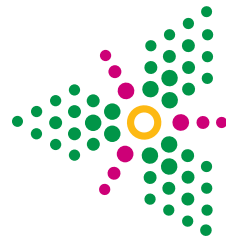


Protecting the pensions and enhancing the quality of life for all OMERS pensioners.



MROO

Municipal Retirees  
ORGANIZATION ONTARIO

[www.mroo.org](http://www.mroo.org)

JULY 2019

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS

## IN THIS ISSUE...

President's Message

Government of Canada Budget 2019

Looking for Temporary Work in Municipal Finance? Sign up for Tempfi Today!

Ontario Budget 2019

Work After Work

Municipal Members' Money Managers Merge

Starting To Think About Downsizing?

Loneliness Can Tarnish Our Golden Years

Planning For Your Health Care Needs, Nothing is as Constant as Change

Planning for Long-Term Care

MROO Treasurer Wanted

## NEW ADDRESS? NEW INFO?

**Please use the form** at [www.mroo.org](http://www.mroo.org), under the "Membership" tab **OR** Call **1-800-595-4497** and leave a message with your full name, phone number, and your new address/new info.

**If you have a MROO Health Plan policy**, please contact the ENCON Group, our Insurance Plan administrators, at 1-800-363-7861 or 905-755-2030.

**You must notify OMERS directly** (MROO cannot).  
Go to: [www.omers.com/Contact Us](http://www.omers.com/Contact Us) for details or call 1-800-387-0813.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### 2019 Zone meetings

Spring - as windy, cool, and flooded as it was - has come and gone and so has another year's round of MROO zone meetings. Every year, each of our nine directors hosts a "come-one, come-all" meeting for MROO members. Again this spring large numbers of you attended and - by all accounts - both enjoyed yourselves and learned something!

I have been impressed over the years, and again this year, at the high quality and range of our guest speakers. This year, speakers touched on wills and estates, fire safety, Lyme disease, pharmaceutical pricing, and financial management, among others. That's in addition to our regular informative presentations by Tom Graves of the MitchellAbbott Group on happenings in the home and auto insurance field, and by Holly Murphy on healthcare and health insurance. (AND, on that topic, please don't forget about out-of-province travel health insurance! Every year I seem to hear another horror story about a retiree without travel insurance, who fell ill in the USA and had to pay the very expensive piper.)

So, thank you to all who came to this spring's meetings. To those who missed them, don't forget next year! A good time, a good lunch, and good information is had by all.

**I have been impressed over the years, and again this year, at the high quality and range of our guest speakers.**

This fall, the directors in our largest zones will also be hosting members meetings in Welland (October 23) and Kawartha Lakes (October 22). Stay tuned for more information in September.

### The Year in Review

At each June's Annual Meeting, the MROO Board presents a report to the membership outlining our activities and accomplishments over the past year. The full Annual Report is available on our website. Here are some highlights.

- MROO continues to explore new services for our members. We are talking to a nationwide provider of hearing appliances about discounts for MROO members, for example, and will be updating the list on our website of law firms that specialize in estate planning

continued on page 2 ●●

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

- Very recently, we have launched a new website, adding new content as well as new technology. It will allow for more information about the organization, its services, its advocacy, and the benefits of MROO membership
- We are translating some of our resource material into French
- We have started to produce short videos to accompany the many presentations MROO reps do over the course of the year, and will post more video content on our new website
- We remain in contact with OMERS, the Canadian Federation of Pensioners and other organizations in order to assist each other in our advocacy efforts
- We eliminated the fee we were charging to employers that host our popular retirement planning seminars. In 2018, 22 OMERS employers hosted a total of 31 full - or half-day seminars for their soon-to-retire employees. Also last year, we recruited three new seminar facilitators who are gradually taking up the load that Phil Hollins has carried since the seminar program began in 2009.
- We continue to build our list of members' e-mail addresses so that we can more quickly and frequently connect with members (we do NOT sell or share our list)

Ontario will get what it voted for... cutbacks in Provincial funding for local services.

- Over the past year we added 900 net new members, bringing our total membership well over 23,000.

### Cutbacks

Like it or not, we get the government we vote for. The Ontario Conservative party said it would cut expenses without cutting services, even while cutting taxes. Those of us who have stopped believing in the tooth fairy - i.e. most voters - knew this could not be so. It was nonsense.

So, Ontario will get what it voted for... cutbacks in Provincial funding for local services...children's aid, public health, inter-library loans, schools, flood warnings, municipal services. Tense times for public health nurses, child protection workers, classroom assistants, library technicians, restaurant inspectors, and municipal planners.

And when Councils and boards are facing these cutbacks, do you think there will be some grumpiness about employee benefits, **including pensions**? No, I don't think so either. And I will be putting false teeth under the pillow tonight, hoping that the fairy comes by and leaves me a quarter while I am sleeping.

