

We Can't Do Everything... but We Can Do Something

This is the motto of the Canadian Harambee Education Society, which for many years has provided security, and education for children in Kenya and Tanzania. The other day I read their Newsletter and that made me think about the 'something' that COSCO has done over the years. A few examples sprang to mind, but I know that every single month we are actively engaged in working to improve the lives of seniors and their families.

A few months ago I was at a meeting where the topic was preventing elder abuse. When it got to be my turn to introduce myself and COSCO the chair of the meeting said, "And they demonstrate." Yes, we do. And what's more, we're proud of standing up for causes that matter.

Not many months ago, we stood on a street corner protesting the dismissal of staff at a senior residence. The owners wanted to pay lower wages to

untrained staff. We named it for what it was: elder abuse. COSCO joined the rally to say, "Oh no you don't." And they didn't. Seniors did something.

A few years ago we organized a public meeting when a Health Authority wanted to split up an elderly couple by sending the wife to a different nursing facility. Lots of folks showed up to protest and the Authority backed off. Strength in numbers in action for a worthy goal. It's called doing something.

COSCO is part of a coalition that fought to maintain the Health Accord as the foundation for health care in every Province and Territory. Representatives of our group met all but two of BC's federal Members of Parliament to try to convince them about the perils of abandoning a federal presence and cutting contributions. A change in government resulted in more consultation and finally accords were formed. Now we are asking



*by Sheila Pither,
COSCO 2nd Vice-President*

for greater accountability for the use of federal money. It is intended for health care and it should not be diverted to other uses. We know we didn't get everything but we also know that our efforts contributed to getting something, and we're not finished yet.

COSCO is non-partisan. We call it the way it is without regard for which party is in power. That doesn't mean that we always show up with a picket in one hand and a petition in the other. But we'll do both of those things if we have to. The strength of our organization is enhanced by the wide ranging values and needs we bring to a wide variety of tables. We mean it when we talk about Seniors Helping Seniors.

Can we do everything? NO
Can we do something? YES

Council Of Senior Citizens' Organizations Of BC (COSCO)

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IN THIS EDITION

We Can't Do Everything	1
Violence and Seniors.....	3
Jamatkhana Mosque	4
COSCO In The Community.....	4, 9, 11
Highlights of Statistics Canada's 2016 Census ..	5
Life and Time's of Our Great-Grandfather	5-6
411 Seniors Centre Society	7
Inequity Affects Seniors in BC	8
Teeth: The Story of Beauty, Inequality, and the Struggle for Oral Health in America.	9
Acting President's Message	10

About COSCO

COSCO is an umbrella organization that brings together 85 different seniors groups, representing around 80,000 women and men, to work on common issues.

COSCO is affiliated with the 1,000,000 member National Pensioners Federation (NPF) which promotes these issues at the national level.

A major focus of COSCO's work is promoting good health. To this end, COSCO Seniors' Health and Wellness Institutes volunteers provide a series of free workshops on 43 topics ranging from Falls Prevention to Health Literacy. More than 30,000 people have attended these workshops.

COSCO News welcomes your letters and contributions.

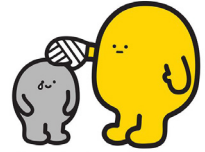
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VIOLENCE & SENIORS

“Did you lose a fight or walk into a kitchen cupboard door?”

Are you OK?



That is often asked when we encounter a friend or acquaintance sporting some injury.

More often than not, the reply is “You should see the other guy”. Unfortunately, the feeble jokes can mask the awful truth: there has been abuse. It is not always a black eye. Repeated broken bones, fingers, bruises, etc, can be evidence that either the person is very accident-prone or they have been abused. Never mind the psychological damage to self-confidence and self-image.

“Domestic or family violence” is neither genteel nor benign. It is assault, plain and simple. Except, you probably guessed it is not quite simple.

Violence and seniors is an age-old topic. It may happen at home or in a facility. Certainly, physical abuse is not confined to a particular age group, gender, sexual orientation or physical disability – it is an equal opportunity situation. Most often, it happens because of a power imbalance and feelings of inadequacy by the perpetrator.

