

President's Message



Dear Members,

When I was first elected President of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, it was the “retired” word that I sensed was holding us back from growing membership among the baby boomers, the first of whom were then approaching age 65. The word “retire” means to disengage, to withdraw; yet many of our best prospects didn’t see themselves joining an association of stereotypically disengaged seniors sitting in their rocker waiting for the end.

That’s where Zoomer came in, with a robust redefinition of our demographic and with lots of exciting info as to why and how to keep going - with a sense of fun and a taste for adventure but also with a commitment to active health.

In the last ten years, I have witnessed a dramatic change. CARP is no longer seen as just a group of “raging grannies” and “grumpy granddads” but rather as a broad coalition of like-minded Canadians (not necessarily retired and not necessarily “old”) but refreshed and recharged and with a shared mission to ensure that older adults are treated with dignity and respect by policy-makers and society at large.

Financial Performance and Health

At our Annual General Meeting in October 2017, members approved a special resolution to move the financial year-end from April 30th to August 31st, the better to align with ZoomerMedia’s year-end so as to streamline accounting and other shared resources. This change explains why the summary financials included in these pages show the results of a sixteen-month fiscal year and not a typical twelve-month report.

CARP has seen a net 21 per cent increase in membership over the last two years. Revenues have increased through steady membership growth and improved retention, while costs have decreased through measures like managing our own membership fulfilment services and using the information gained to do things more efficiently.

What Lies Ahead

Late in 2018 we launched CARP’s National Policy Platform in support of a National Seniors Strategy in this federal election year. The platform, called FACES, identifies areas of our concern, ranging from pension protection to abuse prevention, to improved home care, and will form the basis of our year-long campaign focused on making “Canada the Best Place to Age.”

Baby boomers may no longer be the largest demographic group in Canadian society but we are still of utmost importance at the ballot box. We vote, the kids don’t. Alpha Zoomers (45-75) drive the economy with their wealth and continuing work, while older ones bolster society with their volunteer and charity work. Both will be at the polling station on election day, while millennial voter engagement will likely continue to lag.

Accordingly, Conservative leader Andrew Sheer made a visit to our last AGM, much like Mr. Trudeau did in 2014 and then again in 2015 just prior to his election. Recently appointed Federal Minister of Seniors Filomena Tassi has been listening to members across Canada and meeting with our Advocacy Team. Only the NDP, and their leader Jagmeet Singh, have been notably absent from our doorstep thus far, an oversight they are sure to correct if they hope to find support in our community.

In a world where extreme political views seem to be gaining traction and the vast majority in the middle are feeling pressured into taking sides, CARP remains a calm, non-partisan voice, advising our members to hold on tightly to their franchise and to encourage their own preferred political party to make the needs of seniors a priority in their platform.

Building on the widespread visibility and awareness of CARP created by ZoomerMedia’s legacy TV, radio and print properties, CARP is now also better positioned digitally to understand exactly what issues matter most to each individual member and to then share updates with them about those topics. By deepening our communications in this way, we’ve improved our relationship with our members.

Sticky Members

We take pride in the fact that our member retention rate substantially exceeds industry standards. Our ongoing success in achieving demonstrable changes to public policy, our valuable member benefits and our grassroots chapter engagement keep our members coming back at renewal time. However, there remains a fairly large churn among those who don’t respond to our traditional email or postal renewal notices. To deal with this, we have begun a peer-to-peer member “win-back” campaign featuring passionate current members recruited and trained to help us contact lapsed ones.

These Ambassadors remind-call recipients that their membership has expired, update them on our latest advocacy wins and inform them of the seriously great savings to be had by taking advantage of our growing number of our unusual and exceptional member benefits.

These win-back calls are proving to be effective in member retention, so we will expand the program in the coming year. People report appreciating the reminder. They like hearing from a fellow member who can share their personal reasons for supporting CARP, while urging the expirée to add their voice back to ours to further enhance our clout. As for the callers, it’s the camaraderie and a bit of extra pocket money, not to mention the satisfaction of bringing back some lost souls. If you’d like to register for one of these win-back groups, please reach out to Anthony Quinn at Anthony@carp.ca.

In Summary

Membership remains a tremendous value whose modest cost can easily be recovered with one or two trips to your local Rexall. Prime Ministers and Premiers continue to make CARP members a priority in their outreach, as those who seek change in leadership know that Zoomers hold the key to that change. All in all, it has been a rewarding decade for me as your CARP President; and I look forward to continued membership growth and an ever more powerful voice for us in the corridors of power.

-Moses

Moses Znaimer,

President and Chairman on behalf of the Board of Directors