**Enjoy the sights and scents and sounds of summer!  
It's always gone too fast.**

Bill Harford, President



A good gang as usual at the zone meeting in Thunder Bay



At the 2019 zone meeting in Peterborough

# GOVERNMENT OF CANADA BUDGET 2019

## WHAT'S UP FOR RETIREES?

Finance Minister Bill Morneau in March 2019 presented the last Government of Canada budget before this fall's federal election.

### Guaranteed Income Supplement



*"To help low-income working seniors keep more of what they earn, Budget 2019 proposes to enhance the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) earnings exemption, beginning with the July 2020-21 benefit year. The enhancement would:*

- *Extend eligibility for the earnings exemption to self-employment income*
- *Provide a full or partial exemption on up to \$15,000 of annual employment and self employment income for each GIS recipient as well as their spouse, specifically by:*
  - *Increasing the amount of the full exemption from \$3,500 to \$5,000 per year for each GIS or Allowance recipient, as well as their spouse*
  - *Introducing a partial exemption of 50 per cent, to apply on up to \$10,000 of annual employment and self-employment income beyond the new \$5,000 threshold for each GIS or Allowance recipient, as well as their spouse"*

Many retirees make a little money from services they provide from time to time or things they make in their kitchens, garages, or workshops. It makes sense that this self-employment income should no longer work against low-income seniors eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

### Pharmacare

*"Budget 2019 announces the Government's intention to work with its partners to move forward on three foundational elements of national pharmacare:*

1. *The creation of the Canadian Drug Agency... that will ... take a coordinated approach to assessing effectiveness and negotiating prescription drug prices on behalf of Canadians. Negotiating better prices could help lower the cost of drugs for Canadians by up to \$3 billion per year in the long term.*
2. *In partnership with provinces, territories and stakeholders, part of the Agency's work will be taking steps toward the development of a national formulary—a comprehensive, evidence-based list of prescribed drugs.*
3. *A national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases to help Canadians get better access to the effective treatments they need. Working with provinces, territories, and other partners, the Government will co-develop a plan to ensure that patients with rare diseases have ...more consistent coverage for their treatments...."*

MROO has been on record for decades in favour of a national single-payer pharmacare plan - finishing the Medicare job. What the Government is proposing will certainly help, and begins to deal with the federal-provincial complexities of the issue. However, we are still waiting for the Government to finish the Medicare job.

### Protecting Pensions in cases of company bankruptcy

*"In recent years, concerns have been raised about the security of some workplace pensions when the employer goes bankrupt.... The Government proposes to introduce amendments to the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Canada Business Corporations Act .... that will make insolvency proceedings fairer, more transparent and more accessible for pensioners and workers. This will be accomplished in part by requiring everyone involved to act in good faith, and by giving courts greater ability to review payments made to executives in the lead up to insolvency.*

*The Government will also continue to engage with Canadians on further ways to support the sustainability of defined benefit plans."*

continued on page 4 ●●

Here's a translation: After the way Sears Canada pensioners were treated, the government had to say something about the federal legislation that allowed it to happen. So, they tinkered and promised to keep talking. All good, but what they show no signs of doing is what the Canadian Federation of Pensioners, MROO, Sears pensioners, and CARP have been asking for. Change the legislation to put pensioners at the head of the creditor line when a company with an underfunded pension plan goes under.

### Canada Pension Plan

*"In June 2016, the Government reached an historic agreement with provinces to enhance the CPP. The CPP enhancement, which is being phased-in starting in 2019...represents a major strengthening of one of the three pillars of Canada's retirement income system (along with the Old Age Security program and voluntary tax-assisted private savings). It will significantly reduce the risk of undersaving for Canadian families, and will be particularly beneficial for middle income families and families without workplace pension plan coverage."*

Although it will take many years to phase in fully, 2019 is the first year of an expanded CPP. MROO continues to congratulate the government for this expansion.

### National Dementia Strategy

*"The Alzheimer Society of Canada estimates that in less than 15 years, there will be close to one million Canadians living with dementia. .... Budget 2019 proposes to provide the Public Health Agency of Canada with \$50 million over five years, starting in 2019–20, to support the implementation of Canada's first National Dementia Strategy. "*

While the government's 2019 budget contains several other health-related measures, addressing the needs of people with Alzheimers - and their caregivers - will unfortunately affect retirees more than any other group.



At the 2019 zone meeting in Barrie

## LOOKING FOR TEMPORARY WORK IN MUNICIPAL FINANCE?

### SIGN UP FOR TEMPFI TODAY!

SUBMITTED BY THE MUNICIPAL FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

By 2021, approximately 41% of Ontario's municipal sector employees will be eligible to retire, and of that 51% are in senior positions. This is leading to a significant gap in knowledge in the municipal sector. Of course, younger staff members will gain the knowledge and experience over time, but how will municipalities handle their larger financial tasks in the meantime, such as the annual Financial Information Return or audits or applications for grant funding?

