

USCO 51ST CONVENTION

“CONTINUING TO CARE”

2009

As I was sitting here in my chair, with my feet up, I could not help but reminisce about your successful 51st convention, held at the Holiday Inn in Oshawa. I have just finished reading the September Voice, and the President’s (Ken Cunningham) letter. He wrote about people referring to earlier conventions, and felt maybe they should return as see what is different now!! So here goes, I am going to try to briefly summarize the Convention especially for those of you who were unable to attend.

First, I realize the cost of the convention, prohibits a lot of our senior clubs from attending, especially if there is a great distance to the convention city site. The Executive and the USCO Office Staff do everything in their power to keep costs down. As Convention Chair for the last 13 years, we strive to make the convention a break even situation. Approximately 5 years ago, a committee under the direction of Ruth Peters formed a Cookbook Committee, to raise funds for the Convention. This really helped and continues to help, as you know we followed up with a second cookbook, and sales continue. The Delegates at this convention also voted for the theme this year, continue to be our theme in the upcoming years. It is short and to the point: “Continuing to Care”. Each and every one of you I know follow that motto in all dealings with your Seniors Club.

QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE 2009 CONVENTION

The official opening of our 2009 Convention was at 1 p.m. Monday August 17, 2009. WHOOPS – First snag – the Town Crier Bill McFee failed to show up, even though it was booked by Telephone, a letter was sent by the office, confirming the time and date, an email followed, and about 10 days prior I followed up by a phone call. I spoke with his wife and it was in his appointment book. I tried to phone his residence, no answer, so at 10 after 1, we proceeded without a Town Crier. I like the opening procedures; I like the pomp and pageantry..

Our President Marie Smith was marched into the room carrying the Memorial Book (with the names of all our deceased members, who were reported by your club). She was escorted by an OPP Sgt. Robin Saunders, from Orillia.

Following this, our executive, and our guests were marched in and seated.

Our head table guests were:

- Deputy Mayor
- MPP Jerry Ouellette
- MP Colin Carrie
- Rev. Fred Jackson (lead the invocation prayer)
- Hon. Ted McMeekin, Minister of Consumer Services – Guest Speaker
- Art Field, Past President of The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens
- Mr. Geoff Quirt, retired from the Ontario Secretariat, and to whom a special presentation was being made on behalf of the USCO Executive, Clubs and members.

Mr. Bill Flavell, one of our executive members, led in “O Canada” and all the singing throughout the convention. He does a superb job.

Following our guest speaker, were the financial report of the USCO, Executive reports, and Committee appointments.

Two more speakers followed:

- ❖ Patrick Brown – Auto Insurance and Seniors
- ❖ Sylvia Watt – Enhancing the Lives of Seniors

Following dinner on Monday night (which by the way was ham and scalloped potatoes, with all the trimmings as well as Pecan or Apple Pie) the delegates went to one of the four workshops. Each delegate selected their choice of topic, I do hope that everyone got their first choice. But, prior to departing we had a sing along led by Suzanne Robarts and Margaret Card. Wonderful.

As our focus at this Convention, is to make it Educational as well as Fun and Fellowship, four workshops are held on Monday night, on different topics of concern to Seniors.

This year they were:

- FOOT CARE
- INVESTMENT FRAUD
- WILLS AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
- MEDICATION AWARENESS

These were all well attended, and by the reports given by the Workshop monitors, (Ken Cunningham, Ruth Peters, Suzanne Robarts, and Richard Kratz) thoroughly enjoyed, and very informative and educational. Watch for future copies of the Voice, because as space permits each report will be printed in the Voice for your reading. If you don't get your own Voice, and would like one, call the office toll free at 1-888-320-2222, and apply for an individual membership of \$20.00 for the year. This will give you 10 copies of the Voice during that year, right to your home mailbox. Can't ask for better than that to get information on senior issues.

I should point out that seniors attending these conventions are sure sturdy individuals, after workshops, some had enough energy left to play cards, socialize at the hotel bar, and just visit with friends from other areas.

I am always so pleased to see the interaction of different clubs, it just proves that we are all working towards a common goal. **THE BETTERMENT OF SENIORS.**

Tuesday morning came early. The Executive, Field Reps. and Zone Presidents have a breakfast meeting at 7 a.m. Great get together.

Janet Goodwin from Ontario Incontinence Supplies, gave a brief description of the program. As she was scheduled on the Agenda later to speak to all the delegates, this session was more on how you would go out into your Zone to promote the selling of these products, thereby enabling a saving to each senior, as well as supporting the program with a financial benefit to the USCO. (\$3.00 rebate on a product to the USCO, is something that could build into a profitable venture). Think back to Johnson Insurance, and how our commission has increased through the years. We need your support to help with this type of funding raising.

Call to Order came at 830 a.m.