Many a case of abuse has escalated over time from verbal bullying to explosive physical

attacks. It is most likely accompanied by social isolation where the victim is deliberately kept from contact with supportive family members or friends. Perversely, many people suffering abuse seem to cooperate with the victimizer. They have been convinced that they are worthless, guilty, and shameful and deserve to be punished.

By the time there is violence, no amount of analysis is going to help resolve the situation. The abused person has to seek safety. This may happen a few times because usually there is a ‘honeymoon phase’ where the violent person is so very sorry and will never do it again – until next time and the next.

Many factors can be part of the senior staying in an unsafe situation:

- S/he sees no alternatives
- Lack of money
- Fear of worse treatment
- Fear of losing the “love” or attention and company of the perpetrator – i.e. being alone ; and so on

Currently, there are two Transition Houses for Senior Women in BC! One is located in Surrey and the other one in Victoria... There appear to be no such facilities for men, other

than shelters.

What can we/you do? You cannot fix the situation alone. If anyone you know is in danger to life and limb, call 911. These first responders are very familiar with assaults in a family or facility situation.

In the Lower Mainland Sunshine Coast you can phone 211 for information about shelters or agencies that can help the individual. Of course, it is best if the person is able to do that on his or her own.

A very popular topic in the media and seniors’ circles is loneliness and social isolation.

Perhaps we can all do our little bit by paying attention to seniors and vulnerable people. A friendly “Hello” or “Isn’t it a fine day” kind of chat will help people know that they are noticed and may feel less alone. You do not have to be nosy or mind their business – just being friendly and acknowledging their existence is invaluable. Of course, it is also true that just because somebody is alone does not mean s/he is lonely but it certainly helps to cheer the day with friendly noises.

By: Gudrun Langolf

3 – COSCO News, July 2017

Jamatkhana Mosque

The Seniors Coordinator for all Ismaili Mosques treated Facilitators and COSCO Health & Wellness Institute Board members to a tour of the **Burnaby Jamatkhana Mosque**. This was to show appreciation of our work with them. [On short notice, we did six workshops in 3 days with 344 attendees around the first 3 days of February.]

It was good to learn about some history of Islam – world-wide and in Canada. The Islamic faith is in general a part of Abrahamic religions that believe in ‘one god’. **The Shia Ismaili Muslims are a community of ethnically and culturally diverse peoples living in over 25 countries around**

the world, united in their allegiance to His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan as the 49th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader), and direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad.

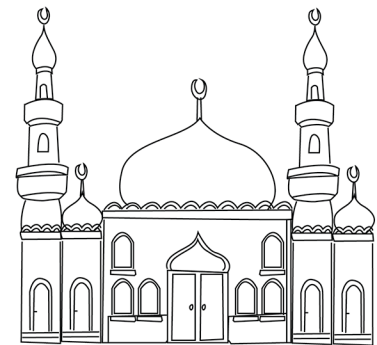
The Islamic faithful generally fall into two groups: **The Sunni and Shia**. It seems just as Christians (and other religious groups) are organized in various denominations like Catholic, Protestant and a myriad of variations, Muslims too are in a number of various groupings. Shia Ismaili Muslim is just one of them.

It was interesting to learn that all members of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community participate in the activities of the Mosque,

whether it is leading prayers or providing services to the community as a whole - assisting students, **caring for their seniors**, etc. It is expected of them.

We enjoyed their generous hospitality: presentations as well as the delectable samosas, sweets and chai - that is a refreshing, sweetened tea.

By: Gudrun Langolf



COSCO IN THE COMMUNITY



BC GEU convention & community information tables

Highlights of Statistics Canada's 2016 Census



In the latest Statistics released by the federal government, it is noted that BC has 5 communities in the list of the 10 communities with the highest proportions percentages of the population aged 65 + in Canada. These 'age friendly' communities with their percentage of seniors include: Parksville at 43%, Penticton 29%, Salmon Arm 27.5%, Courtenay 27.3% and Powell River 27.2%. For the first time in Canada, the proportion of seniors at 16.9% exceeded that of children at 16.6%.