In 2018, the Municipal Finance Officers' Association (MFOA) developed the Temporary Municipal Finance Professionals (TEMPFI) web portal. TEMPFI provides municipalities with a solution to temporary or sudden staffing shortages in the Finance department, while also creating a platform for retirees who are interested in temporary positions to offer their expertise to municipalities.

Interested in applying? Visit [MFOA's website](#) to create a free account and fill out the easy application under the "Temporary Municipal Finance Professionals" on the homepage. Use the checkboxes there to specify your skills and experience, so you can be matched with a municipality that needs your help the most. For any questions or assistance, please contact Christine Duong ([christine@mfoa.on.ca](mailto:christine@mfoa.on.ca)).



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Having fun in Ottawa at the 2019 zone meeting

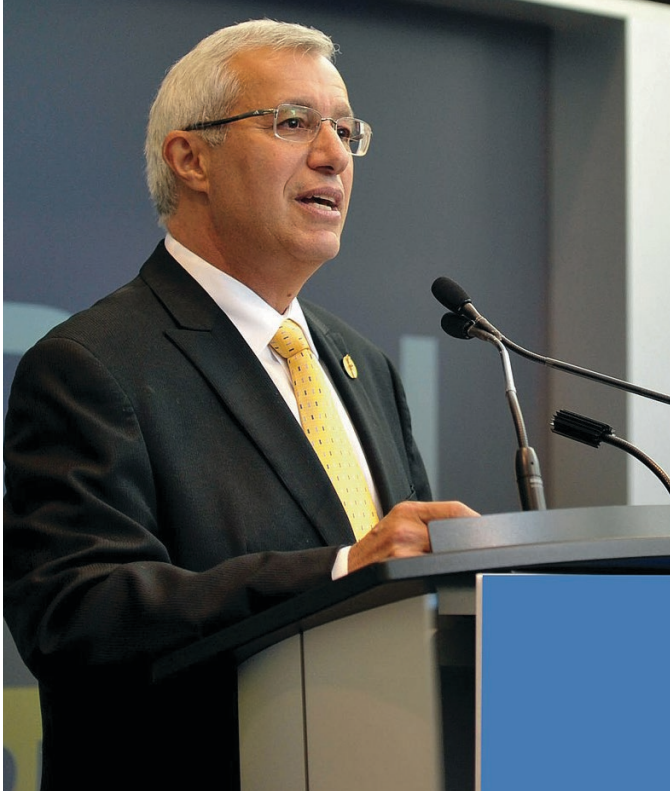


Attentive group at the 2019 zone meeting in Mississauga

# ONTARIO BUDGET 2019 WHAT'S UP FOR RETIREES

Finance Minister Vic Fedeli presented the new Ontario Government's first budget in April 2019.

## Target Benefit Pension Plans



*"Target benefit pension plans, which provide a monthly income stream in retirement with predictable contributions for employers, offer an alternative pension plan model, combining features of both the defined benefit and defined contribution pension plan models. The government intends to move forward with a target benefit framework which would allow more multi-employer pension plans, including those in the non-unionized not-for-profit sector to participate in the framework.... more Ontario workplaces will be able to provide employees with defined benefit-like pensions at a more predictable cost for employers."*

MROO has supported the concept of Target Benefit pension plans, **provided that** no one in an existing Defined Benefit plan is compelled to convert her/his past earned pension credits to a target benefit plan. We recognize that, in today's long-running environment of low interest

on pension funds, employers will not consider new pension plans unless their contributions are predictable. It also makes sense to extend this option to employers and employees in the non-profit sector, so that, for instance, a United Way could establish a pension plan for employees of its participating agencies.

## Financial Advisors

*"The government is moving forward with proposed legislation to protect titles for financial planners and financial advisors in Ontario. The proposed new framework is being developed for the financial services industry to require that individuals using the financial planner and financial advisor titles have an appropriate credential."*

Those saving for retirement and managing their savings in retirement are prime clients of financial planners and financial advisors. Certification of these fields should testify to their appropriate knowledge and ethical standards.

## Ontario Drug Benefit Program

*"The government will continue its work to examine the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, with the objective of creating a sustainable drug system."*

The meaning of this mysterious clause in the budget has not yet been made clear. It may be remembered that the previous government twice proposed a form of means-testing for ODB benefits, but backed away each time.

## Long-term and transitional care

*"The creation of 15,000 new long-term care beds over the next five years will help ... move patients to a more comfortable care setting. This capacity would be in addition to the existing 78,500 beds in the system. Furthermore, the government is committed to upgrading an additional 15,000 older long-term care beds to modern design standards...."*

*An important step in addressing critical system capacity issues is building partnerships between hospitals, the community and long-term care sectors to support transitional care. By creating transitional care spaces, patients can move from a hospital bed to a transitional care bed in the community (such as a retire-*

continued on page 7 ●●

## ONTARIO BUDGET 2019 CONTINUED

ment home) to receive appropriate care until they are ready to return home or move into the right setting. This will ensure care is closely integrated and, at the same time, reduce the pressures on hospitals.”

