



SENIORS CENTRE SOCIETY

# The Old Timers' Rag

Over 40 years of seniors helping seniors

Located on the unceded homeland of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and  
Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.

Greetings, friends, and thanks for your excellent feedback on *The Old Timers' Rag*. While the Centre remains closed, this newsletter will help keep you in touch with one another. You'll find news, stories and ideas that may improve life for people 55+, or just make you laugh. This month, we highlight the re-start of the 411 Seniors' free tax clinic.



## The time for change is now!

By Dale Edwards

Seventy-eight days was a long time for a 71-year-old mixed-heritage, middle-class woman used to freedom of movement to be confined to one floor of a west-side seniors' facility.

My white mom, Diana Edwards, is a 97-year-old maverick of her day, of English ancestry, who married my dad, Phillip Edwards, a well-known Canadian black athlete, a five-times Olympic bronze medal winner and a tropical disease specialist from Montreal.

My mother rejected her own family for not accepting her husband. Her strong sense of socialist justice for Black peoples in North America and South Africa helped define my upbringing. At age seventeen I went to San Francisco, where I worked with SDS

(Students for a Democratic Society), the Black Panther Party and the Peace and Freedom Party for seven years.

Fast forward to 2012. -My mom lived with me in Kerrisdale until I felt I needed to admit her to the Point Grey Private Hospital, a public/private long-term residence, where she began to have problems with constipation. Her condition led to a mental health assessment, because she would lash out when being toileted. I was incensed by this decision, since it is well documented that constipation can create behavioural problems. I wanted to be sure my mom was not over-medicated with opioids, which resulted in her being given Trazadone, a less addictive drug. I visited her five to six days a week, spending five to seven hours there.

Fast forward eight years to 2020. COVID-19 created a state of emergency, with the Senior Licencing Officer for Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) deciding who could come and go in all Vancouver facilities. Compassionate exemptions (for end of life) and exemptions for exceptional circumstances were granted in some cases.

It was Sunday, March 15. I was visiting the facility where my mom lives, and the Director of Care gave me a choice: to stay there 24/7, with no outside time, or to leave and not return until the COVID-19 crisis was over. My decision was immediate: to stay!

Our long-term physician brought me a mattress, and I slept on the floor for three weeks in my mom's room. I told the Senior Licencing Officer that my mom would decline rapidly and likely die if I did not continue her care. He said no twice, so I went to the

VCH decided I could stay in the facility as a resident if I paid what my mom paid. That was too expensive for me, so the facility allowed me to pay 1/3 of the cost. I questioned why I had to pay anything, when other provinces were paying family members to stay and help.

After letter-writing and more, I'm now my mom's official companion. I am with her every day. I witness many acts of kindness and sacrifice by staff complying with VCH's numerous directives. My observations clearly point to staffing levels as the primary issue. Many more staff are needed. Emotional connection is so vital, but it is not a given in the current 3.36 hours a day allocated per resident for activities in the facility where my mom lives.

I began to realize that we, as a society, were not placing enough importance on people's emotional needs being met or on intergenerational family ties. This lack has been devastating during the COVID-19 crisis. I spent thirty-five years working with two First Nations communities in B.C., and their values towards seniors/elders are the polar opposite to what I observed in my mom's western-style facility, despite it being one of the better facilities in B.C.

As we isolate in place, we have finally been forced to face how we value our seniors. Are we going to meet this challenge by shifting our economic priorities to more person-centred care rather than warehousing our parents and spouses? I look forward to being more fully engaged in this critical debate.

**Ranjit Soniassy's "Brain Fitness" programs at 411 attract a consistent gathering. In light of COVID-19 he has developed a series of techniques to do during lockdown. Limited room prevents us from publishing the entire set of exercises. But here is one: "Play Sudoku as often as you can. It trains your brain to think logically and improves your memory and concentration while helping you to make choices and think fast."**

**"I love the artwork and jokes as well as the serious information in the Newsletter."**



### RASPBERRY MOUSSE

2 cups of raspberries  
 ½ cup of sugar  
 1-2 teaspoons unflavoured gelatin  
 1 -1 ½ cups whipping cream

- Mash raspberries and mix in sugar.
- In a small saucepan, sprinkle gelatin over cold water; let stand for 1 minute. Stir over low heat until gelatin is completely dissolved. Stir into a large bowl with the raspberries. Refrigerate until jelled.
- Beat the raspberries until foamy. Whip the cream. Fold the whipped cream into the raspberry mixture.
- Spoon into dessert dishes and serve.