Speakers throughout the day were:

- Johnson Insurance – Bonnie Maxwell
- Scott Laidman – Hearing Impairment
- Dr. Rakesh Bhargava, Cardiologist – Atrial Fibrillation
- Janet Goodwin – Ontario Incontinence Supplies
- Philippa Barry – CNIB

What a wonderful selection of speakers, all their topics so different, but so well accepted by everyone. We had so many positive reports.

I would like to make note about two of these speakers, who especially touched my heart.

Scott Laidman – a young gentleman, 26 years old, born premature at 6 months, and born deaf. It wasn't until he was two years old that his parents realized he was deaf, and was following along, reading their lips, for example when his mother asked if he wanted ice cream, he knew by the formation of her lips what he would receive, and of course would nod Yes. He proceeded to tell of his life experience, and now as a qualified hearing specialist, is able to help other people. It was his first ever speaking engagement, he did all hearing impaired people, and his profession, proud. He has offered to go to clubs to speak and do a presentation of all available products. If you are interested call the USCO office.

The other lady that really gave me a lot of thoughtful and grateful thanks was Philippa Barry from the CNIB. In her mid forties, legally blind, but stood in front of the delegates, with such assurance, posture, and the most explicit smile, she just radiated confidence. She thoroughly is a wonderful ambassador for CNIB. She too is open to go in her area of Oshawa to speak to seniors. A volunteer Bob Geddes, was her driver, a top notch volunteer, a very caring and personable man.

Sitting back thinking today of those wonderful people that touch are lives in so many ways, makes one think and give thanks for being truly blest, by all the volunteers in this world, who give so freely and graciously of their time, I know that each and every one of you reading this fall in that category, I am sure.

DO NOT FORGET – that between all these speakers, a very important part of our Convention was happening. Our Resolution Committee – were presenting the resolutions for discussion and voting. 54 Resolutions were presented on so many topics, **Health, Housing, Transportation, Tax, and Miscellaneous.**

I personally feel, that the Resolution Committee present some of the most important topics covering concerns of seniors. But, please remember, they can only work with the Resolutions that are submitted. Start working now within your club on things you would like changed, or concerns you have on a topic, and forward them. You can never be too early, but you can miss a deadline. Think about it, and start writing down notes on your thoughts on how we can make Canada a better place for all our seniors.

BANQUET NIGHT

After a busy day Tuesday, everyone gets gussied up, and ready for the Banquet. Our Guests, Executive, Field Representatives, office staff and spouses are piped into the assembly hall. There is something about bag pipes that make seniors stand, have a big smile, and relax. A lovely dinner of Ontario Roast Pork Lion with trimmings was served, dessert was crepes, raspberry coulis and frozen yogurt. One thing about this dessert even the diabetics can eat and enjoy it.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Staff Sergeant Don Webster, from the OPP in Orillia. He spoke on Search and Rescue, and gave a true outline of a person who was killed, and the events leading up to the individual being arrested, charged and found guilty. This outcome came from perseverance. time consuming tasks, showing dedication to their work by our police officers.

Entertainment followed, they were the “G Notes” Mr and Mrs Griffiths from Trenton On. who entertained with music and song. We even had people up dancing to their music, great sight to see after such a busy day.

Now comes Wednesday day three:

Breakfast at 7 a.m. Call to Order at 830 a.m. Final Credential Report.

Elections: Bill Woodbeck Chaired the Elections, secretary for Elections, was Louise Jordaan, Parliamentarian Bernard Jordaan, Chair of the Scrutineers Barb Shelson, and her committee of: Betty Jenkins, Sheila Burham, Doris Post, Don Barker, and Jacqueline Smith,

Results of the Election were as follows:

PAST PRESIDENT	MARIE SMITH
PRESIDENT	KEN CUNNINGHAM
1 ST VICE PRES.	JOYCE MITCHELL
2 ND VICE PRES.	JUDY MUZZI
SECRETARY	RUTH PETERS
TREASURER	ROY KERR
MEMBERS	ART FIELD
	SYLVIA GAGNON
	BILL FLAVELL
	GEORGE SITAK
	SUZANNE ROBARTS
	PEGGY HAWTHORN

I should also give thanks to our time keeper, Ken Peters, photographer Jim Robarts, Guards: Ken Peters Chair, Allan Treneer, Bernard Hallett, Bruce Liddle. And of course a million kudos to our office staff Bev Dougherty and the hotel staff of the Holiday Inn.

It truly was a great convention, send in ideas on what you would like to see different, and give us suggestions, we are your executive, elected to serve your needs.

On closing, have a great fall, get right down to business in your clubs, take lots of pictures, especially of your Christmas parties, and send them into the Voice.

TAKE CARE AND GOD BLESS

Joyce Mitchell
1st Vice President