

APRIL 2022

# RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Spring 2022, I hope that all our readers are safe and healthy. Welcome back to Canada to those who were able to spend the winter in warmer climates. For those that stayed home hopefully, you enjoyed the winter.

We have all endured 2 plus years of this pandemic. This time last year most of us did not know anyone who had the virus whereas now virtually all of us know people who have contracted it, including ourselves. Hopefully, the end is in sight. We have included a COVID update article in this newsletter and hopefully, it will be the last article on this topic for our newsletters going forward.

A welcome to all our new members.

Your RWC Executive has been continuing the business of the organization mainly via virtual platforms, but with some in-person meetings at the Executive Committee level.

Our Executive Board at its regular meeting in June will be considering the issue of conducting membership meetings this year. We will keep you informed via our website and bulletins of the locations and dates if in-person meetings are possible. We have increased the number of bulletins again this year to help keep you informed on issues that are important to RWC Members.

A reminder to any RWC Members who have not paid their 2022 dues. Please remit them (\$15.00) ASAP. If you require additional information, please contact us at [rlw@pwu.ca](mailto:rlw@pwu.ca)

We hope our newsletter meets your expectations. All articles are written by PWU RWC Members. As always if you have any ideas for articles for the newsletters or any comments, please contact us at [rlw@pwu.ca](mailto:rlw@pwu.ca)

In solidarity,

**Peter Kelly**

President

PWU Retired Workers' Chapter

*"We have included a COVID update article in this newsletter and hopefully, it will be the last article on this topic for our newsletters going forward"*



Stay safe and enjoy the upcoming nice weather.

**Peter Kelly**  
President  
PWU Retired Workers' Chapter

# UKRAINE CRISIS



It goes without saying that Canadians are appalled at Putin's Russian regime for invading the Ukraine. We are all further enraged over the horrors being inflicted on innocent civilians by Putin's armed forces. Putin and his leaders must be held accountable.

It is assumed that some RWC Members are of Ukrainian descent, have family members in or from Ukraine and/or have Ukrainian friends. Canada has a very good relationship with Ukraine and is doing what it can to assist the Ukrainian people.

The PWU has made a \$100,000.00 donation to the relief efforts. We encourage RWC Members, if they have not already, to donate to the relief efforts via the Red Cross or to other Relief Agencies of their choosing.

RWC Members, may find it interesting that the PWU had strong ties to Ukrainian Unions for several years and that some RWC Members still maintain a relationship with their unions.

Back in the 90s the PWU became linked with the Ukrainian Energy Union via their representatives who participated in the Canadian Nuclear Workers Council (CNWC). The CNWC became involved internationally as a founder of the World Council of Nuclear Workers (WONUC). The Ukrainian Unions affiliated with WONUC and became colleagues of the Canadian delegates.



© Natalia Ogłoszka / Adobe Stock (CNW Group/Power Workers' Union)

In the early 2000s the CNWC disaffiliated from WONUC. The PWU at that time decided to form a new global organization which became the International Nuclear Workers' Network (INWUN). The Ukrainian Union soon joined INWUN. PWU Staff and Elected Officers had very active roles in INWUN. INWUN became a network under the Global Union ICEM and has member Unions from around the world.

Under INWUN the Ukrainian Union worked closely with the PWU delegates on INWUN matters. They visited Canada in 2008 where many PWU Elected Representatives and PWU Staff met them. Over the years, on two occasions, PWU representatives visited Ukraine under INWUN auspices. On both occasions the PWU delegates toured the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant site.

The leadership members of the Ukraine Energy Workers Union were not only colleagues with the PWU but became friends. The PWU in 2017 (after a leadership change) decided to end their strong role in the International Union movement which included INWUN. This did not end the friendship with the Ukraine Union. Several PWU Retirees have kept in contact with these colleagues and have heard firsthand via email from them in regard to the crisis in Ukraine.



**David Shier**  
PWU Retired Workers' Chapter

# VOLUNTEERING IS REWARDING

Two years later, COVID-19 is still here. As we all experienced shutdowns in the province, we turned to other activities to keep us busy.

