involved with the UN group to establish a Declaration of the Rights of the Older Person.

*Linda Forsythe, CPPR and
COSCO member*

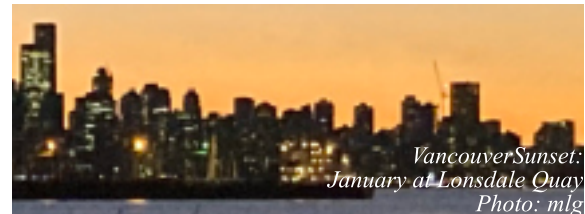
BCITRA Plans its AGM

Our 2026 AGM is set for Tuesday March 10 at BCIT. The plans are in the works and will include an address from the BCIT President Jeff Zabudsky. We are seeking new board members and the call is out.

Our December Christmas lunch was a huge success and pictures are available on our website bcitra.ca.

Our success in 2026 will depend on our membership electing additional Board members to do the work that is mandated for the BCITRA.

In my November report to CPPR I commented on Brian Gillespie, a retiree and member of the BCITRA who had contacted PSP (Supra Progressive Nuclear Palsy). I am pleased to report that on November 15, 2025, *The Vancouver Sun* featured an article



about Brian and his disease, calling for early diagnosis and more research to provide more remedies to assist those stricken with this deadly disease.

Gordon Farrell

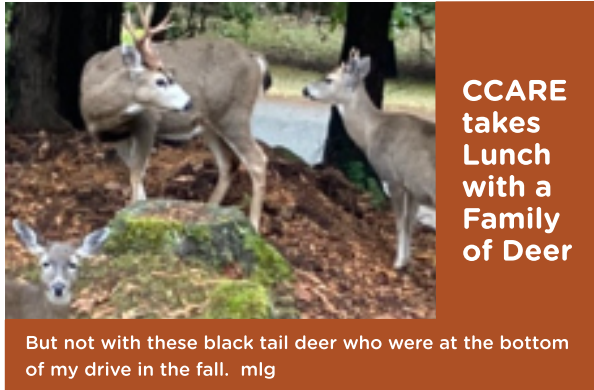
We don't have sufficient room to include the whole *Vancouver Sun* article in *Prime Time*, but you can read it on line at

<https://vancouversun.com/news/former-bcitra-president-brian-gillespie-psp-diagnosis>

For more information about the condition, you may also be interested in the work of the PSP Society of Canada.

<https://www.psp-societycanada.ca> Ed.

On Thursday, May 22nd, the Camosun College Association of Retired Employees (CCARE) Reunion for 2025 was held in the beautiful Sherri Bell Hall on Lansdowne Campus. It was a warm and gorgeous mid-spring day and joining more than 50 attendees was a family of deer, including a very young fawn nestled under an oak tree just outside! CCARE Chairperson Nancy Sly offered an opening welcome to CCARE members, and Carly Hall, Dean of Health Sciences and Human Services, provided a welcome from the college and an update of the very many goings-on.



Following these remarks, the remainder of the afternoon was spent mixing, mingling, and catching up. It was great to see the many regular attendees, renew with some not seen for awhile, and meet the welcome sprinkling of new members as well!

*Nancy Sly, Chair;
Camosun College Association of Retired Employees (CCARE)*



UFVRA plans its inaugural event

Following the formation of the UFV Retirees' Association in April 2025, the Board met in June, September, and December. Planning began for the year, including attending the summer barbecue in August where we had a table to advertise UFVRA and recruit new members.

UFV's Annual Retirement dinner was held November 25, 2025 at the Clarion Hotel in



Photo supplied by UFVRA

Abbotsford. Seventeen retirees were recognized with Congratulations from the President of UFV, the Chair of the Board, the President of the Faculty and Staff Association, and by the President of the UFVRA (Adrienne Chan). Adrienne also said a few words to encourage retirees to join the association. Bookmarks were circulated to the attendees which included our website link, QR code, and email address.

ufvretirees@ufv.ca

<https://www.ufv.ca/retirees-association/>
<https://www.ufv.ca/retirees-association/membership/membership-application-form/>

UFV Retirees' Association inaugural event: *What's So Funny About Retirement?* will take place on February 18, 2026. The event will be open to all UFV retirees, interested members of the University, students, and external communities connected to UFV. The event

will begin with a brief introduction about the Retiree Association, its purpose and links to the university.

The invited speaker, Dr. Rajnish Dhawan, will address the theme of the event *What's So Funny About Retirement?* and provide a stand-up comedy routine. Discussion and then socializing over coffee/tea/ refreshments will follow. We hope to have at least one public event each year.

