

SENIORS CENTRE SOCIETY

The Old Timers' Rag

Over 40 years of seniors helping seniors

Located on the unceded homeland of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.



Charanpal Singh Gill was an important figure in British Columbia's history. He fought throughout his life for the Indo-Canadian community, agricultural workers, for multicultural understanding and against racism. He died on February 2, 2021, of cancer. 411 Seniors Centre Society was lucky to have had him on our Board of Directors.

In 1967 Charan arrived in Canada where he worked in a sawmill. He broke his wrist in an accident on the job prohibiting him from continuing doing physical labour. He went back to school earning a BSW and then a MSW from the University of British Columbia.

In 1979, Charan was one of the founders of the Farm Workers Organizing Committee, which led to his co-founding the Canadian Farmworkers Union (CFU) in 1980. The CFU organized labour on farms in the early 1980s which led to significant improvements in the wages and working conditions of British Columbia's

farmworkers. This ultimately caused the government to institutionalize regulations governing better pay, safety, workers' benefits and employment practices for farm and ranch workers in BC and Canada. Prior to the changes in legislation starting in early 1980s British Columbia's laws did not acknowledge the work of immigrant and migrant labour of agricultural workers.

While he was advocating for agricultural workers, Charan also co-founded with Raj Chouhan, the British Columbia Organization to Fight Racism (BCOFR) in the 1980s and served as its founding president. This organization played a significant role in combating racism and stemming growth of the KKK when people of colour were routinely targeted by racists and neo-Nazis.



1980 Driediger Farms, Langley, CFU demonstration to protest Driediger Farms pull out after two months of negotiations had brought agreement between the Union and growers to pay workers \$4/hr plus \$3/flat.(SFU Digitized Collections)



Charan Gill addresses a PICS seniors' protest against BC Hydro rate hikes in January 2012.

Photo by David P. Ball.

Despite threats to his life and vandalism of his organization's offices, Charan continued to be the BCOFR's president as long as the organization was active.

In 1987, together with friends, he incorporated the Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS) where he served as the organization's Chief Executive Officer until 2017. Under Charan's leadership and the team he assembled, PICS became the first social services agency of its kind in British Columbia serving the South Asian and new immigrant community. The organization has been at the forefront of social justice causes. Its mission and vision are to promote harmony and intercultural understanding in order to build a just society. It has developed many programs for visible minorities, supporting youth-at-risk, combating elder abuse, and providing transition support for immigrant women and children facing violence.

PICS has become a premier community organization with over 120 staff with a multimillion dollar budget. The organization operates a Seniors Housing Complex (2002), a Seniors Assisted Living Complex and Adult Day Center (2007), and Harmony House (2012) which provides housing for women who are victims of domestic abuse. Just before his retirement from PICS in June 2017, Charan

secured 2.5 acres of land in Cloverdale and launched a second project for a modern facility for long-term care for seniors, Diversity Village.

In addition to PICS Charan also has served on numerous other organizations in agriculture, labor, and housing.

Charan served on the Board of Directors of 411 between 2013 - 2015. Without his work, 411 Seniors Centre would not have been able to negotiate with the City of Vancouver for adding senior housing to our future location on Fraser Street.

For his lifetime of leadership and achievement in community service Charan received numerous awards and honours including: The Order of British Columbia; Honorary Doctor of Laws, Kwantlen Polytechnic University; Top 25 Immigrants in Canada Award; Recognition in the House of Commons; Distinguished Service Award, BC Association of Social Workers, and several other awards.

Charan leaves behind him a legacy of activism in the service of working people. He has inspired many people to engage in the struggle for a better world, without religious, ethnic or gender oppression, a world where all can live in communal harmony.