Whether it was binge-watching Netflix, cleaning the house, exercising, turning to Zoom meetings to communicate, or baking (putting on those COVID pounds), we looked for something to occupy our time.

I decided to look into doing volunteer work since I had been a volunteer in the past with various organizations but had not pursued anything since I moved to Lakefield.

After looking into several options, I decided to become a Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBS). I completed the interview process, provided references, and passed the police records check. I was cleared and all set to go.

For over 100 years, BBBS has been championing the health and wellbeing of youth.

BBBS helps prevent the physical and mental effects of adverse childhood experiences. Children as young as 7 are supported by caring adults as they overcome these adversities, helping them to do better in life – physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and academically. With the guidance and support of a mentor, youth are reminded that they can be anything they dream of being.

In 2021, BBBS impacted over 41,000 youth with over 20,700 volunteers in over 1100 communities across Canada.

Their Mission is to enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people.



In my case, I was matched with a 10-year-old girl. I have been her Big Sister for over a year now and have grown very close. We are learning from each other and enjoying each other's company. Our activities have included everything from reading, baking, and artwork to fun days at the beach, ice skating, attending art fairs and a hockey game, and participating in activities at the BBBS office.

It takes as little as a few hours a week, and I cannot begin to tell you how rewarding the experience has been.

There are so many people in need out there. As a retiree, I feel blessed that I have been able to make a difference in a young girl's life.

If you are looking for an enriching and fulfilling life experience, and want to give back to your community, I urge you to reach out and become a volunteer.



Stay Safe Everyone!!

**Dorothy Couvier**  
Retired PWU Staff Officer

# COVID STATUS IN ONTARIO APRIL 2022

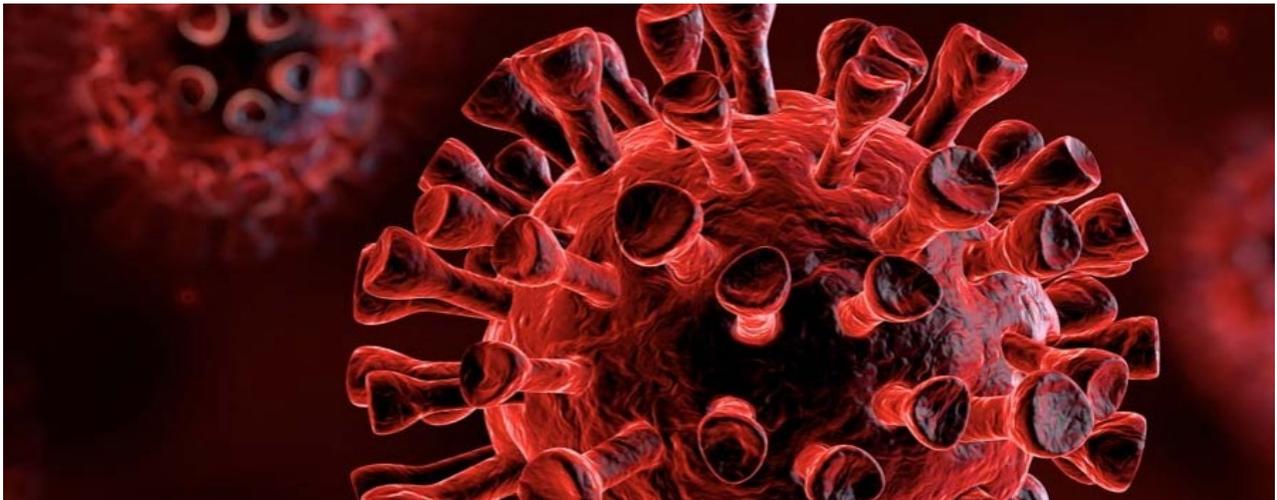
## WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE CAN DO

We have been dealing with this virus for two-plus years. Everyone is tired and wishes to get on with life. Unfortunately, COVID is still with us, and it appears it will be around for the foreseeable future.