Other activities: We are still in the process of developing a MOU with the university. We have formed collaborative relationships with CURAC, CPPR, and with our own Centre For Education and Research on Aging (CERA). Ian McAskill and Adrienne Chan are on the planning committee for the annual conference of CURAC, chaired by Gladys We.

Our AGM will be held the first Wednesday in May. It is our intention to review and pass our bylaws which were introduced at the Inaugural AGM in April 2025. We are hoping to have a speaker at the AGM. Here is our QR code!



**Considering starting a
group at your old institution.
CPPR could help. Contact us
at info@cppr.ca**

Adrienne Chan attended COSCO's 75th Anniversary Conference Human Rights and Aging: Advocating for an Equitable Future 3-5 October 2025

This conference was very worthwhile and I am glad that I attended on behalf of CPPR. I learned a great deal.

The conference made me think about our decision to remove the word 'seniors' from our constitution and bylaws. However, even if it is not in our constitution and bylaws, I think we as a pension advocacy organization can make meaningful connections and contributions to seniors.

Some take-aways from the conference:

Dan Levitt, the Seniors' Advocate was there, and it was useful to hear him speak. He recited many statistics that I was not familiar with, and he made useful comparison to urban vs rural services. He would be worth listening to again. It did make me wonder how many of the seniors that are in these statistics are on any pensions like ours. There must be some statistic on that?

A rather startling presentation was given by BC Human Rights Commissioner. Kamari Govender. She is a lawyer in Human rights law, and she discussed the report "We're still here" which is about detention under the adult guardianship act. Although I knew a bit about guardianship from my background, I did not know the details of detention and how that can play out on people's lives. This is something to

pay attention to if we think our aging relatives might end up under guardianship.

Numerous speakers spoke about social isolation/participation, health/wellness issues and loneliness/ connection. While our group (CPPR) has a pension and we have what many of us consider decent benefits, this does not make us immune to other issues such as isolation and possible declining health.

The concept of community was repeated by many people from seniors serving agencies to community planners. As a pension group, what is our community? What do we share with each other. I suppose in some ways, the commonality of the pension brings us together in a rather random adhoc manner. Some of us develop community together, and some of us do not. Penny MacCourt stated: "Quality of life requires meaningful and sustainable relationships; a sense of belonging; sources of meaning including activities; moments of feeling well and feeling accepted; choice and a sense of control." I think this means for CPPR and other pension groups that we can gather ourselves into community where we find meaningful relationships.

Thanks to the planners and the attention to the speakers and their diverse backgrounds and experiences. There was no feedback sheet or way to give feedback so I did not give any. The only 'negative' I would have is that it is a lot of sitting all day in closed rooms! I went out at every break and lunchtime to get some fresh air and circulation!

Thanks to CPPR for supporting my attendance.

Adrienne Chan



Adrienne at the Conference
Photo: COSCO

The Pension I Brought With Me



When I became a college instructor partway in my early 30s working life, it felt like a fresh start. I had spent seven years in another career before moving into the public sector, and like many people, I was focused on the job itself, not on what I was carrying forward from earlier chapters.

I had a choice then. Hold onto that pension for another 30 years and hope that it would still be there or transfer it out into an RRSP. Given that the parent organization was gradually running the business into the ground, I didn't have much confidence that my pension would still be around. While they eventually went out of business, surprisingly, the parent company, one of those old Canadian historical family empires still exists. If I had kept that pension, since the projected payout would have been at the early 1990 interest rates that would have turned out pretty nice today. Hindsight!

I felt pretty big league at that time. I transferred my pension out into a self-directed RRSP with an advisor. Later, after educating myself further on investing and learning about trailing fees and wondering why a basic trade cost \$65, I began to direct the advisor more specifically and he eventually fired me stating "I can't add any value". By then he only took on new clients that had at least a half million dollars, doctors, dentists, high wage earners who didn't have the time to look after their own investing.

That original pension had been split into a regular RRSP and a locked in RRSP, which

would only allow me to buy GICs. That was fine as I was following the classical 60/40 stocks and bonds split. Now that I am retired I began to research how I can access those funds.

Locked-in accounts are designed to protect retirement income. They grow tax-deferred, but access to the money is restricted. Unlike an RRSP, you can't simply make withdrawals when you choose. At retirement age, the account must usually be converted into an income-paying arrangement, most often a Life Income Fund, or LIF. A LIF looks similar to a RRIF, but it comes with both minimum and maximum withdrawal limits, reflecting the fact that the money originated in a pension plan.