Seniors in Canada number 5,935,635 people, now account for a record-high 19% of the population. For the first time ever, there are now more people in Canada age 65 and over than there are under age 15.

The median age of Canadians is 41.2 years compared to 40.6 years in 2011. There are more seniors 5.9 million than children 5.8 million the first time that has happened. By 2061 it is projected there will be 12 million seniors to 8 million children.

BC also had the lowest proportion of children 14 and younger

in Western Canada. The gender ratio changes the older you get. At 85 and older, women outnumber men nearly two to one. At 100 and up, it's five women to one man. A total of 770,780 people reached the age of 85 and older, according to the census. That group grew 19.4% since 2011. The census found that centenarians were the fastest-growing population from 2010 to 2016 41.3%. There were 8,230 Canadians over the age of 100 in 2016.

Canada is one of the youngest countries in the G7. Having

the second-lowest proportion of seniors aged 65+ out of the G7 countries. Higher proportions of seniors are in Japan, Germany, Italy, France, and UK. There are more people approaching retirement (4.9 million) than beginning to enter work force (4.3 million).

These statistics from the last census bring into focus the trends of our population in Canada.

The senior population will increase, and our focus needs to be on wellbeing in our senior years.

by Barb Mikulec

Life and Times of our Great-Grandfather

On Friday 13 January 2017, the BC Government's news release featured the unveiling of the second of a series of fifteen Commemorative monuments, honoring Chinese Canadians, in recognizing their contributions to BC's rich cultural, historical and economic mosaic. This monument was located at the Chinese Cemetery in Cumberland BC. Upon reading the news, a flood of emotions & childhood memories ensued, for this is the exact site where our GGF-HUI-Fui-Yuen's monument is still standing, since his passing in 1960. That was all

the inspiration I needed to decide upon writing about our GGF's life and times. However, to write about a GGF with whom no living member of our extended family have ever met; furthermore, to write about a GGF who have lived in Cumberland BC Canada since 1913, at the age of 35where do I begin?

After what has been a fascinating journey of discovery, first & foremost, I must thank the Cumberland Museum & Archives (<http://www.cumberlandmuseum.ca/>), the University of Victoria's Chinese

Canadian Artifacts Project (<http://ccap.uvic.ca>) for their tireless and meticulous efforts in preserving & archiving our forefathers' colorful history. Secondly, I also owe a token of appreciation to my Uncle John Heu, who actually met our GGF in Vancouver, on at least one occasion, when GGF visited the bright lights of the Big City, to look after the funeral arrangements for his nephew, who had the notorious distinction of being nicknamed "Yanshi-Jin" ("Yanshi" actually refers to the nicotine deposits in opium ashtrays). You'll get the drift. Uncle John recalled that he and GGF-Hui went shopping at Vancouver's A & N Boutique, for a set of burial clothing for "Yanshi-Jin".

Thirdly, no discovery journey about my roots on this side of the Pacific would be complete without the heart-warming conversations with members of the Leung's extended family: Namely John, now a residence of Burnaby; John's sister May, and his 92-y-o aunt Marie, both of Courtney BC. In view of my personal background with CN Rail, and being the first-and-only Chinese-Canadian locomotive engineer in Canada; during our exchange of greetings, they were as fascinated as I was, in making the connection about the old days: Cumberland BC, originally named UNION, the coal-mining center of high grade steam and domestic coal, was a boomtown of a bygone era, played an integral part in the railway and lumber industries in its hey days. It was the sharing of their acquaintance with our GGF, namely from Aunt Marie, whose father was great friends with GGF, which helped me to learn that GGF was not only the scribe for the Chinese laborers, he was also a community leader,

Chinese-language teacher, and the secretary of Gee-Gong-Tong, the local masonic lodge which served as the community center of the Cumberland Chinatown. To my delight, I also discovered that GGF actually lived on the upper floor of the masonic lodge, in a Chinatown which boasted a population of 2,000 at one time. John Leung, a former student of GGF, whose Leung's Grocery was located directly across from the Cumberland Post Office; as such, John was able to offer a glimpse into GGF's daily routine: He fondly recalls that on most afternoons, GGF would always have an umbrella for shade, walk up to the post office with letters in hand, for the mailing of the many letters of which he was the scribe.