A Time To Rise - ਉੱਠਣ ਦਾ ਵੇਲਾ | Canadian Farmworkers Union

"On April 6, 1980, the Canadian Farmworkers Union came into existence. This film documents the conditions among Chinese and East Indian immigrant workers in British Columbia that provoked the formation of the union, and the response of growers and labour contractors to the threat of unionization. Made over a period of two years, the film is an eloquent testimony to the progress of the workers' movement."

https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=Vb5A4d0dO-8&feature=emb_title

Directed & Produced by: Anand Patwardhan, Jim Munro A National Film Board of Canada Production



Progress on the New Seniors Centre

The contracts are signed and the financial arrangements are in place so work to prepare the building site at 3510 Fraser Street is starting. The first job will be to clear the site and make sure that there are no hazardous materials before excavating and creating the supports for the six storey structure. The Seniors Centre will be on the ground floor and housing for seniors, managed by the Community Land Trust (CLT) will be above. Construction will take about two years.

It has taken years to get to this important stage. When we started, after the sale of 411 Dunsmuir Street, the Seniors Centre had money but no land, so we looked for possible partnerships with organizations that had land and/or financial assets that could realize a ground floor seniors' centre with housing on upper floors. 411 members wanted a new centre that continued to provide similar services and activities as had been available in the past. They said that it should be on level ground to accommodate people with mobility difficulties and be easily accessed by public transit.

411 contacted non-profit agencies, especially housing providers, church organizations, and private developers, including long-term care facilities. Nothing seemed possible.

Meanwhile, the City, facing increasing concerns about housing issues, established the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency and we made a formal request for a meeting with VAHA. This resulted in a relationship with VAHA proposing to develop the project on land owned by the City. VAHA would be responsible for selecting the housing provider. VAHA identified the site at 3510 Fraser as the location for development and selected the Community Land Trust (CLT). VAHA also identified Ventana Construction as the builder.

Initially, VAHA projected a charge of \$400,000 as its Development Fee but decided to drop this requirement after being asked to reconsider by 411. We also learned that we would need to compensate the City's Property Endowment Branch for part of the land value, even though 411 would not realize a long term interest in the land. Initially the amount was projected to be in the range of \$600,000. With the support of City of Vancouver departments, a proposal was put to City Council that resulted in 411 being forgiven an amount up to \$800,000. Increases in land prices in Vancouver now suggest that 411 will pay the balance between \$800,000 and the new land value. Essentially, 411 funds are being used to pre-pay rent for 60 years.

Because the design required a change to the zoning of the site to a greater height, the City required a public consultation before City Council held a meeting and confirmed the re-zoning. Throughout, 411 has received legal advice on the terms of contracts. An agreement with CLT will look after the accounting for 411 expenditures. Because CLT financing involves guarantees by the BC Housing Management Commission, the entire project required BCHMC sign-off even though there is no direct relationship between 411 and BCHMC. This was received in mid-November, allowing the necessary contracts to be signed.

Watch for more progress reports!



The Arts And The Pandemic

When the pandemic started a year ago, we saw the closing of theatres, art galleries, museums, and the many other places we have usually attended to have arts experiences. The health authorities have been clear that we should not be gathering in large groups. This has been a huge challenge for arts organizations but they have started to adapt over the months.

In September and October, I was able to visit the Museum of Anthropology at UBC and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Both required setting up appointments that are timed so that it is possible to keep appropriate distance from others. In fact, it was very pleasant to visit without crowds. At the date of writing, this is still possible.

In that same period, I also had the opportunity to attend two dance performances and two musical events. All of them involved checking in, being shown to seats that were separated from other audience members and, at the end being asked to exit through another door in an orderly and distanced way. Safety was the driving concern so audiences were kept very small.

Not long after, the health orders were that we must stay in our "bubbles". Christmas Day dinner with friends was cancelled, as were other plans to see people. Gatherings for performances are not permitted but artists can practice together if the proper precautions are planned and approved. The result is that lots of arts organizations have adapted to offering performances on line. We have to pay for some and yet others are free of charge (but may ask for a donation).

