

A Shared Concern

Magazine of the B.C. Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors
Volume 13, No. 2 Spring 2005

The Community and Justice System *Working Together As Partners*

Written by **Pearl McKenzie**

We at BC CEAS have just completed a year-long project funded by the Federal Community Mobilization Program. During this project, we looked at how the community and criminal justice system work together in situations of criminal abuse and neglect of seniors. We also asked people in communities and the criminal justice system to tell us what education, training and protocol or policy development they need, to do their work more effectively.

This information was obtained in various ways: A major activity was the conference held last October and described in an earlier issue of *A Shared Concern*. Many of the project Advisory Members participated in the conference. They also supported us to consult with people in three communities around the province who could tell us about rural, large suburb and urban experiences.

Community Consultations

The interviews, which took place in October and November of 2004, were conducted with members of community response networks, designated agency staff, police, victim service workers, seniors, members of a support group and people providing services to seniors.

In the interviews, we asked what happens when people become aware of criminal abuse and neglect of a senior, about actions taken and the relationships and understandings in communities that work well. We also heard examples of what does not work so well.

What is working well

We learned that Community Response Networks are successfully educating, raising awareness and building relationships and understandings among different groups and organizations. In the three communities where the research took place, it is clear that people want to work together to address abuse and neglect of seniors and other adults.

There were many examples of designated agency staff and police working collaboratively to ensure staff safety when they carry out their duties under Part 3 of the *Adult*

Guardianship Act.

One person said: "The police are very ready to go along and keep the peace when Designated Agency staff ask them. On one occasion, I phoned to ask the police to stand by and they wanted to know where I was going and how long it would take me to get there. An officer met me down the block and asked what I needed; I quoted Sec. 59 of the *AGA* and said I needed to get a doctor in to see the lady.



Pearl McKenzie

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From the President

The time has come when BC CEAS has to adapt to some major changes marking the beginning of a new chapter in the history of our organization. To some, organizational change may be intimidating but change can be good for us. Certainly it challenges us and can add a new perspective as we venture forth together with new leadership. It is, indeed, a memorable occasion, bringing both sadness and joy. Bidding farewell is never easy, particularly to Executive Director **Carol Ward-Hall** and Administrative



Assistant **Tricia Alford** to whom we are indebted for their ten years of dedicated commitment to BC CEAS. Both have given so much constant effort despite some difficult times, and have contributed greatly to the recognition that BC CEAS enjoys throughout the Province today.

Donald Trump once said: "In the end, you're measured not by how much you undertake, but by what you finally accomplish." Carol and Tricia have always cheerfully undertaken much and their

accomplishments are immeasurable. Thank you both. Our best wishes are for your good health and some enjoyable leisure. We will miss you!

I, and the Board Members, have welcomed our new Executive Director, **Penny Bain**. Penny brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and connections; we are most fortunate to have her "take the reins". She is assured of our support and cooperation in what may develop into a challenging year. The provincial election has the potential to bring changes of its own and a strong leadership of BC CEAS is essential for us to maintain a good relationship with governing authorities. To Penny, our best wishes are for happy and successful years as Executive Director of BC CEAS!

One other change is forthcoming - that of obtaining a new Administrative Assistant, to replace Tricia. The successful candidate will be announced later this month.

Last, but not least, our newsletter is on the way to becoming a magazine! My personal best wishes for the coming season.

Joyce Schmalz
President, BC CEAS



A Shared Concern

A SHARED CONCERN is sponsored by **Scotiabank**, and is published quarterly by **BC CEAS**, the British Columbia Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors.

Your comments and enquiries are welcome. While BC CEAS welcomes contributions to the newsletter, the views expressed by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of the Board of Directors or the staff of the Society.

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Next deadline for submissions: July 31, 2005

From the Executive Director's Desk



It is with great pleasure that I anticipate joining the staff of BC CEAS on June 6, 2005. For many years I have participated in the work of BC CEAS in my role as the Executive Director of the BC Institute Against Family Violence.

I represented the Institute at BC CEAS strategic planning sessions, on project advisory committees and at BC CEAS conferences. I am very aware of the amazing expertise and commitment of the current board members, staff, contractors and volunteers.