I simply cannot imagine the hardship these men had to endure: working as laborers in a coal-mining town, surviving two World Wars which ravaged much of the world, being isolated from the rest of their families; furthermore, having to face the Chinese Head Tax (1885), and the Chinese Immigration Act (1923). It remains on record that the Chinese workers were paid less than half of the usual wage rate. Money and wartime stood as the biggest obstacles for GGF to have made the occasional trans-Pacific crossing by boat to visit his family. Therefore, I would venture to the guess that he'd only made one such trip since 1913, judging from the fact that the younger 2 of his 5 children were born merely a year apart; perhaps it was even an extended stay in the homeland. Case in point: My paternal-great-aunt #4, was born around the same time as my father, in 1925. Speaking of which, this great-aunt #4 would go on to enjoy a prolific motherhood-rearing 1 son and 8 daughters (2 of whom are twins).

Mr. Heu-Chuen, Uncle John's grandpa, an old chum of GGF, also worked in the Union Colliery Company as a carpenter, until his leg was injured at the workplace. Aunt Marie recalls that he would refuse the doctor's recommendation for amputation; instead, he promptly traveled back to China for treatment. In his subsequent return, he would go on to become a well-known carpenter in the Cumberland/Courtney area, building many houses, inclusive of Aunt Marie's family home. His last known duty in the area, before retiring to Vancouver sometime before 1960, was to look after the funeral arrangements for GGF's second-elder brother. To this day, only the concrete slab on the ground remains, whereas the wooden marker has long since disintegrated. Being the youngest of 3 brothers who came to Cumberland, GGF would be the last survivor of his era, until 1960. The brothers' burial sites were next to each other. By then, GGF-HUI-Fui-Yuen had the good fortune of having a stone marker at his grave-site, one of the very few which remains standing to this day, in this almost desolate Cumberland Chinese Cemetery.

In closing, it is my wish that this short essay can serve as a starting point for a more comprehensive family history. I'm hopeful that in time to come, more & more of us in our extended family will contribute their own stories of our GGF/Grandma, from fond memories of days gone by.



by Alex Hui

411 Seniors Centre Society

The building at 411 Dunsmuir was built by the Vancouver/New Westminster Labour Council as a labour temple in 1910. It was occupied by the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, the BC Federation of Labour, various unions and The Federationist (the labour paper) from 1910-21. It was sold to the Vancouver School Board and, in the late 1920s, was taken over by the provincial government.

In the early 1970s the provincial government accepted the Senior Citizens Association of BC's recommendation for a 'rest and refreshment' centre. But it wasn't until 1977 that the 411 Seniors Centre Society was registered as a non-profit society. This year marks the 40th anniversary of that event.

The provincial government gave 411 Dunsmuir to 411 Seniors in 2006. But the building was old and required a great deal of money for maintenance. The Society could not afford to fix it and keep it. It was sold in 2012 and 411 Seniors Centre moved to 333 Terminal as an interim step in finding a new and permanent home.

411 believes in seniors serving seniors. Our organization has

nearly 300 members, 90 volunteers and only 5 hardworking staff members. We provide a large number of programs and services. The most notable are the Information and Referral (I&R) program that uses trained volunteers to help seniors deal with all kinds of issues to access resources and programs. I&R volunteers can help seniors navigating the large number of social, medical, housing, government benefit and pension programs.

This service is provided 5 days a week. Last year we served 1869 seniors.

The other large program is the Income Tax Clinic which provides free tax filing for low income seniors and people with disabilities. The clinic is staffed by volunteers and runs 5 days a week for the months of March and April. Last year we filed over 1700 returns.

We have a small but well used thrift shop.

411 no longer has a cafeteria (but plans one when we move!). The space provides a warm, welcoming place for seniors to meet, have a coffee and cookie and visit with friends or join in the many programs we offer every week.