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra has created a season of online concerts and you can pay concert by concert or buy the package. The musicians are masked except for the wind section whose members are separated by plexiglass screens. I have seen several. Early Music Vancouver is broadcasting free performances. I watched three hour-long dance selections from Sadler's Wells in London, all free. I have now watched two of the free-to-register Tuesday Night Talks with artists promoted by the Audain Gallery in Whistler. Ballet BC has a program in the upcoming period, as does Lamondance. Dancehouse will bring a filmed performance of Crystal Pite's Body and Soul from the Paris Opera. The Vancouver Recital Society sends out a weekly email/Facebook post that has links to musical performances chosen by staff. The Guardian newspaper in England offers information and links to all sorts of events and articles in its weekly Arts update. And, I have found great amusement as I search You Tube for videos. Not all are free but there is so much that is.

So, if you are able and willing to poke around on a computer, you can get a decent diet of art to fit your interests.

Stuart Alcock

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U			6		7				3
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u		4				9		8	6

Our community members' safety remains our top priority at 411 Seniors. We are taking appropriate measures to ensure everyone using the Income Tax Clinic at the Centre is kept safe and to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. There will be signage on-site to direct visitors, plexiglass barriers in place between staff and visitors, free disposable face masks, hand sanitizing stations, frequent cleaning and sanitizing schedule, and floor markings indicating where to stand safely 6 feet apart from other visitors. Please remain home if you are not feeling well.



NEW STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Since the lockdown 411 Seniors Centre has acquired one new staff member. Morgan Jacko will be the staff member at the Centre who takes Leslie's place while Leslie oversees the building of our new location on Fraser. We also have two new Board members. Here are their bios. When we finally get back to our lives we invite you to introduce yourselves to these wonderful people.

Morgan Jacko

My name is Morgan Jacko. I am of Dene ancestry from Cold Lake First Nation, Alberta and grew up in Edmonton, AB. I attended the University of Alberta and studied Astrophysics in a Bachelor of Science Honours program until my family life required me to take a break from my studies. Shortly after, I moved to British Columbia and have been a resident of BC since 2013. Since moving to BC, I have largely worked with the Indigenous community in the Lower Mainland, mainly in not-for-profit roles. I have an administration background and background in community engagement.

I grew up learning to always respect and listen to seniors and Elders, which is why I am so passionate about the work I do and my care for this community. Service to others is a very important part of who I am and carrying out that service to the highest level with meaningful intent and a good heart is key. Ensuring all members of the aging community have their voices heard, age gracefully, with optimized health, and dignity not only benefits individuals and their families but the entire society as well, and I intend to do my best to support this work with integrity, respect, and enthusiasm. I am very excited about 411's journey ahead!

Gerald (Gerry) Dragomir

Gerald has only just realized, in his 70th year, that he is a fully qualified senior. However, that is not stopping him from continuing to work full-time in his accounting practice that primarily serves the not-for-profit sector. In addition, Gerald is finishing up a Masters at UBC in High-Performance Coaching and will be lobbying ardently to be admitted into a doctoral program once that is wrapped up. If that was not enough, Gerald enjoys coaching high-performance Olympic athletes and will be (carefully) making his way to Japan for this summer's event. Hopefully his athlete will finally get his gold medal and Gerald will be able to tone it down a bit.

Alana Kenyon

Alana Kenyon was born in Winnipeg Manitoba. In her early teens, her family moved to Edmonton, Alberta, where at the age of 19, Alana became a full-time postal worker.

During her time with Canada Post, she was introduced to the labour movement. Through decades of violent strikes and worker unrest, Alana developed a passion for workers' rights. She immersed herself in Union education programs. Alana received a scholarship from the Canadian Labour Congress and completed the Labour Studies program at Laurentian University.

