



COSCO NEWS

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC
www.coscobc.ca

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SMOKE AND MIRRORS AND A GOOD IDEA BADLY IMPLEMENTED MAKE IT A POOR BUDGET

Editorial

Despite a silver tongue and green shoes the Minister of Finance fell far short of putting forward a budget that would pioneer a new approach and rein in British Columbia's major polluters. She actually rewarded the major industrial polluters by decreasing their taxes, which is not much of an incentive for them to stop polluting. Middle and lower income British-Columbians, especially those living outside the Metropolitan area, will be hard hit by the carbon tax. A one hundred dollar individual rebate is a blatant effort to bribe us with our own money and to forestall any critical outcry of the pending 14% BC Hydro electricity increase - a hammer which is just about to fall. One would have thought that the government would have brought in a carbon tax which would force companies and individuals to make a financial sacrifice and therefore make environmentally friendly choices. Funds generated by the carbon tax could be used to further develop our public transportation system, expand our public hydro system and promote alternate energy resources like wind powered turbines and tidal power. But nothing of this kind is contained in the budget.

What is in the budget is over one billion dollars in so-called 'contingency funds' which are nothing but hidden surpluses to be used in the upcoming election to buy our votes with our own money yet again. In addition there is one hundred and eight millions dollars for the eighteen person "Climate Action Secretariat". The Minister of Finance was very evasive when asked for details as to the use of this money. The explanation that it is for coordination, policy formulation, outreach and education leaves one wondering if it's not another government slush-fund to reward the government's friends. It was interesting to find out that the government in the last fiscal year under-spent the PharmaCare budget by more than sixty million dollars. Wouldn't it have been fairer to have given seniors some of the money back which they took from us in the massive Pharmacare cuts? It appears that it is better to remove the last vestiges of a fair tax on banks. I guess the banks need it more than our seniors.

The budget has a lot of hot air to deal with homelessness but all the additional money is solely to keep the homeless shelters open. Not a single additional unit of social housing is included in the budget. Seniors' housing stocks are being decimated by referrals of so called "Hard to House Adults" now placed in seniors' housing. The redevelopment of Manufactured Home Owners' trailer parks whose tenants are mostly low income seniors, pushes them to enter the housing market with no place to go. Sweet nothing for these folks in this budget! It is ironic that housing is now lumped in with the Forest Ministry and we know the current state of forestry in BC. Housing will suffer the same fate.

Yes Minister Taylor, you have a silver tongue and it is your last budget before you move on to greater things. We wish you well but this budget in which you short-changed health, education and housing will not be your great legacy. It was Smoke and Mirrors and not the great savior of the environment.

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ORGANIZATIONS OF BC
(COSCO)**

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**COSCO ELECTS
ART KUBE
AS PRESIDENT**



The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of British-Columbia (COSCO) has elected Art Kube as its President for a two year term. Mr. Kube has been active in seniors' organizations for the past 14 years. He helped COSCO to grow to its present size of 75 affiliated seniors' organizations with a combined membership of approximately 90,000. Art Kube succeeds Rudy Lawrence, who has served COSCO with distinction for the past ten years. Lawrence declined to stand for election due to illness in the family and because he expressed the need for a changing of the guard.

During the last six years COSCO has played a major advocacy role on behalf of seniors in the Province. It has been at odds with the Campbell Government on healthcare issues which have negatively impacted seniors. Presently COSCO is involved in a pioneering role in the area of illness and accident prevention education among seniors. It is planning a major conference on the World Health Organization's Program of "Global Age Friendly Communities". COSCO is able to attract many highly trained and committed seniors to its Executive positions and as volunteers for its numerous programs and activities. It operates solely with volunteers who come from all walks of life, and who buy into the COSCO's commitment of "SENIORS HELPING SENIORS". It has 32 trained seniors' advocates around the Province, who are helping seniors to deal with service providers and different government agencies.

In electing Art Kube the course set for COSCO by Rudy Lawrence will continue. Art Kube served in the past as President of the United Way and as President of the BC Federation of Labour. Presently he serves as Treasurer of the New Vista Society and as 1st Vice President of the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation. He is 73 years young, is married and lives in Surrey.

For more information on COSCO, log onto its website www.coscobc.ca . Art Kube can be reached 604.576-8000 or at 604.312-2089 or at aakube@telus.net .

A CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD

COSCO has been very active in the last number of years but this year will be most challenging to our human and financial resources. Not only is there the likelihood of a federal election, but we are planning a major conference on **“Seniors Health, Housing and Income in a Global Age Friendly Community”** and we are also hosting the annual convention of the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens’ Federation.

COSCO and the City of Burnaby have secured a \$ 35,000.00 contract to provide health literacy training for two thousand seniors in Burnaby and COSCO’s twenty-two Coordinator / Trainers will be starting health literacy programs around the Province. On top of that we are mandated to proceed with organizing more COSCO Branches around the Province and to look into the area of seniors’ housing and seniors’ poverty, especially among elder women.

With this in mind COSCO has expanded its executive to 18 members, with each member given specific responsibilities. We are also expanding our committee structure. Some might ask why we are engaging in all these activities. These additional activities are being thrust upon us because we are growing and are being recognized as the major voice of seniors in British Columbia. With this increased recognition comes a greater responsibility. Naturally we need help from our affiliated organizations and our associate members to fulfil our mandate.

For your information the SENIORS’ HEALTH, HOUSING AND INCOME IN A GLOBAL AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY CONFERENCE is designed to provide a blueprint to improve the quality of life for seniors by developing a best-practice document in the subcomponents of health, housing and income. We hope to educate and connect the representatives of the different organizations engaged in the building of an Age Friendly Community and most importantly demonstrate how to strengthen seniors’ organizations so they

are able to play a full role in planning and implementing the GLOBAL AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY. The conference will be held on September 15th and 16th at the Richmond Inn. We expect between 300 to 400 participants, with the majority of participants being seniors. We urge you to set these dates aside and plan to attend this ground breaking conference.

As mentioned in the previous COSCO NEWS we will be hosting the convention of the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens’ Federation on September 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th at DAY’S INN in Surrey. Some of you had your affiliation lapse with the NPSCF. We ask you now to renew your affiliation and start preparing resolutions for the convention. We have an excellent opportunity to reform this organization with a strong voice nationally. We need your help to bring this about.

We urge you to avail your branch or chapter of our Health Literacy program and to offer one of the five modules in conjunction with your monthly meeting. The five modules are Fall Prevention, Prevention of Elder Abuse and Neglect, Healthy Eating for Seniors, Proper Use of Medication, and A Safe Home Environment. We are receiving excellent feed-back from the different health literacy presentations and there are strong indications that these presentations help to build greater participation in branch and chapter meetings.

In line with a delegate decision COSCO has set up a Housing Committee which will meet in the near future to start the work of updating our housing policy and to make recommendations in regards to our involvement in seniors’ housing. We urge all of you to assist us in our work and build a strong grassroots seniors’ organization which will truly be reflective of the needs and aspirations of seniors in the Province. Yes it is a challenging year, but with your help we can meet the challenge.

GETTING OLDER AIN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE

Just before the funeral service, the undertaker came up to the very elderly widow and asked, "How old was your husband?" "98", the widow replied. "Two years older than me" "So you're 96", the undertaker commented. The widow responded, "Hardly worth going home, is it".



Reporters were interviewing a 104-year old woman. "What do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. The woman simply replied, "No peer pressure."

These days most of the stuff in my shopping cart says, "For fast relief".



Disability Tax Credit: Do you qualify?

A message was sent from Member of Parliament Penny Priddy which would be of interest to all readers of the COSCO NEWS. You do not need to be in a wheelchair for the Disability Tax Credit to put money into your pocket today. In the community, thousands of people with disabilities have never been made aware that they are eligible for an important tax credit that often includes a significant refund. It is time residents learned about their legitimate entitlements under the Income Tax Act. It doesn't matter whether your disability is the result of a workplace injury, an accident, declining health or a chronic condition; you need to meet just *one* of nine conditions listed below. The Disability Tax Credit can amount to up to \$1380.00 per year and can be claimed retroactively for up to ten years. While the Act stipulates this is a non-refundable tax credit, it is transferable to spouses and other family members if the disabled person's income is too low.

You may be eligible for the Disability Tax Credit if you meet *one* of the following conditions:

Walking – you are unable to walk normally for the length of a football field without angina, pain, or the need of a cane, wheelchair or walker;

Seeing – you have vision loss in excess of 20%

Speaking – you are markedly restricted in communicating

Hearing – you are unable to hear clearly, even with hearing aids

Eating – you require assistance in feeding

Dressing – you are unable to bathe or fully dress yourself without assistance

Eliminating – you have poor bladder or bowel functioning

Mental Impairment – you have problems perceiving instructions, thinking or remembering (people suffering Dementia or Alzheimer's)

Life Sustaining Therapies – you need life sustaining therapy such as kidney dialysis or chemotherapy three or more times per week.