These include educational workshops on issues specifically aimed at seniors, as well as English Language classes and our basic computer training; health clinics (hearing, blood pressure, etc.) along with Yoga classes; and social events like Christmas dinner, Chinese New Year, Filipino events, and of course the week of PRIDE celebrations. We have Mahjong and cards weekly. We have a book club that meets monthly and we have recently started an armchair traveler program where members present pictures from their various travels. We have social activities that take us to the ballet and musical concerts.

One of our latest achievements has been to join together with West End Seniors Network and South Granville Seniors in an alliance. Our intention is to work together on various projects, to share resources and training and work in a cooperative manner.

by Linda Forsythe, for 411



Former 411 Seniors Centre Society

Inequity Affects Seniors in BC

Recent BC Statistics from the Labour Force Statistics Data 2016 suggest that there are regional disparities in jobs across the province.

Outside Metro Vancouver and Greater Victoria, the jobs story is grim. Job creation had negative figures for the province except in the broad Lower Mainland, and Vancouver Island/Coast. The Thompson-Okanagan, Kootenay, Cariboo, North Coast/Nechako and Northeast saw net job losses last year.

Half of BC seniors live on less than \$25,000 a year says the Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

(CCPA) report states that senior's poverty rose from 2.2% in 1996 to 12.7% in 2014.

Many BC seniors live below the poverty line. The CCPA report 'Poverty and Inequality among BC's Seniors' concludes that single women are at highest risk, as 28% of seniors now live alone, with one in three BC senior women poor and living alone compared with 22.5% for senior men. The higher risk of poverty for women is driven by gender inequality in the job market which translates into unequal pension income in old age.

Statistics Canada data reports that the **typical senior woman receives 21% less income**

from CPP, than the typical man and women are less likely to have access to private retirement income, employer sponsored pensions and RR-SPs. CCPA's researcher Iglia Ivanova says BC seniors have a growing gap between rich and poor that shows up across generations. The poorest 20% of senior households in Canada had a median wealth of only \$15,000 in 2012 but the top 20% had over \$1.6 million.

Solutions to this economic inequality may include establishing a poverty reduction plan, increasing public investment in home and community care, further expanding CPP and addressing the gender wage gap.

by Barb Mikulec

COSCO Associate Membership

☐ In addition to my \$25 Associate Membership fee, I wish to make a donation of \$_____ to COSCO.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

COSCO does not share mailing lists with third parties, unless we are required by law to do so.

Associate Membership is \$25 a year. Please make cheques payable to COSCO and mail your application to:

Linda Forsythe, Membership Secretary,

702 – 4353 Halifax Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 5Z4

E-Mail: membership@coscobc.org

Telephone: (604) 444-4300

For information about Affiliate (organizational) Membership, please contact the Membership Secretary.

Teeth: The Story of Beauty, Inequality, and the Struggle for Oral Health in America.

Do you remember when dentists were primarily concerned with keeping your natural teeth healthy, with doing a filling here as needed, teeth straightening perhaps, and at worst an extraction? It was about maintaining health. Now it seems that dentistry is mostly about “your smile” and about selling expensive cosmetic improvements that may improve your mental health (as you flash your row of “chiclets” at all the world) or not.

The other side of the coin is that access to basic dental care for lower income children and seniors in Canada and the US has always been and still is deplorable. Although it is well established that infections from tooth decay can spread through

your blood stream and sometimes be fatal, governments have been reluctant to add dental care to necessary health care provision or to tangle with the almost entirely private dental profession.

The 2017 book *Teeth: The Story of Beauty, Inequality, and the Struggle for Oral Health in America* is a powerful indictment of the recent history of dentistry in the US, its transformation into an industry promoting beauty, and the relationship between having a healthy mouth and teeth and income, social class, and racialized inequality. We do not know of any similar examination of the dental industry in Canada but it may not look much different.

In Canada, as in the US, those with private dental health insurance coverage have better access but, according to a 2012 Ontario study by the Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry, seniors in general had “significantly poorer access to dental care compared other age groups.” Only 36.1 per cent of seniors 65 and older in Ontario had private health insurance that subsidizes dental care costs. They were also most likely to visit dentists only in an emergency.