More long-term care will unquestionably be needed over the next 30 years as the baby-boom generation ages. Similarly, more seamless transition from hospitals, and more effective community care, are worthy objectives and not substantially different from the “diagnoses” of previous governments.

### Missing: Ontario Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund

MROO and the Canadian Federation of Pensioners have called for a substantial increase in the eligible PBGF benefit, in order to better protect pensioners in single-employer pension plans. Pensioners like Sears should not suffer when companies with underfunded pension plans go

into bankruptcy or creditor protection. (PBGF is mutual insurance policy funded by single-employer pension plans, not by taxpayers.) The budget failed to address this issue.



Waterloo Region’s Danielle Seiler, receiving the MROO draw prize from MROO ambassador John Fleck, at the spring 2019 OMHRA conference

### Possums

If you are old enough to read this newsletter, you remember Ontario before possums. Presumably sometime in the 80s, a few hitched an accidental ride from their southern habitat to Ontario’s less hospitable climate (aided by our generally warmer winters since then, particularly in cities). With large litters and a taste for our garbage, and despite their typically short lifespans, they survived and spread. Being slow-moving, they are an increasing component of Ontario road-kill, and of the diet of hawks, owls, cats and coyotes.

As marsupials (like kangaroos), their peanut-sized young live and are fed for 2-3 months in the mother’s pouch. While they can growl and show their teeth, it is true, just as reputed, that when suddenly frightened they tend to fall unconscious and look (and smell) dead.

It is not uncommon anymore to see possums at night in urban neighbourhoods. To be blunt, they are not cute!



# WORK AFTER WORK

## Local government retirees filling gaps for local governments

Bev works part-time as a call-in Customer Service Agent for her former municipality in the Niagara Region. “ I am “on call” for the Customer Service Division when one of the Customer Service Agents is on vacation, in training, or on medical absence” reports Bev. “On those days, I work a shift that covers first break, lunch and last break. I have also assisted in the Water Billing Department during times they are short staffed. The Town contacts me via email or text to come in for coverages. They seem so thankful that I can come in, it makes me feel appreciated”.

Bev is not alone.. .

- Frank is a retired back-hoe operator from a small town in eastern Ontario, who gets called in when the Town needs graves dug on the weekend.
- Darlene works at the school board office during the summer, scanning and filing reports and generally helping to get things up to date for the coming school year
- Pete worked for a small hydro commission. After retirement, he and a buddy and a used truck operated a business drilling post holes and installing poles for several small utilities in the area and for private land-owners.
- As a municipal Clerk, Cheri performed weddings. Following her retirement, she retained her appointment as a wedding officiant and has performed hundreds of weddings over the years since.
- After retiring from a long career as a municipal CAO, Murray has taken a temporary CAO position where the permanent CAO was on medical leave. This was his second temporary CAO fill-in job.
- Gail is one of a pool of retired school secretaries who can be called on to “supply” when needed (e.g. if there was a big staff meeting and they needed a secretary or receptionist to fill in for the day)

The fact is that lots of local government retirees are back working for local governments on a part-time, casual, seasonal, temporary, or contractor basis. The reason is simple: irregular or temporary needs on the part of the employers, expertise and experience on the part of the retirees.

The Municipal Finance Officers Association provides a service that matches municipal finance retirees with municipalities that need temporary help in their Finance departments. Explains the MFOA website: “A lack of professional finance staff at a municipality can be a barrier to financial planning and asset management. Temporary or part-time financial professionals can be a cost-effective solution to staffing shortages, and they are well-positioned to provide mentorship and support to [permanent] employees.

## The Work-after-work survey of MROO members

Work after work is not for everyone. But it’s not rare. A few years ago, MROO surveyed our members to find out how many were working (for pay; volunteering would have encompassed many more members). 28% of the almost 1600 respondents were doing at least some paid work, almost 24% was on a part-time, temporary, casual, or seasonal basis (as opposed to full-time or farm).

### Are you working at paid employment in your retirement?

No	72%
I’m working full time (at least 32 hours/week most weeks of the year)	3.4%
I’m working part time (less than 32 hours/week)	23.7%
I operate a farm	1%
Total	1,578

For retirees less than 65 years old, that number was higher, over 36%. 30% were part-time (which included seasonal, occasional, or temporary)

continued on page 9 ●●



At the 2019 zone meeting in Sarnia



## WORK AFTER WORK CONTINUED

### Are you working at paid employment in your retirement?

	No	full time	part time	I operate a farm	Total
Under age 65	63.4%	5.5%	30%	1%	560
65-75 years old	73.8%	2.6%	22.7%	1%	860
Over age 75	90.5%	0.6%	7%	2%	158
Total Responses	1133	54	374	17	1578

A quarter of those working part-time were working for a local government (and many if not most of those self-employed would have contracts with local governments).