What surprised me most—and what I suspect many mid-career instructors don't realize—is that there may be a very brief opportunity to unlock part of the money at the moment that conversion happens. In many jurisdictions, when a locked-in account is first converted into a LIF, there is a one-time window during which up to half of the funds can be unlocked. This option isn't based on financial hardship or special circumstances. It's simply a one-time choice embedded in pension rules, and it usually must be exercised within a matter of weeks.

If that window is missed, it closes permanently. After that, access to locked-in



The Pension I Took With Me cont.



funds becomes much more limited. Some provinces allow withdrawals only under tightly defined conditions, such as low income, serious medical costs, or shortened life expectancy. These rules are technical, documentation-heavy, and vary depending on where the original pension was regulated. Any money taken out under these provisions is fully taxable and generally can't be put back into an RRSP.

For those of us who arrived in the public sector mid-career, retirement planning often means juggling several income streams: a public-sector pension, CPP, OAS, and one or more locked-in accounts from earlier work lives. Decisions about timing matter. Unlocking funds too late may not be possible at all, while unlocking too much at once can create unexpected tax consequences or affect income-tested benefits.

Something else I learned through this process is that RRSPs originate as a tax deferral instrument from the federal government while pensions are part of the employment relationship which falls under

provincial jurisdiction. My LIRA was governed by Ontario legislation so it had to be transferred to an Ontario LIF.

Looking back, the locked-in pension I brought with me wasn't a problem—it was just unfinished business. The lesson for me has been that these accounts aren't something to ignore or postpone thinking about until the last minute. They do exactly what they were designed to do, but only if you understand the rules at the point when decisions are required.

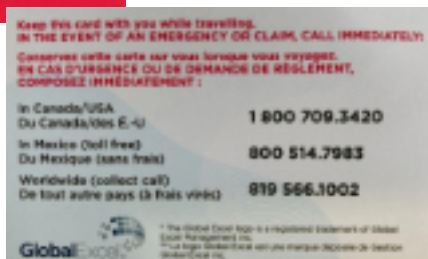
For anyone who came to teaching after another career, it's worth taking stock of those earlier pensions well before retirement.



Knowing what kind of account you have, which rules apply, and when choices must be made can turn an old pension from a source of confusion into a useful and intentional part of your retirement plan.

Ken Shaw

Travelling this Year?



Medoc Travel Insurance is now Belair Direct Travel.

For information visit

<https://www.belairdirect.com/en/group-insurance/group-travel-insurance.html>

For information about ETAs, (UK and USA), ETIAs (Most of Europe), and travel advisories visit <https://travel.gc.ca>

For information about Visas contact the consular services of the countries you'll be visiting.

CONNECTIONS

USEFUL LINKS: If these links don't work, copy and paste them into your web browser.
College Pension Plan

Home Page: <http://www.pensionsbc.ca>

Other Direct Links from their site

My Account: <https://collegepensionsbc.ca/register-for-for-my-account?inheritRedirect=true>

GreenShield Information: <https://onlineservices.greenshield.ca/publicbooklets/cpp.pdf>

EHC Premiums: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/extended-health-care-plan-premiums>

Dental Premiums: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/dental-plan-premium>

Taxes and Pension Payments: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/taxes-and-pension-payments>

Pension Life: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/pension-life>

Death and death benefits: <https://college.pensionsbc.ca/death-and-death-benefits>

Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan
<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/home.shtml>

To update your information,

Email us at info@cppr.ca

Phone 1-844-655-6565

ENCOURAGE your ex-colleagues to **JOIN CPPR** now and strengthen the voices in support of our Pension Plan. Membership forms can be found on our website cppr.ca or by scanning the QR code below.



REMEMBER, while other retiree groups may offer similar travel and other insurance options, they cannot speak on our behalf.

TELL anyone you know who receives a BC public pension about the organizations that advocate on behalf of the retired members of BC's public sector pension plans.

BCGRE	bcgre.ca
BCRTA	bcрта.ca
MPRA	mpra.ca

BCITRA	bcitra.ca
CCARE	ccare@camosun.ca
KPURA	kpu.ca/retirees
LCAR	lcar.ca
SFURA	sfu.ca/retirees
UFVRA	ufvretirees@ufv.ca

Do you belong to a retiree group attached to your old institution?

Why not consider affiliating your group with us?

Email us at info@cppr.ca for more information.

Prime Time is published twice a year. If you would like to contribute an article or images, please contact Mary at editor@cppr.ca.

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