My experience and training is primarily in the field of legal policy analysis, public legal education, access to justice and non-profit management. I have a Masters of Law degree, was called to the BC Bar in 1977, and worked as a senior manager for the Legal Services Society for 14 years. For the past seven years, I have 'filled the shoes' of the former Chair of BC CEAS, **Jill**

Hightower, carrying on her work as Executive Director of the Institute.

I look forward to supporting the many projects that have made BC CEAS so well known and respected in the community and, with your assistance, developing new projects to address issues of abuse of seniors throughout the province.

BC CEAS is going through a transition time in which Board and staff will focus on strategic and financial planning in order to move forward. I hope to address BC CEAS's operating deficit, assist in board and volunteer development, and find new ways to support outreach to seniors around the province.

Penny Bain, Executive Director, BC CEAS



A Message from Carol Ward-Hall

Hello Everyone! I had expected to leave by now, but the new Executive Director, **Penny Bain** from the **BC Institute Against Family Violence**, could not begin until June 6th. So here I am, still here! We are pleased to have hired her as our new Executive Director. She brings a great deal of expertise and knowledge, has many networks, and I know will be a great person to carry BC CEAS forward.

We have put in applications for funding to federal and provincial governments and national foundations over the last three months and are waiting to hear the results. We are also trying to obtain some provincial funds for BC CEAS, but will continue the process as soon as the election is over and we know who the government will be.

We are the only provincial organization for prevention of abuse to seniors and we used to get annual funds from the **Office for Seniors** until that office was closed three years ago.

All non-profit organizations are finding it harder to obtain funds both provincially and federally, as either there is a shortage of funds to give away, or many more organizations are applying for the funds that



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A Message from Carol Ward-Hall (cont'd from p. 3)

are available. We used to obtain at least three out of every five proposals we put in, but now we are lucky if we get one out of five.

I am busy tidying up my office for Penny. It is amazing how much 'stuff' one accumulates over ten years.

On May 17th we interviewed for Tricia's position, for Executive Assistant, and hired **Patty Ginn** to fill her shoes. I know that Patty will make her own place in the organization, but **Tricia** has been here over

ten years, first as a volunteer and then as Executive Assistant. Thank you, Tricia, for all your hard work and for being who you are! You have helped to build BC CEAS. It has been a great pleasure working with you.

So once again, good-bye to all of you and take care of yourselves!

Carol Ward-Hall

Retiring Exec. Dir., BC CEAS



Breaking News

New Administrative Assistant to BC CEAS!

BC CEAS has just hired **Patty Ginn** as the new Administrative Assistant to replace the invaluable Tricia Alford. Patty Ginn was formerly the Information Coordinator at the BC Institute Against Family Violence, where her responsibilities included general office management, administrative assistance and information and service referral. She also managed the Resource Centre at BCIFV and dealt with circulation and membership.

Patty Ginn was responsible for the publication, coordination and distribution of the BCIFV newsletter, so she will be a valuable asset to the fledgling magazine of BC CEAS. Patty Ginn has also served as a sessional instructor in anthropology and sociology at UBC. She is a competent teacher and researcher and has served as Legal Counselling Coordinator at Vancouver's Battered Women's Support Services. She is a crisis and peer counsellor and has coordinated training programs for volunteers.

BC CEAS welcomes **Penny Bain** and **Patty Ginn** and wishes them well as they pick up the reins for the dedicated team of **Tricia Alford** and **Carol Ward-Hall**. Enjoy your retirement, you two!



Happy Retirement, Tricia and Carol!



The police officer talked through the door and stood by. He called backup.” Designated agency staff are using the criminal justice system to protect seniors who are in danger as well. When asked about any experiences with restraining or other protective court orders, people cited many instances of working through the criminal process to obtain restraining orders.



Graphic, Government of Canada

The Victim Services Program is another example of what is working well. Police often involve victim service workers when responding to reports of crimes against vulnerable adults. The victim service workers build rapport and trust and provide ongoing support if needed. One victim service worker said that her service kept files open for about six weeks after an initial referral and would regularly call a person they were supporting during that time period.

In addition to providing support to vulnerable and isolated victims of crime, victim service workers can provide much needed linkage between community and the criminal justice system. By contacting a worker, designated agency staff or other helpers may be able to obtain information on behalf of a senior or adult about the status of the police investigation or other criminal justice system process. And they can help keep open the lines of communication.