### If you are working part-time, are you working in:

		Total
Own business	30 %	103
A family business	4.7%	16
Another small business	17 %	59
A large business	7.3%	95
Your former employer	14 %	49
Another local gov't employer	10.5%	36
Your farm	3%	11
Total		344

Money was not the biggest reason for working part-time.



At the 2019 zone meeting in Sault Ste Marie

### Why do you work part-time? (Please check all answers that apply.)

Answer Choices	Responses
Working gets you out of the house	53.6%
I want to keep using the knowledge I accumulated over my career, and/or I want to keep my skills up to date	51.5%
Working helps you to meet new people	47.2%
I need the money for special expenses (e.g., travel, new car, home repairs, grandchildren's RESP)	43.4%
I am doing something I always wanted to do	34%
Working enables you to stay in touch with old friends	30.6%
I need to add to my savings for when I get older	16.4%
My employer needed help and I couldn't refuse	14.2%

### Matching retirees to employers' part-time or temporary needs

The backdrop to the increasing demand for retirees in part-time or temporary roles and special projects is of course the retirement of the baby-boom generation, which has been going on for 15 or more years already, and has another 10 years to run. A lot of knowledge and expertise is whooshing out the door.

continued on page 10 ●●



MROO Directors Penny Allen and Francine Delcourt at the Ontario Association of School Board Officials conference

## WORK AFTER WORK CONTINUED

As a result, MFOA and other associations have developed programs to match retirees with employers in need. The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers offers its "Member Employment Marketing Service", providing an opportunity for AMCTO's retired members to offer their services to municipalities, or other organizations that work with the public sector. From its website: "Increasingly, specialized expertise is being sought along with filling short-term vacancies (illness, maternity leave, etc.). Therefore, we are pleased to provide a service (sought by municipalities, the Province and other organizations) whereby retired... individuals can step in to meet such demands."

In collaboration with the Ontario Municipal Administrator's Association (OMAA), muniSERV.ca has developed an on-line CAO Job Seeker database to help municipalities find the retired CAOs that are looking to return to municipal life in an interim or a consulting role.

It is a good bet that other professional organizations like AORS (Association of Ontario Road Superintendents), OMHRA (Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association) and EDA (Electricity Distributors Association) also get contacted frequently by employers looking for retirees to provide short-term help.

## Not for everyone, but an answer for some

The last word to Bev...

*"I believe this is a win-win situation. This lets me keep helping people, keeping myself active, financially helping my family, and learning something new every day. It is good to know we can still be useful after a career of serving the public. And casual hours are great because I can plan other things."*

*As an aside, I should add that, once I retired, I felt lost. I missed the everyday interaction of a busy office. Everyone who I know retired and loved it, but I wasn't getting it... then, after the fact, I read a quote "You should not retire FROM something, you should retire TO something."*



Lots of chat at the 2019 zone meeting in Hamilton

## Seniors vote

Seniors (65 and older) are the fastest growing age group in Canada. In the next 20 years, the senior population is projected to comprise 25% of Ontario's population. In 2016, there were 3 million seniors in Ontario; by 2036, 4.6 million are projected.

In the 2011 and the 2015 federal elections, the largest group of voters, by percentage, was seniors. 75% of those 65 to 74 cast a vote in 2011, and 79 % of the same age group voted in 2015.

(By comparison, the lowest turnout - 38% - in the 2011 federal election was in the 18 to 24 year old group. However, this group's participation increased to 55 % for the 2015 election.)

Therefore, seniors/baby boomers will have a significant effect on elections over the next two decades. Their positions on things like health care, climate change, income distribution, pensions, and foreign policy will continue to influence the positions taken by political parties and elected officials. But if the 2015 turnout is any indication, our grandchildren will also be making their voices heard!

# MUNICIPAL MEMBERS' MONEY MANAGERS MERGE

## Ontario's credit unions continue the merger trend

### Recent mergers among municipal credit unions

The growth of Ontario's credit unions, and their ongoing tendency to join forces, show no sign of slowing. Many MROO members are credit union members. In fact, the three most recent credit union mergers have all been directly related to OMERS sectors.

### The growth of Ontario's credit unions, and their ongoing tendency to join forces, show no sign of slowing.

- In May 2019, City Savings Financial Services Credit Union (which had evolved from the North York Municipal Employees' Credit Union) became the most recent to merge, when they joined Alterna Credit Union. The former North York Municipal Employees' Credit Union had got its start back in December 1950.
- Prior to this merger, the Toronto Municipal Employees Credit Union's merger with Alterna had been the most recent. As of December 1st, 2018, TMECU has been rebranded as Toronto Municipal Employees' Savings, a division of Alterna.
- Before that, Utilities Employees' (Windsor) Credit Union had joined with Windsor Family Savings Credit Union, on June 30th, 2018.