Health professionals & scientists, as well as the public, have learned plenty about this virus but it is keeping several steps ahead of us. A year ago, we were waiting for our vaccines which we thought were going to be the silver bullet. Here we are, a year later, still concerned about COVID. What do we know and what should we be doing? As we have become accustomed, COVID information changes, sometimes daily. The information in this article is based on the information as of early April 2022.

## COVID-19 VIRUS

The main virus this year has been Omicron, BA.1 which appeared back in November 2021, taking over from the Delta mutant which is still around. Omicron, BA.1 is much more contagious than the Delta version but fortunately in most incidences, results in a milder illness. Back in February, a new mutation of the Omicron, BA.1 began circulating, which is known as Omicron, BA.2. It is much more contagious and is the current dominant virus in circulation.



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## HOW DO YOU GET INFECTED WITH COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spread from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets and aerosols (smaller droplets) created when an infected person: talks, sings, shouts, coughs, and/or sneezes. It can also spread by touching something that has the virus on it, then touching your nose, mouth, or eyes with unwashed hands.

## CURRENT TESTING

The Provincial Health Units have increased the testing criteria which has narrowed the PCR eligibility scope resulting in fewer people being tested. The daily test results, which are made public, are estimated to be 8 to 10 times higher than the actual number of cases reported daily in the province.

There are COVID-19 Antigen test kits available for home testing. This test is being deemed less reliable overall compared to the PCR tests.

The new measure for testing is an analysis of wastewater. Modelling is used to relate to the numbers of people infected. This testing has been around since the early days of the pandemic and now appears to be the main data used in the modelling for the health authorities. It was reported, on Friday, April 8, by the COVID-19 Ontario Advisory Science Table, that there are approximately 100,000 cases per day at this time. This is based on the wastewater testing results.

We all know of many people who have or have had COVID in the past few months. We have entered the sixth wave as indicated by the health authorities.

## PROTECTION MANDATES

The Ontario Government decided to drop many of the COVID requirements on March 21 and plans on dropping all restrictions shortly. Economic and public pressure is believed to be the catalyst for lifting these restrictions. Governments have based their thinking on public health capacities to manage the illness. The restrictions imposed are based on the numbers of people hospitalized and the numbers in ICU. These numbers had been dropping but are now surging again.

Many medical professionals have indicated that it was too early to drop restrictions - especially masking mandates. The virus is airborne; therefore, masking can provide good but not perfect, protection from infection.

However, masking is still required in some situations such as at medical facilities, transit, and federal facilities at this time.

## ARE VACCINES WORKING?

Contrary to some people's beliefs the vaccines are working.

Vaccines are designed for two purposes, and simply put, they first create immunity to prevent infections, and second, if the virus breaks through, the vaccine creates immunity to prevent serious illness.

Over time vaccines wane, which means they diminish or dwindle in power. This is why further doses are recommended.

Yes, vaccinated people are getting the virus, but most are only getting a mild dose, which means fewer and or milder symptoms and normally do not require hospitalization. Vaccines (2 shots) provided some protection against the Delta virus but not as much against the Omicron virus. People with a booster shot get more protection against being infected. Overall, fully vaccinated people, plus those with a booster, are now being infected and getting COVID at this time, but again, in most people, it is a mild case.



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## IMMUNE DEFICIENCY

Many people have weaker immune systems and have a higher risk of contracting COVID, getting very sick, and needing to be admitted to a hospital.

Some of these people include:

- Newborn babies
- Women who are pregnant
- Anybody who has not received or is not able to receive a COVID vaccine (e.g., children under five years old)
- People with diabetes, heart problems, or lung problems
- People who are undergoing cancer treatment or take medications for autoimmune conditions

People who are immune deficient, people over 60, and the unvaccinated are very vulnerable to getting the Omicron, BA.2 virus and becoming very ill. The reality is that people are still getting infected, and some are getting very ill and some are still dying from the virus.



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## MASKING & OTHER PROTECTIONS

A good mask (N95 or KN95) has been proven to be very effective at providing a barrier for protection against the virus. Other measures such as distancing, limiting contacts, and sanitizing surfaces as well as washing your hands, also provide good but not perfect protection.

