

Val Wilson



How Much is Enough?

Astute Estate & Insurance Planning: hard to say, easy to do—with the help of the information offered in this issue of *The Scrivener*.

“It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.”

That proverb comes from “The Ant and The Grasshopper” fable; the grasshopper fiddled all summer while the ants toiled to store food. When winter came and the grasshopper was dying of hunger, he watched the ants eating the grain they had gathered. That grasshopper lacked a plan.

Some people practise the Hope plan: hope to win it, hope to marry it, or hope to inherit it. Although those dreams may be realized by a few, an astute estate plan is a dependable way to secure your future.

G. Wayne Braid, The Society’s Secretary/Executive Director, sees it this way: “Some people plan *for their lives and their retirement*; others limit their focus to planning financial comfort for those they will leave behind. I am of the opinion that estate planning is a lifetime undertaking.”

Wills

The first item of business is a Will. Many people do not have one. When a BC resident dies *in testate*, the Public

Guardian and Trustee assumes control of the distribution of assets. Without the guidance of a Will, any specific wishes the deceased might have had regarding the estate will remain a mystery.

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Government Support

Retirement benefits paid by the government are not generous sums of money. Living on a limited income can be quite challenging. It has been suggested that government pension funds—CPP and OAS—are at risk. Why?

- The first wave of Baby Boomers is nearing retirement age.
- Due to the decline in population, the workforce necessary to support the pension program is inadequate. If the percentage of people receiving benefits is greater than the number of people paying into the funds, the system will be sorely taxed.

- People are living longer; the system will have to pay benefits for more years.

If it is true that we cannot rely on government pension plans in our retirement years, we had best pursue a viable and sustainable alternative, now.

Personal Responsibility

Each adult has the responsibility to arrange his or her estate planning strategy. Planning options include special insurance to pay death taxes on RRSPs; different types of trusts; Representation Agreements for health care planning; Powers of Attorney; bequests to favourite charities; and much more.

Rule 1: Start early.

Rule 2: Start now.

Rule 3: Consult qualified professionals.

How much is enough?

Consult your local Notary Public or allied professional who is qualified to help you plan for the rest of your life. ▲

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