In 2016, the Fire Services Credit Union chose an amalgamation as their best way forward. Fire Services had started out small in Toronto 1941, and for 75 years had a mandate to serve all of Ontario's firefighters and their families. On May 1st, 2016, they completed a merger with Comtech Credit Union, operated out of Ottawa, to become Comtech Fire Credit Union. Later in 2016, Comtech Fire purchased the assets of Limestone Credit Union, based in the Kingston area. Now Comtech Fire Credit Union has more than 20,000 members, and branches serving three large urban areas.



### Why Merge?

These mergers are recent examples of a long-established trend of Ontario's credit unions coming together to get larger. In the case of TMECU, they believe that joining Alterna will benefit their members by offering enhanced products and services, more sophisticated online banking, loans and mortgages at more competitive rates, and enhanced investment planning.

These are among the commonly cited advantages for credit unions to merge, but possibly a bigger reason relates to the cost of doing business in Ontario's financial services industry. Luckily for Canadians, our financial services industry is tightly regulated. The 2008 sub-prime loans crisis had led to even more oversight, auditing, and compliance requirements. As a result, many smaller credit unions have sought mergers to defray these rising costs over a larger membership base and to remain competitive. Credit unions are owned by their members, and have a mandate to do what is best for those members. So, savings on expenditures, especially those related to overhead, are clearly quite attractive.

### Joining the Bigger Leagues

The Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario lists 132 amalgamations or purchases of credit unions since 2009. And this is far from a new idea. For many years, even Ontario's largest credit unions have found financial advantages to merging their operations. Economies of scale can also drive the larger players, with many pursuing the competitive advantage gained from the greater visibility of the amalgamated brand.

Meridian Credit Union, Ontario's largest, is an example of this. Meridian was created in 2005, when Niagara Credit Union, Ontario's largest at the time, merged with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario Credit Union, then Ontario's third largest. In 2011, Meridian took over the Ontario operations of Desjardins Credit Union in Ontario. In 2016, they added a commercial leasing division, that had been owned by one of Canada's big banks. At the time of its creation, Meridian had 40 branches; now it has almost 100.

This process of merging and growing is fairly typical of Ontario's credit unions, which have gained in size and stability to be an alternative to Canada's big banks.

# STARTING TO THINK ABOUT DOWNSIZING?

## Tips from the Pros

SUSAN GLENN, THE GLENN GROUP

Most of us at a certain point will think about downsizing. The kids are gone; you're down to one car (maybe none?); no more need for ski equipment, spare lumber, or baby carriages. Perhaps, sadly, a spouse has passed away.

But, LONG before there's a "For Sale" sign in your future, you have some serious thinking to do!

### 1. Your goals...Picture your next stage

- \* Where do you want to live - smaller house, townhouse or condo?
- \* Relocate to another neighbourhood or stay in the same area?
- \* What kind of lifestyle are you picturing?
- \* Do you prefer a bustling urban setting or a quieter suburban or country setting?
- \* Do you need to live near your family?
- \* Do you need to be near a hospital?
- \* Do you even need to move? Could you stay in your home and get whatever help you need?

### 2. Your limitations

- \* Physical - Do you have health issues or physical limitations you need to consider?
- \* Financial - How much money will you have after you sell your house?
- \* Geographic - Your budget may dictate your geographic location.
- \* Lifestyle -Your Lifestyle will also dictate your location.

### 3. Your resources

The right real estate agent can be a great source of contact information and save you a lot of time searching for answers. But there are others you may also need to consult:

- \* Health Care Workers
- \* Financial Advisor
- \* Retirement Residences
- \* Vacation Property Specialist

### 4. Your Trust

Your real estate is probably your largest asset. You've worked hard to acquire and retain it all these years and it can serve you well in your retirement years. But this is a vulnerable time for you. Avoid making decisions which can have a negative impact on your retirement years. Get advice you trust.

The most important of all: make sure you start early to think about downsizing, so you have lots of time. Take that time to ask yourself the important questions, talk to the people you need to talk to, and be confident in your answers. The time to plan is before the "For Sale" sign, not after!



York Region employees at a MROO Retirement Planning seminar in March

# LONELINESS CAN TARNISH OUR GOLDEN YEARS

## WHY THE UK CREATED A MINISTRY FOR LONELINESS

Recent research from the United Kingdom throws new light on a serious threat to a healthy and happy retirement: loneliness. The negative impact on seniors' health from social isolation could be as great as that from obesity, alcoholism, or smoking.

The *Age UK* report indicates various factors contributing to post-retirement loneliness. The most obvious one is that retirees no longer have the day-to-day companionship of colleagues at work. In addition, if seniors lose their spouse or partner, are living on a tight budget, are no longer able to drive, and/or suffer from poor health themselves, they may find themselves living a lonely existence.