COMMENTS ON THE BUDGET

Gudrun Langolf, President Vancouver Municipal Regional Retirees Association (VMRRA)

While the VMRRA is non-partisan, that does not mean we're apolitical. I believe we need to pay attention and look beyond a one hundred dollar cheque coming in the summer. On February 19th my MLA Carol Taylor brought in the Province's last budget before our next provincial election. Ask yourself - what does this budget have for us seniors and our families? It does not contain protection for families and our most vulnerable citizens from out-of-control Hydro and ICBC rate increases. The minimum wage stays unchanged and education is not more affordable. It does nothing to lower transit and ferry rates.



BC's rate of child poverty will not be reduced. We will continue to hold the shameful record of having the highest poverty rate in Canada. How did this budget address the result of last year's Conversation on Health? Our access to health care is in jeopardy - health authorities around the province are looking at a \$300 million shortfall. Contrast that with a \$220 million tax cut to banks.

Here's what this budget does; it puts all the pressure of tackling climate change onto average families already struggling to get by. The carbon tax will hit everyday families hard while industrial polluters are getting huge subsidies - the oil and gas sector will get \$327 million this year, followed by \$358 million next year.

The carbon tax looks a lot like the GST and there is really nothing in the budget that actually reduces carbon emissions! It leaves us with quite a number of questions. When is green really green? Who is the budget really for...? Why are we being taxed and then get a rebate? Are we being bribed with our own money again? I'm sure you have your own questions.



COSCO has a website.
www.coscobc.ca
**Please check it out for past issues
of the COSCO NEWS,
and senior-related issues.**

NOBEL WISDOM

“They call us romantics, weak, stupid, sentimental idealists, perhaps because we have faith in the good which exists even in our opponents and because we believe that kindness achieves more than cruelty.”

-Fridtjof Nansen, Nobel Prize for Peace, 1922

“After the collapse of communism, capitalism remained without a rival. This unusual situation unleashed its greedy and - above all suicidal power. The belief is now that everything - and everyone - is fair game.”

-Gunter Grass, Nobel Prize for Literature, 1999

Conversations on Community Based Research: Engaging communities with college faculty and students

May 8 & 9, 2008

Subsidized with generous financial support from the Canadian Council on Learning through the Health and Learning Knowledge Centre, Douglas College will host a two-day symposium on community based research. Faculty, students and professionals in the health, education and social service sectors are invited to join the conversation.

The historically rich relationships between colleges and institutes and their communities provide the context for mutually beneficial research through the practice of Community Based Research (CBR). Trends to engage faculty and students with the community through service learning and the desire for many community organizations to identify their own research needs and seek research partnerships with colleges converge to enrich this practice.

CBR involves College and Institute partnerships with community groups for the purpose of research where there is shared responsibility for:

- identifying research problems,
- developing methods and applications,
- analyzing data and
- ownership of research products

The symposium promises to:

- Enrich your understanding of Community Based Research
- Present exemplary work in CBR
- Provide networking opportunities for CBR practitioners
- Provide a forum to meet with agencies prepared to fund CBR

Held in the new Health Sciences Building on the David Lam campus of Douglas College in Coquitlam BC, the symposium will also launch officially the new Centre for Health and Community Partnerships at David Lam.

Whether you are an experienced or novice CBR practitioner or just interested in learning more about it, you are invited to attend. Registration is limited and will remain open only until Friday April 11th.

Proposals for symposium presentations will be accepted until Friday, March 14th. Proposals that showcase partnerships between colleges and community groups, include students or have a focus on health and learning are especially welcome. For details go to: <http://www.douglascollege.ca/community/conversations-on-community-based-research.html>

WHERE MINDS MEET



There's something new in the neighbourhood. A program called "Where Minds Meet" invites new retirees and older adults to put their unique ideas, talents and creativity to productive use and community benefit in an intellectually stimulating environment that will help them stay mentally fit and socially connected.

The program is the dreamchild of Ann Kitching, a long time community volunteer, and Judith Dale of Douglas College. They recognize that a new, sizeable group of active older adults are about to radically change the way they – and the rest of us - experience aging and they want you to be part of that process. The average age of retirement is now 61 and these retirees have too much knowledge and too many skills not to use them in a meaningful way that is mutually beneficial for them and the community. The Union of BC Municipalities, the City of Port Moody and Douglas College agree and are supporting the project to help them establish creative partnerships that keep older adults contributing to the mainstream of society.