Through hard work and dedication, Alana became a recognized national facilitator and worked beside other Unions helping educate workers on human rights, health, and safety. As a shop steward, Alana also sat on several committees over the years. She had the distinct privilege to be a loaned agent to the United Way of the Lower Mainland and worked with them for 4 years until she retired.

After 36 ½ years working at Canada Post, Alana has retired. She has been retired now for almost 4 years, spending time enjoying outdoor activities and her small grandson. During the current pandemic, people feel somewhat disconnected from community and are looking for ways to reach out. Alana was pleased when a friend and mentor Marion Pollack invited her to volunteer at the 411 Seniors Centre. Alana looks forward to participating in and contributing to 411's good work.

SNOW STORMS

I look through my window

Straining my eyes, at the falling flakes of snow

Its arrival herald by silence

They fell one by one

More gentle than rain, more comfortable than whispers

More prophetic than the future

I stood there mesmerized

Peace seem to reign supreme

Order restored to human hearts

The blanket of white appear to transform darkness

The sun, the moon the stars stood aside

Nature's visual symphony had suspended time

Perhaps God really does live in silence

And snowstorms are the signature of God's

Unwavering hand.

Bryan Phillips Vancouver



Big news - but not until June 1!

We will be making a temporary move to the third floor as of June 1, 2021. The space is bigger and the rent is less. (This will only be until we can get into the new space on Fraser. Predicted to be July 1, 2022)

Contributors

Writers of Issue 7

Stuart Alcock "Progress	pp.3
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Jeannie Kamins "Charan Gill"	pp.1-2
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Bryan Phillips "poem"	pp.6

Staff and Volunteers who have on worked Issue 7

Stuart Alcock

Charlotte Ferrell

Mohinder Grewal

Morgan Jacko

Jeannie Kamins

Alana Kenyon

Louise Leclair

Ranjit Soniassy

Mariko Takashina

Kelly Talayco

Volunteers and Staff who have helped at the Centre running off the Rag and folding, stuffing the envelopes and stamping and getting the newsletter to your door.

Jane Belanger

Judy Heintz

Jeannie Kamins

Rosario Larion

Rosalie Mah

Marianne Maier

Amar Marrache

Ann Merrick

Flor Motta

Monica Murguia

Emma Ng

Bryan Phillips

Elizabeth Porteous

Angelita Supena

Mariko Takashina

Bill Thomas

And to all the posties at Canada Post

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." Herodotus, Greek scholar 499-479 BCE



Beghrir (Moroccan Pancakes)

Beghrir are yeasty, pancake-like breads, cooked on one side and topped with hundreds of little holes (Also called 1,000 Hole Crêpes). They are popular for breakfast in the African countries of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. Beghrir is a Berber word meaning "too soft".

INGREDIENTS

1 cup warm water ½ teaspoon active dry yeast ½ teaspoon white sugar

1 cup milk

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup semolina flour

2 eggs

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

Sauce:

6 tablespoons butter

3/4 cup honey

1 t. orange-flower water, or to taste (Optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

*1.Place the water, yeast, and sugar in a blender, and let stand without blending for 5 minutes, until the yeast softens and begins to form a creamy foam. Add the milk, flour, semolina flour, eggs, baking powder, and salt. Blend until the mixture is smooth, about 1 minute. Leave the mixture in the blender to rest for about 30 minutes.

*2.Heat a 5-inch nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Blend the pancake mixture for about 10 seconds, to remix, and scoop 1/4 to 1/3 cup of batter into the heated skillet. Cook the beghrir until bubbles have formed and popped, and the top of the pancake is no longer shiny, about 3 minutes. Do not flip. Adjust the heat as necessary so that the bottoms of the pancakes are just starting to brown when the tops are dry. Blend the batter for 10 seconds or so after cooking 3 or 4 pancakes, to keep the batter fluffy.

*3.To make the sauce, place the butter, honey, and flower-water flavouring in a microwave-safe bowl, and microwave on High setting until the butter is melted and the honey is hot, about 1 1/2 minutes. Stir the sauce, and drizzle about 1 tablespoon over each warm pancake to serve.