**The report found that feelings of isolation are associated with depression, sleep problems, impaired cognitive abilities, hypertension, and mental health problems.**

The report found that feelings of isolation are associated with depression, sleep problems, impaired cognitive abilities, hypertension, and mental health problems. Moreover, there is evidence that loneliness may speed up the onset of dementia and shorten our lifespans.

The potential for loneliness is growing. Canadian census data indicates that about one-quarter of the population aged 65 and over now lives alone. Almost half of women over 75 live alone. Clearly, if we are to ward off the health risks that accompany loneliness, we need a strategy to combat it.

The United Kingdom has led the charge: the government appointed a loneliness minister in 2018. Canada has no plans to follow suit at this time, but the British appointment has helped to bring attention to the problem.

What can seniors themselves do to help stave off loneliness and preserve their health? Here are some suggestions:

1. **Admit you're lonely.** Human beings are social creatures by nature, so there should be no shame or embarrassment in admitting to yourself and others that you'd like more company. Friends, neighbours, and family members may not realize you're feeling isolated.
2. **Think more human and less technology.** Today's technology, where people are inclined to email or text,

may exacerbate feelings of isolation. If you can't visit friends and family members in person, pick up the phone and call them. Let them know you'd rather communicate "live."

3. **Don't shun technology completely.** There are some online tools that can help to minimize loneliness. For instance, there are "friendship" sites where you can connect with someone not for a date, but for a coffee or movie. Bumble BFF and Friender are examples. The "Meetup" app helps people with similar interests get together.
4. **Ask someone to check in on you.** Without someone checking on them regularly, seniors who live alone may forget to take medication or suffer for lengthy periods if they fall or have other mishaps.
5. **"Befriending."** One of the programs initiated in Britain is a "befriending service," where a volunteer of any age spends an hour a week with a senior. The intention is to provide companionship and conversation, but true friendships often result. There are similar services in some communities in Canada where volunteers call or visit seniors. If you're able, you might consider becoming a volunteer yourself!
6. **Take advantage of resources for seniors.** Most communities have senior centres where membership has a minimal cost or is free. You can meet regularly with others to exercise, play cards, or pursue a hobby.

continued on page 14 ●●



In London, the largest 2019 MROO zone meeting

## LONELINESS CAN TARNISH OUR GOLDEN YEARS CONTINUED

“Third Age Learning” groups bring seniors together for lectures and chat (find one at [thirdagenetwork.ca](http://thirdagenetwork.ca))

7. **Volunteers wanted.** No matter what the size of your community, if you are able, there are opportunities to join others doing something worthwhile. It could be short and sweet like pouring coffee after church or a bit more time-consuming like volunteering at the hospital.
8. **Get a pet.** There’s nothing like a pet for companionship. And if you have a dog that needs a daily walk, you’ll have a reason to leave your home, get some exercise, and exchange a friendly word with other “mutt-mates”.
9. **Find activities geared to singles.** That doesn’t mean dating (necessarily). As the population lives longer, and some of us inevitably outlive partners and friends, more opportunities geared to singles are cropping up. For instance, if you’re able to travel and can afford to do so, some companies offer tours or shorter excursions for solo travellers. You’ll get your own room and

won’t pay a single supplement – and you’ll be in good company with other singles.

Yes, it takes more energy to fight loneliness than it does to simply stay at home and watch TV by yourself. However, the benefits for both your physical and mental health make it worthwhile. You may be alone, but you don’t need to be lonely!



## PLANNING FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE NEEDS, NOTHING IS AS CONSTANT AS CHANGE...

Even with good planning there can be things, completely out of your control, that can throw a wrench into your retirement. For instance, unexpected changes in provincial health care services.

Just recently, on April 24, the Ontario government announced a **proposal to end OHIP coverage for Canadians who travel outside of the country.** (OHIP currently covers up to \$400/day for out of country in-patient care.) If the proposed amendment passed, this change would take effect on October 1, 2019. Be prepared.

As a MROO member, you are able to take advantage of the many retiree benefits we offer to help you plan for unexpected health care expenses, at home, and away.



**Relax. You’ve earned it.** Do what you want with your time. With MROO’s **Health and Dental Care Plans** you may receive many of the benefits you had under your group benefits plan at a rate you can afford.



**Travel with confidence.** \* It happens. You’re travelling out of province and you need to go to a hospital. With limited OHIP out of province coverage, MROO offers two travel options: an **Annual Travel Insurance Plan**

when enrolling in the Health Care Plan or a selection of **Individual Travel Plans** offered through RSA. Help is just a phone call away.



**Recover with ease.** With **Convalescent Care**, assistance is provided if you encounter expenses while getting back to health after a hospital visit or an illness or injury. Benefits include monthly cash, home nursing and home care, transportation and ambulance benefits, equipment rental and more.



**Wait there’s more!** We also offer a **Life Insurance Plan** with guaranteed acceptance, no medical questions when you apply and a reduced premium for couples. After you’ve enrolled, premiums never go up and coverage can continue for life, as long as premiums are paid.