"Where Minds Meet" is - at heart - a 21st century matchmaking service. We want to match you with a project or an activity that you will find interesting and exciting and uses what you know best. Are you interested in passing on your skills to a young person just learning a trade? We will find that person for you. Are you interested in travelling to an exotic destination and helping a community develop a sustainable marketing idea? We will help you find that place and those people. Do you want to join a group of other retirees and play your recently dusted off bassoon? We will help you find a coterie of others who just happen to be looking for you. Do you have decades of small business experience and no-one with whom to share your expertise and experience? We have many new entrepreneurs taking programs at Douglas College who really need to hear what you have to say. Do you want to read the novels of Jane Austen and talk about them with others who also finally have the time and energy to really engage in this process? We want to connect you to those other ardent readers.

We encourage you to come and meet us in person, or phone us, or contact us by email and see how we can connect you to your next worthwhile life experience. Ann and Judith can be contacted at Douglas College, David Lam Campus, Coquitlam, in the Centre for Health and Community Partnerships, room C1027, by telephone at 604-777-6503, or by email at CFCA@douglas.bc.ca.

PS Ann Kitching and Judith Dale are Associate Members of COSCO



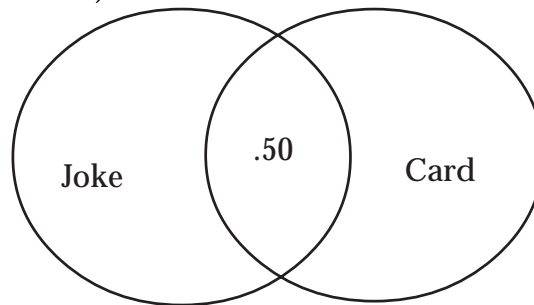
Patterns of Ageism in British Columbia: A Short Report

*By Dr. Larry Anderson, Professor of Psychology
Connector Kwantlen University College*

In the spring of 2007 with the help of COSCO, The Senior -a Province wide seniors' newspaper, a large seniors' trailer park, and a few other B.C. organizations serving older people my research assistant Yongjie Yon and I gathered over 800 ageism surveys. The survey has 20 types of situations, determined by its developer Erdman Palmore to represent negative forms of ageism. Ageism in this paper is a negative Stereotype.

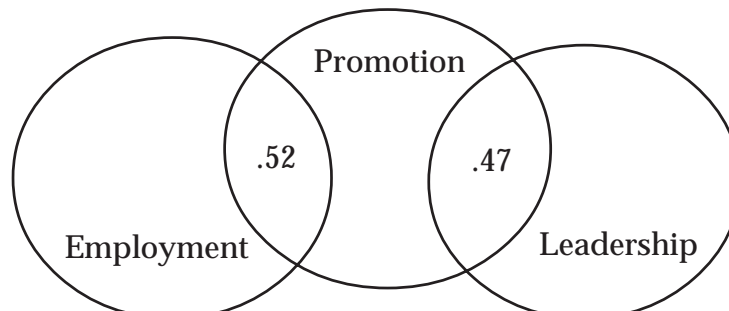
Correlation Patterns

It is helpful to remember that correlation does not mean causation. As we look at the patterns we see how they are related but we can't tell why. The first figure shows a relationship between the number of people reporting that they have been given an "Ageist Birthday Card" and "Told a Joke That Makes Fun of Old People". The correlation is strong, and there is only one chance in a hundred that it is pure chance. Correlations range from .00 (no relationship at all) to 1.00 (perfect correlation).



There were more comments written about these items than any of the others. On one hand humour helps us assess our relationships with others and helps moderate anxiety, "humor is the best medicine", and on the other it is used to put others down, "there is nothing to look forward to".