**Fill in the empty spaces so that: each row, each column and each box contains the numbers one through nine.**

1	6	5	7	9	4		3	8
4		7			2		5	
9	3				6			4
8	1		4		5			2
5	7	6	2	3	9	4		
2			6		1		7	5
3		1	5		7	8	4	9
6	9					5	2	7
	5			2	8	1		3

## Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

The partial re-opening of 411's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP), formerly known as our Free Income Tax Clinic, will start up on June 22. The program will be run as before, with the support of volunteer tax preparers, and will still be free.

### Want your income tax done for free? Here's what to do:

Our free program for simple income tax filings will operate on a drop-off/pick-up basis under the guidelines provided by the Canada Revenue Agency. This new system has come about due to ongoing concerns about COVID-19.

The 411 Seniors Centre on the 7th floor remains closed to the public at this time, but you can drop off all relevant tax documents in our lobby at 333 Terminal Avenue, Vancouver, Monday-Thursday (except statutory holidays) between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Staff/volunteers will check your identification and collect your tax slips, phone number and other pertinent information. Our tax filing volunteers are working from their homes. You will receive a phone call or e-mail when your taxes are ready for pick-up.

### Eligibility criteria for the free tax clinic: Seniors 55 years +

To qualify, your total income must be less than:

- \$35,000 per individual
- \$45,000 for a couple
- \$45,000 per individual with a dependent
- + \$2500 for each dependent
- Interest less than \$1,000

We handle simple tax situations only.

We DO NOT do taxes for those who:

- Have self-employment income
- Have business or rental income and expenses
- Have capital gains or losses
- Have employment expenses
- Have filed for bankruptcy
- Are deceased

**The tax deadline for seniors and persons with disabilities this year is**

**"Having the *Old Timers' Rag* delivered to my mailbox by Canada Post is great. Thank you."**



### Meet One Greeter

Angus Dan has been a member of 411 since 2012. He's one of the Centre's prized receptionists and is originally from B.C.'s Lillooet region -- Skookumchuck Falls, now back to its original name of Skatin (Ska-teen). Angus came to Vancouver in the 70's and first visited 411 at the Dunsmuir location. He asked for a membership form but received a volunteer sign-up sheet instead, and he's been with us ever since. Angus says he likes his volunteer work at 411 because he gets to talk to people one to one. That way, he gets to know them.





## Janice Kaleta Takes Her Leave

Janice's involvement with the 411 Seniors Centre began in 2006 when she volunteered, once a week, to be one of those special greeters for which the Centre is noted. Her worth proven, she was hired to do various jobs, finally being named the Building Projects Manager in 2007.

In her new role, Janice managed the leasing out of spaces in the Non-Profit Tenants' Centre at 411 Dunsmuir, which comprised several floors in the building. She was the tenant liaison with non-profit groups who occupied the building. In addition, she oversaw the development and leasing of the retail locations on the building's main floor.

With 411's move to 333 Terminal Avenue, Janice transitioned to the role of Financial Coordinator/Officer. Her quiet but friendly demeanour will be sorely missed as the 411 Seniors Centre prepares to move to its new permanent home on Fraser Street in 2021/2. Let's all give Janice a round of applause and offer her the best of wishes for her next chapter.

**Q. What's the difference between ignorance and apathy? A. I don't know and I don't care.**

## Friendly Calls - A Lovely Idea

411 Seniors member Pat Egan had just returned from England. It was the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, so she had to quarantine for 14 days. Quarantine over, Pat, who does not have many friends in the Lower Mainland yet, received a call from one of 411's friendly callers. "Imagine my surprise when the phone rang and there was a lovely kind voice, introducing herself as a volunteer from 411 Seniors Society, asking if I was me and if I was okay. She said she was just making friendly calls to members to ask if everyone was all right.

I replied that I was fine but concerned about my income tax. She said that she would get back to me, which she did. So impressed, I contacted Mariko Takashima, 411 Program Co-Ordinator, to see what I could do to support 411. Lo and behold if I was not invited to become a 'friendly caller.'

"It has been a wonderful experience. My first call was with another woman who, like me, lives alone. We chatted. Also like me, she missed doing volunteer work, so we agreed on a follow-up call. I look forward to those telephone calls and feel particularly pleased that a friendly call I received turned into friendly calls that I can make." Though the 411 Seniors Centre is still closed, this is an additional way of living 411's principle of "Seniors Helping Seniors."



"Grandma, my teacher said girls can be whatever they choose when they grow up. How come you choose to be an old lady?"

**COVID-19 closure to the public remains in effect. Open for Tax Clinic drop-off only.**

**411 Seniors Centre Society**  
**333 Terminal Ave. 7th floor. Vancouver, B.C., V6A 4C1**  
 Call/leave a message - 604-684-8171  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/411connected/>  
<https://twitter.com/411seniors>  
<https://www.instagram.com/411Seniors/>  
<https://anchor.fm/powered-by-age>