\*We will be mailing MROO Members information about our **Individual Travel Plan** options this fall. If you are travelling before then and need a quote, please call RSA direct at 1-877-762-9207.

Learn more at [www.mrooinsurance.ca](http://www.mrooinsurance.ca) and enroll online. For personalized service, contact one of our ENCON Relationship Managers by calling 1-800-387-2037 or email us at [mroo@encon.ca](mailto:mroo@encon.ca). We’re here to help.

# PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM CARE

SUBMITTED BY THE ONTARIO SECURITIES COMMISSION, OFFICE OF INVESTOR ENGAGEMENT

At the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC), we understand how important it is to plan for a secure financial future. Our mandate is to protect investors in Ontario from unfair, improper or fraudulent practices by making and enforcing rules that govern the securities industry. We also aim to help Ontarians make more informed financial decisions by providing free unbiased tools and resources. Our consumer education website, [GetSmarterAboutMoney.ca](http://GetSmarterAboutMoney.ca), has useful tips and financial tools on preparing financially for retirement and budgeting throughout your retirement years.

**Our mandate is to protect investors in Ontario from unfair, improper or fraudulent practices by making and enforcing rules that govern the securities industry.**

While many of us tend to focus on our ideal retirement scenario, planning for the possibility of long-term care is often given less attention, if any. The reality is that our health can change at any time. Planning for these changes can help you live your retirement with dignity and access to important services.

## What is long-term care?

Long-term care includes medical and non-medical services and accommodation you may need due to aging, illness, injury, or disability. Long-term care can take place

in the home or community, a retirement home or in a long-term care facility.

Planning for the possibility of long-term care gives you time to learn about your options, the services available in your community, and how much it will cost. It allows you to make important decisions while you are still capable, both physically and mentally. It's also important that your family and care professionals know your wishes, should you be unable to communicate them yourself.

## Preparing for long-term care

Long-term care costs can represent a significant portion of your retirement funds. While it's difficult to financially plan for services and accommodations that you may not need, taking the time to research your options may prompt you to review your finances and find out how financially sound you'd be if the unexpected happened.

A financial advisor help you create a plan for long-term care. One funding option might be long-term care insurance, a living benefit that can cover a portion of your long-term care costs.

In addition to financial matters, ensure that your legal documentation, including any powers of attorney, are current. Keep this information in a safe place and accessible to those who might need to find them.

*The November newsletter will include the second part of the OSC's article on planning for long-term care, taking a closer look at long-term care options and costs.*



## Wayne's Words of Wisdom

1. Everything now takes longer than you think it will: start jobs and go places earlier
2. You know that "same old, same old" stuff you do? Keep doing it and ENJOY it
3. Get outside. Go for walks if you can. Better yet, take a dog for a walk – you'll *both* enjoy it
4. Go to the concerts of performers older than you are. You'll be amazed that they've "still got it", and they'll make *you* feel better
5. You probably have TOO MUCH STUFF... 'nuff said
6. Some things you thought were important are not. Some things you thought were not, are. Think about it...



**Municipal Retirees**  
**Organization Ontario**  
4094 Tomken Road  
Mississauga, Ontario  
L4W 1J5

**Toll-Free:** 1-800-595-4497  
**Fax:** (905) 602-6710  
**Email:** info@mroo.org  
**Website:** www.mroo.org

**Publications Mail Registration**  
**Number:** 40041589

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• Protecting the pensions and enhancing the quality of life for all OMERS pensioners.

## MROO TREASURER WANTED

Because MROO's current Treasurer will soon be resigning, applications for the Treasurer position will be welcomed from interested MROO members. Please send your resume with covering letter to [executive-director@mroo.org](mailto:executive-director@mroo.org) no later than September 30, 2019.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- An accounting background and professional accounting designation would be a definite asset
- Familiarity with various computer programs, i.e. Excel and Microsoft Word as well as use of email and the internet
- Strong organizational skills and high attention to detail
- Able to commit up to 20 hours per month to oversee MROO's financial responsibilities (see Note 1 below)
- Qualities - including perspicacity, collegial behaviour, and independent thought - suitable to an effective Board member (see note 2 below)

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Review monthly financial reports prepared by the bookkeeper
- Review recommendations regarding MROO's investment portfolio
- Prepare and monitor the annual budget
- Communicate with the Auditor at year's end
- Review and comment on the Annual Report prepared by the ENCON Group (MROO's Health Care Plan managers)
- Attend four (4) MROO Board meetings per year (see Note 3 below)

### NOTES:

1. A modest per diem for services is provided along with all expenses incurred on behalf of MROO.
2. The person in the Treasurer position becomes a full member of the MROO Board of Directors.
3. Three (3) of the Board meetings (March, June, and December) are held in the Toronto Airport area. The September meeting is rotated among the nine zones.

**If you have any questions,  
please contact Penny Allen, Treasurer, at [treasurer@mroo.org](mailto:treasurer@mroo.org)**