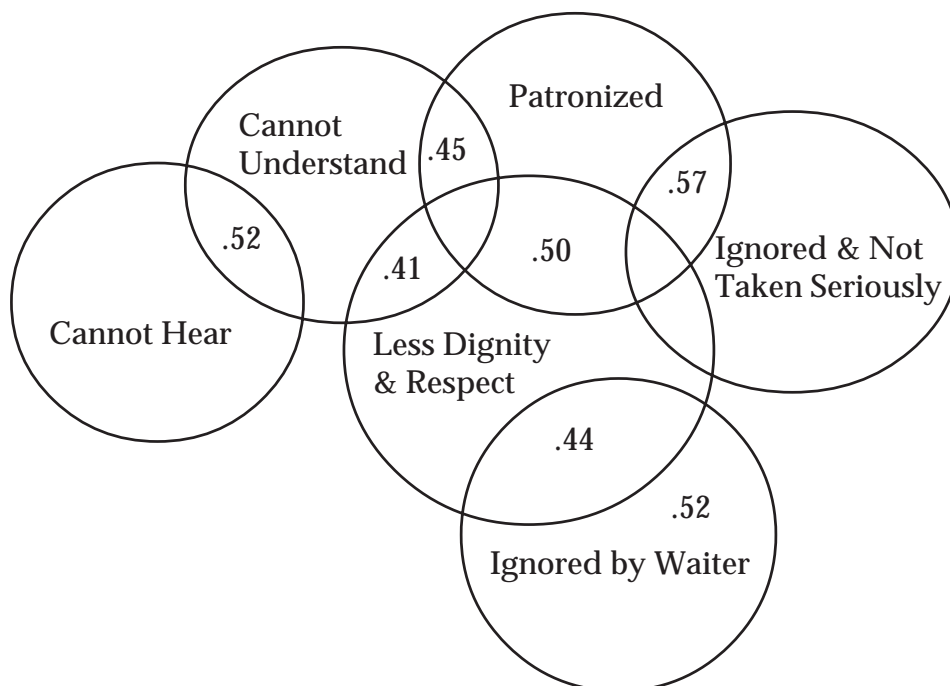
Another pattern of correlations involves three issues around employment. While these were not reported as frequently as the humor ones above, they are serious. Eighteen percent said they had been "Denied Employment", 13% were "Denied Promotion" and 8% were "Denied Leadership"

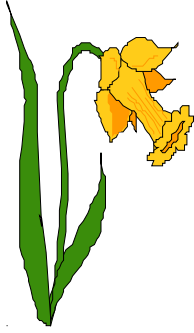


Until recently, when the BC Government set January 1st 2008 for the end of mandatory retirement not much has been done regarding employment and ageism issues. More attention has been directed toward ageism and employment in Great Britain. Research there suggests that employment opportunities have not improved for older workers and it is suggested that the “language of equal opportunities” is being used to construct a “new ageism”, using language to justify discrimination against older workers.

The next figure, shown below, is in some ways the most disturbing. It involves six interconnected items. At the centre is “Treated With Less Dignity and Respect”. This item was reported by 29% of the 815 respondents. Four of the other five items were directly connect with “Less Dignity”. They are “Ignored by Waiter”, “Ignored & Not Taken Seriously”, “Patronized and Talked Down To” and “Assumed the person Could Not Understand” which, in turn was connected with the last item, “Assumed Couldn’t Hear.”

While self-esteem is commonly thought of as a reflection of one’s perception of skills and ability, “I am strong”. “I am smart” etc, current research argues “...self-esteem motive functions not to maintain self-esteem per se but rather to avoid social devaluation and rejection.” Further, there appears to be a connection between one’s self-concept and self-esteem connected to a person’s acceptance from others. The ageist comments directed toward older persons forces them into a stereotyped devalued outgroup. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT?





COSCO LOSES TWO ACTIVISTS

It is with a deep sense of loss, that we are reporting the loss of two great people and former COSCO delegates. Eve Erickson, sister to the late Bruce Erickson and sister-in-law to M.P. Libby Davies, passed away recently. Eve was an active member of the VMRRA.

Walter Jacobs was a director of COSCO and a delegate from Marine Workers and Boilermakers Retirees Organization. Walter served as Secretary of the Marine Workers and Boilermakers Union and was also on the Executive of the Vancouver Labour Council. Our condolences go out to both families.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PHOTOCOPY YOUR COSCO NEWS AND PASS ALONG TO OTHERS WHO MAY BE INTERESTED

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (TO BE MAILED TO THE ADDRESS BELOW)

I wish to join COSCO as an associate member and I enclose a \$25 membership fee ____
I wish to make a donation to COSCO – please find enclosed cheque for \$ ____

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Fax _____

Email address _____

Date _____ Signature _____

**Please make cheque payable to COSCO and send to: Ernie Bayer, Membership Sec.
6079 184 A Street, Surrey, BC. V3S 7P7 (604 576 9734)**

Seniors' Groups or organizations wishing information about joining COSCO should write or phone Ernie Bayer and request a membership package.