## WHY ARE WE SEEING THE NUMBER OF CASES RISING?

The current virus Omicron, BA.2 is very contagious much more so than previous strains. Medical professionals blame some of the increases in cases on dropping restrictions too early, especially masking.

Dr. Peter Jüni, Epidemiologist and Scientific Director of the COVID-19 Ontario Science Advisory Table indicated in a recent article that:

“Many people are behaving as if the pandemic is almost over. And this means that it is mainly our behaviour that is driving this wave,” he added, noting that the new highly transmissible sub-variant of Omicron, BA.2, is only partly responsible for the increase in cases. “The new variant is not the main culprit. It's us. It's people just dropping their guards and increasing their high-risk contacts, such as gathering with others indoors without masks.”

## FOURTH SHOTS

Ontario and other jurisdictions are, or will be, offering an additional booster also referred to as fourth shots. A fourth shot is now available for people with immune deficiencies and those over 60.

## LONG COVID

A small percentage of people who become infected can end up with long COVID. Most people recover from COVID within a few weeks or less. Some people continue to experience symptoms after their initial recovery (source Mayo Clinic).

## HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19?

Government and other officials indicate people need to take the precautions that they are comfortable with. We see many people still wearing masks and many not. It is an individual choice now on what precautions we take. Masking is the easiest and most effective precaution in preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

## WE MUST ALSO REMEMBER THAT EVEN AFTER HAVING COVID YOU CAN BE RE-INFECTED.

Overall, people must perform their own risk assessment and decide which precautions they will take individually or for their families.

**BOTTOM LINE IS THAT PEOPLE MUST DECIDE WHAT MEASURES THEY NEED TO TAKE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

This article is intended for information and food for thought. There is still lots of misinformation out there regarding conspiracy theories, etc. We encourage readers to seek legitimate information when they are making their personal risk assessment into their decisions regarding COVID. If in doubt, contact your doctor or a medical professional



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# TRAVEL DISCOUNT FOR RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER (RWC) MEMBERS

The RWC has arranged with STAFFORD TRAVEL AGENCY for RWC members to receive a discount when booking vacation packages and flights.

Discounts will be as follows – 4% on vacation packages and a flat service charge of \$25.00 for flights.

To receive a discount contact John Stafford at 416 481 5106 or [staffordtravel@sympatico.ca](mailto:staffordtravel@sympatico.ca) and identify yourself as an RWC Member.

Stafford Travel has served the travel needs of the POWER WORKERS' UNION for over 60 years. Included below is some information regarding the benefits of using a travel agent for your travel needs.

## ACTA - Association of Canadian Travel Agencies

**Whether you are traveling for business or pleasure, when it comes to making travel plans, we recommend you start with the perfect companion: an ACTA Professional Travel Agent.**

Although there are many benefits to using an ACTA Travel Agent, here are just a few:

### 1. Expert Advice

While reading about all of the places to go online can be fun – planning a vacation is hard work. Your ACTA Travel Agent often has inside knowledge of your desired destination with either personal experience, or through their network of contacts. They can access up-to-date information to answer all your questions on destinations, transportation, documentation, immunizations, travel insurance, etc. Think of them as your Internet Interpreter with a "personal touch" and the most reliable travel search engine!

### 2. Personal Attention

An ACTA Travel Agent can tailor your travel plans to suit your personal needs and interests – whether you are looking for an adventure, a business trip with an ever-changing itinerary, or a family vacation with special accommodations for toddlers and grandparents. An ACTA Travel Agent will ensure that your travel experience has that personal touch, meets your expectations, and fits within your budget.

### 3. Peace of Mind

With an ACTA Travel Agent, you have an advocate that you can count on for help before or during your travels – in case there is a change of plans, emergency, cancelled flights, or any other unexpected event. Your ACTA Travel Agent is there when you need them.



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#### 4. Convenience and Savings

Travelling is more complicated than ever. The variety of accommodation options, new airline routes, and classes of service, as well as the introduction of multiple styles of cruises, are updated and promoted daily. How can you possibly find that perfect fit for your travel plans? We understand that keeping up with all of the travel options available is a full-time job and encourage you to let an ACTA Travel Agent do the work for you and find the best value for your travel dollar. From air tickets to car rentals, lodging, and activities, ACTA Travel Agents have the knowledge and many local connections, which makes them capable of offering unique additions to your itinerary.