You can use other flours, maple syrup, jam etc. The thing that makes these special is the use of both yeast and baking powder. I don't use a teflon pan. Even so they still taste great.

Sudoku solution

Sudoku was invented in 1979. Popular in Japan in since 1986 it is now enjoyed by puzzle enthusiasts throughout the world.

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





Information and Referral

Watching tv as we try to keep informed.

411 Seniors Centre Society has been offering Information Referral and Personal Advocacy (I & R) support since the late 1970s. Over these 50 years we have become leaders in helping seniors to help themselves by finding where to look for the support that they may need.

Our program focuses on support programs which specifically fill the gaps of information and referral services for low-income older adults with higher needs. It provides one-on-one assistance to access support services and government benefits at the local, provincial and national level.

Because of this work, over the past 3 years, we have been actively involved in the United Way's I&R provincial working group. Recognizing the important role that we have played in the provision of the critical support services, we are pleased to announce that 411 Seniors Centre Society has been selected as the BACKBONE agency for the Navigation and Peer Support program developed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland. We feel that we are up to the challenge of leading the way by sharing our learnings with other centres and communities.

We offer thanks for all the hard work from our volunteers led by President Marion Pollack, Executive Director Leslie Remund and I&R Coordinator Monica Murguia.

POWERED BY AGE

Since its launch in 2019, The Powered by Age (PBA) podcast program at the 411 Senior Center Society has grown from four episodes recorded onsite to Canada's largest Senior-Led online podcast series with over 40 episodes.

Its coordinator, Charlotte "Sista C Ferrell, is a 74-year-old author and retired university professor, who currently teaches poetry, and hosts a CJSF radio show that regularly features one of the PBA podcasts. Through its funding by the 411 Senior Center and the City of Vancouver, PBA now has a website, https://www.poweredbyage.com where you can hear all of our episodes.

Through online training provided by the PBA production team, our podcast participants have learned how to use Zoom, invite, interview and record guests about such topics as, "natural health options", "walkability", and "working past retirement." We enjoyed virtual holiday parties with music, movement, and recipe demos. Members of the 411 Center Society Board have facilitated special presentations, on "the Digital Divide", "senior housing, and we have hosted representatives from COSCO; the Senior Advisory Council; Vancouver City Council; and even a local MMP

Our 1pm Thursday meetings are recorded then posted to anchor.fm, which posts to six other platforms, including i-tunes, YouTube, and Spotify. You too can hear or share your ideas, information, poetry, stories, or interviews by joining the PBA podcast program. There is no fee.

For more information or to Get Started Now, contact Charlotte Sista C Ferrell, Program Coordinator/Host, at pbaafc@gmail.com, or phone (788) 512-0664.

For security reasons we ask each person for their name, email address and phone number (not shared outside this program.)

BC Bus Pass For Seniors

Did you know that you may be eligible for a low cost BC Bus Pass for Seniors? The bus pass is \$45.00 per year.

• To get a reduced-cost pass, you must meet one of these criteria:

- 60 years or older and the spouse of a person with the Person with Disabilities designation and are receiving disability assistance from the Province of British Columbia
- 60 years or older and receiving income assistance from the Province of British Columbia
- 60 years or older, living on a First Nations reserve and getting assistance from the band office
- 65 years or older and would qualify for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) but does not meet the Canadian 10-year residency rule
- Receiving Old Age Security (OAS) and the GIS
- Receiving the federal spousal Allowance
- Receiving the federal Allowance for the Survivor

There are several ways to apply for the BC Bus pass:

- You can phone them at 1-866-866-0800 and follow the phone prompts
- You can fill in the Online Request for Service at My Self Serve - BC Bus Pass Program (gov.bc.ca)
- You can download the Bus General Enquiry form at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/policies-for-government/bc-employment-assistance-policy-procedure-manual/form and mail it in.

