

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

APRIL 2008

MARIE M. SMITH

April is finally here with showers to bring forth the May flowers. With Easter behind us we can start planning our gardens and I'm looking forward to seeing all the birds return. Spring is a wonderful time of year. It is my favourite season.

April is also time to get your income tax return ready. Some may already have theirs completed, especially if you are receiving money back. This year you also are allowed to do income splitting. Eligible income for splitting includes 1) pensions from registered pension plan and 2) annuity payments from RRSP, LIF or RRIF if received as a result of the death of a spouse or if you are 65 or older at the end of the tax year. Your OAS, CPP and other government income programs must be included in the calculation of your annual income, but these pensions do not qualify for income splitting. Apparently it almost never makes sense to split pension income when both partners have about the same income. Pension income splitting is complex and highly personal therefore it is advisable to seek professional help. You can consult the following sources:

Canada Revenue Agency	www.cra-arc.gc.ca	1.800.959.8281
CPP, OAS, GIS	www.servicecanada.gc.ca	1.800.277.9914
Department of Finance	www.fin.gc.ca	
or		
Certified tax software or web application.		

Do you have trouble opening a package that was so well sealed that you wish you'd never bought it? I bought an *Open It* cutting tool. It really works! Apparently several hardware places have them.

Our research project with the OPP, Seniors Against Victimization, is completed. I have a copy of the report and we are waiting for the literature review and project evaluation. It is already on our website. Click on and read it. The brochures were distributed at the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse Conference at the end of February where many were given out.



The USCO is also working with the Ontario Bar Association (OBA) and the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association (OTLA) putting on a seminar at the end of April. We are working on Regulation OReg 381/03 compensation for injuries sustained in a car accident that you heard about last August at our convention. I will be speaking at the seminar on behalf of all seniors. As I know more about the seminar, I will keep you informed. The USCO is making great strides in getting our organization recognized as the oldest and largest seniors' organization in Ontario.

This is our 50th Anniversary so it is a great time to promote the USCO in your area and bring many to the convention in Burlington August 18-20th to celebrate the event. Your resolutions are due April 11th, so please bring your problems to the attention of the government in our brief.

In some areas, long term homes and senior organizations are working together to take up petitions asking for more money for more staff and operating costs to long term care facilities. Do you realize a prisoner is allotted \$10.50 to \$11.00 per day for food and persons in long term care facilities are only allotted \$7.00 per day? Are our seniors not as important as an incarcerated person? As a senior we need your help to speak out against these injustices.

The USCO needs your voice to be heard not just your president's voice at all the government meetings. Some weeks I attend four meetings on behalf of seniors. Instead of asking what is the USCO doing for you, think: What can you do for the USCO? We need your help and voice. You are the USCO, not the Board. It is your organization. Let's work together to strengthen our grey power with our MPP's and the government. Seniors are the greatest volunteers (in all aspects of life) and we appreciate any assistance we can get. Thank you in advance for your help – you are the backbone of the USCO.

We hope more songs and chants will come in next month for the contest. How many new members do you have? How many pictures have you taken for our album?

That is enough questions for this message, but we are working to keep all the benefits seniors have and to improve conditions for seniors and for our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. Do inhale and enjoy the spring and all the wonders of nature.

*Enjoy each day
and
God bless.*

