

CASSE founder remembered as passionate, dedicated

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Olive Smith, the founder of CASSE (Canadians Asking for Social Security Equality), died March 28 at the age of 77.

She began CASSE with a small group in Essex in 1996 after changes to the Canada-U.S. Tax Treaty resulted in a higher tax burden for Canadian retirees collecting United States Social Security benefits.

About 85,000 Canadian residents were affected by the increase, said CASSE member Bill Thrasher.

"It was a devastating blow," he said. "Some people had to move from nursing homes. Some people told us their spouses died from grief."

Thrasher remembers Smith as "a real fighter" for the cause.

He first met Smith after expressing his concerns in a letter to the editor of a local newspaper. A few days later, Smith sent a similar letter and within a few weeks, more and more people were also writing.

It was then that Thrasher received a call from Smith, asking him to form a group to petition the government about the increase.

It started with a group of five or six seniors getting together to determine a plan of action. Soon after, the group held a public meeting that drew about 200 supporters. During the meeting, Smith was "ecstatic" at the turnout and agreed to become the chairperson of CASSE, Thrasher said.

Another meeting in Windsor followed, drawing about 2,000 people.

The group continued its cause and eventually met with former prime minister Paul Martin.

The Canada-U.S. Tax Treaty was subsequently amended so that retirees

living in Canada were subject to paying tax in Canada on 85 per cent of their U.S. Social Security income. But it was still causing hardship for many retirees, Thrasher said.

"Instead of taxing 50 per cent of social security benefits like before, they were

now taxing 80 per cent," he said. "It helped people but it never got them back to where they were."

Recently, Essex MP Jeff Watson has continued the CASSE campaign with his Private Member's Bill C-305, which would allow Social Security pensioners

to claim only 50 per cent of their U.S. Social Security income for tax purposes.

"Olive Smith is certainly one of the most caring and compassionate people I've met," Watson said. "When that tax hike was introduced, she was rallying. She went above and beyond

the call of duty. Essex County is certainly going to miss her."

Smith worked for a U.S. based trucking company. After starting CASSE, she received phone calls from thousands of retired Canadians in distress, Thrasher said.

"She listened, gave advice and even drove people from Windsor to a social security office," Thrasher said.

"She was absolutely amazing. A lot of lower income people can thank Olive Smith for her drive and dedication."

HEARTLAND
CREDIT UNION

WOODSLEE
CREDIT UNION

divisions of UNITED COMMUNITIES CREDIT UNION LIMITED

Board Nominees (Woodslee Region)



Eric Denotter
Grain & Operations Manager,
Agris Co-operative/
Great Lakes Grain



Sheila MacKinnon
Lawyer & Partner,
Shibley Righton LLP



Paul Meanwell
General Manager,
Gosfield North
Communications
Co-operative Limited

Annual General Meetings

The 1st Annual Meeting of United Communities Credit Union Limited will be held in both regions at 7 PM on the following dates:

Woodslee Region
Monday, April 16th, 2007
at St. John Parish Hall
Woodslee, Ontario

Heartland Region
Wednesday, April 18th, 2007
at the Royal Canadian Legion
Exeter, Ontario

Voting Information

Election of Directors will be completed by **in-branch voting April 2nd – 13th, 2007** inclusive as provided by bylaw. For more information visit or call your local branch or check online at our websites listed below.

Growing, Together

What a year it's been! Our collective growth and success over the past year has set the stage for an extraordinary future, and we are tremendously excited about the momentum we are building together.

2006 was about promise. During the Heartland-Woodslee Credit Unions merger information meetings in 2005, we promised to create a strong, vibrant combined credit union that would meet the current and future needs of our members. We promised to maintain regional autonomy with respect to community reinvestment, facilities, and credit decisions. We promised that no staff members would lose their employment as a direct result of the merger. We are pleased to announce we kept our promises!

Income before taxes and distribution to members was \$4.45M. Almost \$500,000 was returned to members in dividends. Regulatory capital now tops \$36M. Prior to the merger, both credit unions had a proud history of supporting our respective communities through sponsorships, bursaries, donations and community development initiatives. After the merger, community reinvestment in each region not only continues, but will see an overall increase from \$176,000 in 2006 to \$191,000 this year.

Growing together, we're also taking advantage of each others' best practices. Our Leader-Coach Program will provide coaching and mentorship to staff, along with personal leadership training. Our Service Quality Training Program focuses on delivering service excellence. And starting in the spring of 2007, through a new Lean Processing Program, we will be identifying and creating processing efficiencies to deliver our products and services better and faster, allowing us to spend more time with our members. Improvements to our Wealth Management offerings in the Heartland region also took place, with the addition of a full-time Credential Financial Strategies Inc. Representative. The wealth management professionals in both regions provide a high level of expertise through extensive professional accreditations. They are caring professionals who deliver unbiased advice – just what you would expect from your credit union.

2006 was also about the promise of our new organization. By combining our resources and expertise, we have created a stronger credit union with even greater potential to grow and make a difference. We have seen growth already, but there is still much to do as we serve our members, and work to fulfill our promises.

Thank-you for your continued support and loyalty as we learn and grow, together!

Paul L. Mullins,
Chair, Board of Directors

Dennis A. Wipp
President and Chief Executive Officer

Credential Financial Strategies Inc. offers financial planning, life insurance and investments to members of credit unions and their communities.

Board Nominees (Heartland Region)



Jim DeBlock
Feed Sales Manager,
Hensall District
Co-operative
ACCLAIMED



Gary Jewitt
Retired School Principal,
Vice Chair of United
Communities Credit Union
Limited
ACCLAIMED

Financial Highlights 2006

BALANCE SHEET (In thousands)	
ASSETS	
Cash & Investments	63,561
Loans to Members	429,743
Future Income Tax Asset	248
Capital Assets	8,774
Other Assets	1,406
	\$503,732
LIABILITIES & UNDIVIDED EARNINGS	
Liabilities	
Member Deposits	465,008
Other Liabilities	1,736
Member Shares	9,035
	\$475, 779
Undivided Earnings	
Balance at Amalgamation	24,890
Net Income	3,063
	27,953
	\$503,732
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS	
Interest Income	27,734
Other Income	4,446
Interest Expense	(12,668)
Operating & Other Expenses	(15,063)
Distributions to Members	(491)
Income Before Income Taxes	\$3,958

E-mail: [ESSEX FREE PRESS](mailto:essex@essexfreepress.com)
with your comments at: essexfreepress@on.ahm.com