The 411 Seniors Centre can help you with your BC Bus application. Phone us at 604-684-8171.

TELUS Mobility for Good for Seniors

About a year ago, the Board of the 411 Seniors Centre wrote to all the large telecommunication companies in Canada, to urge them to provide low cost internet services for seniors.

The only corporation to respond was TELUS. Board members from the 411 Seniors Centre had several discussions with TELUS representatives urging them to provide low cost internet services and low cost cell phone services to low income seniors.

In December 2020, we were notified by TELUS that our intensive lobbying was partially successful. TELUS launched their "Mobility for Good For Seniors" program."

This program will provide seniors who are receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) with access to a free smart phone and a subsidized data plan.

Seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) will be eligible for:

- 1. A free smartphone
- 2. A \$25/month plan that includes unlimited nationwide talk and text and 3GB of data
- 3. Contract-free; seniors can cancel at any time without incurring additional fees

Application steps:

- Send in your Statement of Old Age Security T4A (OAS) to mobilityforgood@telus.com
- 2. TELUS will confirm eligibility and provide a verification code
- 3. Activate your offer online or through the TELUS call centre

The 411 Seniors Centre can help you with this process.

This is a good start, but we need to continue working hard to help low income seniors become more digitally connected.

We should train Amazon delivery guys to give the vaccine. The whole country would be vaccinated by Saturday.

(Thursday if you have Prime.)

Bulletin

Income Tax Clinic

With the objective of keeping everyone safe, and to reduce the spreading of COVID-19 virus, we encourage people interested in filling their taxes through 411's income tax clinic to book an appointment for drop-off of documents.

Appointments can be made either by calling the Centre 604-684-8171 or sending an e-mail to contact411@411seniors.bc.ca.

You can start booking appointments now.

The Tax Clinic will run from March 1, 2021 to April 29th. Monday to Thursday.

Are you a low-income person aged 55+ or on disability benefits? Is your household income less than \$35,000 (individuals) or \$45,000 (couples). Don't miss the deadline! Keep everyone safe booking an appointment now. Get all benefits that you are entitled to, for example GIS, OAS.

Keeping you safe continues to be our top priority.

Alternative tax filing methods

1. How to file your own taxes by mail.

If you filed your taxes on paper last year, the CRA will automatically mail you the 2020 Income Tax package by February 19, 2021.

You can see, download and order forms and publications as of **January 18, 2021**, at <u>canada.ca/taxes-general-package</u>. Starting **February 5, 2021**, you can call the CRA at 1-855-330-3305 to order forms and publications.

2. How to file your own taxes by telephone.

The CRA offers an automated phone service called File my Return. This free service lets you complete and file your return by phone. The service is available to eligible Canadians who have low or fixed incomes and whose tax situation does not change from year to year. If you are eligible for File my Return, the CRA will mail an invitation letter to you by mid-February.

If you are not able to use any of these above tax filing options for any reasons, please contact us email contact411@seniors.bc.ca or 604-684-8171 to find other available methods.

Friendly Calls

Winter might be a challenging season for you and friendly calls from our volunteers might be a great support. Contact Mariko for arrangement at 604-684-8171 EXT. 245 or mtakashina@411seniors.bc.ca.

Writers Needed!!!

The Old Timers' Rag is 411's newsletter. We need more writers. If you are interested please contact Mariko or Jeannie at 604-876-7342.

The Centre Is Partially Open To The Public

Open Monday to Thursday 10-2 pm.

Open programs: public computer use, courtesy phone use, and the Information & Referral service. Please make an appointment in advance for these services.

411 Seniors Centre Society
333 Terminal Ave. 7th Floor, Room 704 Vancouver, B.C., V6A 4C1
Call/leave a message – 604-684-8171

https://www.facebook.com/groups/411connected/ https://twitter.com/411seniors https://anchor.fm/poweredbyage