#### 5. Trust

Travel Agents are caring, and personable and add a human element to your travel planning. They are not just another anonymous website. Travel Agents are invested in your happiness and satisfaction and want to ensure each, and every trip is packed with positive lifelong memories. ACTA Travel Agents abide by a strict [Code of Best Practices](#) and are dedicated to their client's best interests.

#### 6. Stress Relief

Feeling overwhelmed by options? With a professional Travel Agent on your side, you can rest easy. Having an expert Travel Agent assist you with the planning and logistics of your travels will not only reduce your stress, but it can have a big impact on how much you spend, and how much you enjoy your vacation.

## A RETIREE'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE RETURN TO NEAR NORMAL TIMES

After two plus years of wishing and urging the world to be done with the COVID-19 pandemic, workers and retirees alike have realized that being done is not really in the lexicon. It is more likely that we have to co-exist or as some experts say, learn to live with COVID-19. Co-existing may not be where we wanted to go, but there appears to be little chance of anything different for the foreseeable future.

Is this important for workers and retirees? Yes, it is! These variants continue to pose a risk and hopefully retirees and current members will do what they can to look after themselves and their family and friends. The PWU is the owner of a real legacy of health and safety innovation, training, and execution of the principles of occupational health and safety. In a world where COVID-19 variants and variants of concern are to remain with us this leadership will be tested many times yet. The PWU Health and Safety Department remains very active on the COVID front. The most current activity is working with local Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) to help the return to the workplace of many workers returning after what is, in some cases, more than two years of working from home or as it is called, working remotely.

The return to work for many will be difficult, even unsettling. Not to mention, the upheaval on the work-life balance equation as remote working has permitted many workers to be more involved with their children and grandchildren. The PWU is working with employers and other unions to

ensure that the mental health and psychosocial safety of all workers is looked after, but with an element of emphasis on those returning to work over the next days. By the time this is published, it is expected that many workers will already be back in the workplace.

In the context of mental health and psychosocial safety, the PWU Health and Safety Department is hopefully going to run an in-person Level 4 H&S Accreditation Training Course in June. Level 4 is focused on the very issues of mental health and psychosocial safety.

The recent PWU donation to Ukraine relief is something that retirees and current PWU members can point to with justifiable pride. Through the Canadian Nuclear Workers' Council (CNWC) the PWU has a close relationship with Ukraine. Some years ago, members of the PWU and the CNWC visited Ukraine and toured Chernobyl. The tour guides and interpreters became not only colleagues, but also became good friends. In the tragedy of the war in Ukraine at least one of the Ukrainians has been able to directly communicate with some of the PWU/CNWC people. The reports are heartbreaking.



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**Dave Trumble**  
PWU/Bruce Power Retiree

## DOES YOUR TRAVEL INSURANCE COVER COVID AS WELL AS TRIP CANCELLATION?

More retirees are taking trips or are planning to travel this year. With Omicron variants still spreading, many travelers are wary - not just of catching COVID - but of having their trips cancelled, either by airlines or government restrictions.

It is always advisable to have medical as well as trip interruption/cancellation insurance when you travel, especially in the current climate.

Not all travel insurance policies offer the same coverage and credit card insurance should not form the foundation of your travel insurance, experts say.

Insurers say that one thing that won't be covered with any policy you buy, is if you cancel the trip because COVID numbers at your destination are rising. Some travelers are also concerned about booking a trip to Europe right now due to the situation in Ukraine that may spark a wider conflict.

Countries neighboring Russia or Ukraine, like Poland, Lithuania, or even Finland, are not currently subject to an official travel advisory from the Government of Canada. If the travel advisory changes, it is suggested that getting cancellation or trip interruption insurance would be virtually impossible.

Many PWU Retirees are covered for out-of-country medical insurance under their EHB plan. If you are covered, we strongly suggest, that you check with your insurer, so you understand what

you have coverage for and what limitations and restrictions are in the plan especially related to COVID.