COSCO and other seniors’ organizations have long advocated for dental care to be included in Medicare but so far without success.

by Kathleen Jamieson

COSCO IN THE COMMUNITY



“Protein for People” AGM and BBQ

Acting President's Message

At our Annual General Meeting the following members each received the Lifetime Membership: **Sheila Pither, Ernie Bayer, and Jean Sickman** received their framed certificates (as pictured on this page).

Rudy Lawrence, Art Kube, Sylvia McLeay were not able to attend and their certificates await delivery in the future.

The Lifetime Memberships are awarded in recognition of sustained and substantial service to the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC. These honorees served COSCO well and we continue to benefit from their volunteer service. They collectively illustrate very well the motto, seniors working with seniors and the

principle of planning with seniors [not for them].

This has turned out to be an eventful year. The heart-stopping Provincial election results will affect political life, as we know it. We are of course optimistic about what a new government can bring – it certainly will not be business as usual. For many of our affiliates and the members, the incredibly destructive wildfires will be life altering.

At COSCO, our President, Lorraine Logan is on a medical leave and we are looking forward to her return in September. In Lorraine's absence, some executive members have stepped up to help with the work beyond

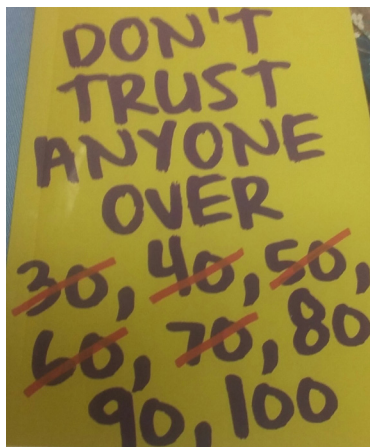
their own or otherwise ensured that things stayed on track. My thanks to all!

You may have noticed, we are also experimenting with new formats for the COSCO News. That is why we have a summer edition this time... If you have any helpful suggestions, write to the editor at cosconews.editor@coscobc.org and/or

vpone@coscobc.org



COSCO IN THE COMMUNITY



“Protein for People” AGM and BBQ

BC GEU convention & community information tables

Seniors' Repair Service

The Senior Citizens' Repair Service provides low-cost minor house repairs, renovations and maintenance services for seniors 55 years and over and for people with disabilities in Metro Vancouver.

Services include plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, gas fitting, painting, yard work and general handyman services. All services are guaranteed for 30 days, and are performed by experienced trades people who are retired or semi-retired.

Sponsored by the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Local 170.

Office hours are 9 AM to 12 Noon, Monday to Friday.

Phone: 604 529-1100

How to book a free workshop for your seniors' group

Over the last few years, 25,000 people throughout BC have participated in the COSCO Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute's free health promotion workshops. We now offer workshops on 43 different issues and topics of particular interest to seniors.

Each 60 to 90 minute workshop is available free of charge to any seniors' group of 10 or more. A trained senior volunteer presents practical and usable information. These workshops are not intended to provide any specific legal, medical or financial advice, just a better understanding and practical suggestions.

To book a workshop for your group, please contact:

Gordon Dainard, Workshop Coordinator

eMail: ws_coord@coscoworkshops.org

Phone: 1-604-820-1300



The next COSCO DELEGATES' meeting:

September 8th 2017

10:00 am – 12 noon

Hastings Community Centre

3096 East Hastings, Vancouver [corner Hastings & Renfrew]

Special Speaker: Prof. Steve Morgan

Topic: Pharmacare 2020 – the Future of drug coverage in Canada

Steve Morgan is a passionate, knowledgeable and engaging speaker. He is a very sought after speaker and we are fortunate to be able to get him to talk to us.

Feel free to bring a friend to this event. Remember to bring your cup if you drink coffee.

Our first meeting after the summer break will feature this very important topic. We will keep the 'regular business' to a minimum to ensure that there is some time to interact with Mr. Morgan.