



President's Message – December 2015

Gerry Graham

Is it just me or is time just flying by. Christmas is just few short weeks away and I have not done any shopping. The good news is I have graduated from crutches to a cane and I am now more mobile, to get down to the business of taking care of seniors and the USCO. However I was able to fulfill my obligations as president. Through countless teleconferences calls and hundreds of calls to the office I was able and determined to get things done.

But I really must take this moment to thank your full elected USCO board members for visiting our clubs, attending conferences and meeting on my behalf and of course I would be remiss if I didn't thank our staff at the USCO office. When called upon your full board and staff were there. Not for me but for the USCO and Ontario Seniors. Their dedication was spectacular. Now if only I can delegate someone to do my Christmas shopping.

On a great note one of our own, Past President Bernard Jordaan, has rightfully been presented the Ontario Senior Achievement Award. This award was presented by the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario along with the Honourable Mario Sergio, Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs. Bernard is the driving force of the Meadowvale Club and the USCO and works tirelessly in his community where seniors have access to the support and services they need to live a full and active life. Bernard has worked closely with governments on issues affecting all seniors across Ontario. To name a few, ombudsman for health care, long term care and new grant program for seniors. On behalf of all USCO, Congratulations Bernard! Just remember, we have miles to go before we rest. Pace yourself.

Our Next Convention for 2016 will be in Cambridge August 8th, 9th and 10th. Get those resolutions going.

Thanks to Peggy and the office staff as all resolutions pertaining to the Federal Government have been put in a brief format. We will send it to The

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children And Social Development whose mandate includes seniors and also to the Prime Minister Of Canada. We will also send it to the National Pensioners Federation to keep them informed on our resolution moving forward.

What we need now is the government of the day to communicate with the provincial government. There is just too much down loading on seniors and the next generation our children. Another promise made by our new federal government was to keep our health care system public and to implement a national Phamacare plan across the country. We have all read the government report and now is the time to deal with it. Canada can save billions on this one issue alone. On behalf of the provinces let's get the \$36 billion that was taken away from us back on the table. Nine billion of that belongs to Ontario. Increasing the OAS and GIS to raise seniors out of poverty must be a priority as promised. The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is still the best plan out there for the next generation and we are receiving good reviews. It must include everyone, i.e. the self employed, manufacturing workers, temp workers, contract workers and farmers. Our children won't find a better saving plan and at some point it will be merged with the CPP. Seniors do vote and this past election you voted for change. A lot of promises were made. It will be our work to remind our new government of the day to uphold all their promises.

Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and looking forward to a great New Year. Take care and drive safe.