If you purchase any medical insurance, be sure you understand what your coverage provides. The same rule applies to your trip interruption/cancellation policy. In these turbulent times, circumstances continue to change. It is important that you keep up to date on the protection you have. Insurance can be costly, but it does provide you with peace of mind and hopefully, you will not have to use it.



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## GETTING BACK ON THE HORSE

After the last couple of years of restrictions, closures, cancellations, and now, just when we may be seeing our way through this pandemic, we are hit with higher prices at the pumps, higher costs for groceries, and rising household bills, and a looming war in Europe. What could be next? Are we going to just sit at home and worry about the next piece of bad news that might be coming down the pipes? Or are we going to get out of the rut we've been forced into and take advantage of some of the great things being planned for you by folks in your community and around the province?

Many of your local community groups are moving forward with plans for some big events this year- such as the Lion's Club, Rotary Club, your local Canadian Legion, Business Improvement Association (BIA), your local Hospital Auxiliary, Car Clubs, Motorcycle Groups, Shriners, etc. All these events take people to organize and hold these events and there are countless opportunities to get out and become a member of a group, volunteer to help at an event, or just attend an event as a supporter.

Let me just tell you about one of the events that I will be heavily involved in this summer. My son-in-law Alex Rauket will be raising money for the only Canadian Shriners Hospital by riding his bicycle from the Masonic Centre in Port Elgin Ontario to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Montreal Quebec. To find out more or to show your support please visit [www.bruceshrineclub.ca](http://www.bruceshrineclub.ca) or [www.mochashriners.org](http://www.mochashriners.org)

If you are visiting the beautiful shores of Lake Huron this summer don't forget to check out Goderich, the most beautiful town in Ontario. They are holding their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Bed Race Around the Town Square, on May 21<sup>st</sup> @ 12:30 pm.

Kincardine, Ontario has a full slate of events planned: The Market in Victoria Park is back every Monday starting May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. Cruise Nights return to Kincardine on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

On the Friday evening of each long weekend, Kincardine shuts down its main street and welcomes Antique and Classic Cars and Motorcycles from across Mid-Western Ontario to strut their stuff. The World-Famous Kincardine Scottish Pipe Band will start marching down main street every Saturday night once again starting in June.

Kincardine's Scottish Festival is back July 1<sup>st</sup> – July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, followed closely by the Lighthouse Blues Festival July 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and the Kincardine Summer Music Festival August 1<sup>st</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 [www.ksmf.ca](http://www.ksmf.ca).

The Rotary Club in Paisley, Ontario is hosting Music events all summer long and the Blues Festival is on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

There is a "MEGA" Garage Sale being held by The Tiverton and District Lions Club, on September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Also, the Fergus Scottish Festival "The Pipes are Calling" is running again this year from August 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The Keady Farmers and Flea Markets are back every Tuesday in Keady, Ontario. Fresh fruit and vegetables, livestock, antiques, and collectibles. They have it all.

I could go on and on, but I'll leave you right there. Take a look around your area or a new area where you have never been before and take the opportunity to get up, get out and have a little fun this year.

I hope to see you along the shores of beautiful Lake Huron sometime this summer. Maybe you will stop into a local pub for a pint.



Best Regards,

**Kevin MacKay**  
PWU/Bruce Power Retiree

# DISCOUNT HOME & AUTO INSURANCE PRICES FOR PWU RWC MEMBERS

The broker we have arranged this program with will provide the following savings:

- 10% savings with the group plan
- 5% additional savings for CAA Members

**Contact the agent below and identify yourself as a PWU RWC Member to receive the discount.**



Conrad Vachon | President  
416-645-3166 | [cvachon@vachoninsce.com](mailto:cvachon@vachoninsce.com)

**Vachon Insurance Group**  
200-5468 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M9B 6E3  
Office: (416) 239-3373 | Toll-Free: 1 (800) 766-8662 | Fax: (416) 239-4944

THANK YOU FOR READING!



*Prince Wind Farm, Author is Stiles Creative.*

# THE PWU RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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