Criminalize the abuse of seniors

One person consulted said: “I don’t think that we in health and social service agencies do a lot to encourage seniors to report. An error we fall into is getting them support or helping them learn how not to get into situations, but we do not do things like saying: ‘Get a lawyer or call the police’. We need to criminalize the behaviour and say to those out there perpetrating these crimes that it is not okay to do these things to seniors. We try to avoid that route and do damage control; we don’t want them

to be more traumatized by involvement of the criminal justice system. This is especially true when family are involved. I really do believe we err on the side of not pushing involvement of the criminal justice system. I do this work full time and I can count on two fingers the times these crimes have gone to court.”

Other people told us that seniors are reluctant to tell anyone about crimes against them, especially if the offender is a person close to them. The reasons for not reporting range from fear of not being believed, to concern about the offender, to the very real possibility of being punished for telling anyone about the abuse or neglect.

Care workers fear retribution

An example was given of seniors in care facilities who would be very vulnerable to the repercussions of reporting abuse or neglect. Fear of retribution is also felt by people trying to help. One staff person in a rural area said: “We always have to be careful putting care workers in situations like this. It’s a small town and everyone knows where everyone lives – so we always have to be aware of this.”

Lack of restitution and compensation

Since so much of the abuse of seniors is connected to theft, fraud and other financial exploitation, we were curious to know if these cases were being actively prosecuted and if the criminal courts were awarding return of money or property obtained through crime. No one interviewed could recall restitution orders or compensation for losses. And there were no examples of charges being laid against offenders, although police actively investigated many situations.

Age and diversity in abuse and neglect

People interviewed cited many examples of seniors living in ethnic communities, who were described as being vulnerable to abuse and less likely to receive help.

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This is one example: “There is lack of support in their own community – if they decide to report they are on their own. Not only would they be isolated from their family and community but due to language and things, they would be isolated from the larger community as well.”

One person reminded us that the attitudes and values of all older people were shaped in a different time:

“It’s not just other ethnic groups – older generation people from Britain don’t talk about that. My mother would never say anything outside the house that would be detrimental to her family.”

Lack of community resources

More resources are needed to do this work.

During the consultations, people referred to a lack of resources. One person said, “The problem with the *Adult Guardianship Act* is that designated agencies were given new responsibilities and no new staff.”

We were told that designated agency staff and seniors need more protection in some situations. Seniors with disabilities, especially people with impaired or fluctuating decision-making ability, are very defenceless against abuse and neglect. If they refuse a first offer of help, which typically involves leaving their home for safety, there are not many other options available to address the problem.

Abandoning seniors to their autonomy

The *Adult Guardianship Legislation* tells workers to presume capability and respect an adult’s right to make decisions about his/her own life. When these principles are combined with fear of retribution – by the senior and people trying to help – there appears to be a substantial risk of seniors being abandoned to their autonomy. It takes persistence, creativity and time to find solutions that will keep everyone safe

and meet the needs and wishes of the person being abused or neglected. If designated agency staff lack the resources to do this difficult work, it would appear that they, too, are being abandoned to their responsibility.

Underfunding CRNs

People interviewed in all three communities emphasized that Community Response Networks should be credited with raising awareness and creating a climate where people will work together to prevent and address abuse and neglect of adults. Unfortunately the value of their work is not reflected in available funding. One informant said that the provincial government and/or

health authorities should recognize the contribution of CRNs and provide funding.



Photo used with permission of Sandy Cameron

Note: For a complete report about the information gained from the research interviews and recommendations for education, training and protocol or policy development, visit the BC CEAS website at www.bcceas.ca and look under the heading **The Community and Justice System Working Together as Partners** for the document called: “Summary Report on Research Findings, Learning More About Best Practices When Working Together to Address Criminal Offences Against Seniors”.

BC CEAS and the project Advisory Committee are very grateful to the people in the three communities who answered our questions so thoughtfully and spoke so openly about their experiences and observations. Thank you for sharing your experiences and observations with us.

Educational materials developed

During the Community and Justice System Working Together As Partners project, we asked

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With the assistance of the Advisory Committee to the project and our funder, Community Mobilization Program, we have developed an **on-line education kit** that can be used by people in communities as they work and learn together. We hope that you will adapt the material for your own use, adding information about local resources and contact numbers.

people to tell us what kind of educational material would best meet their needs.

Seniors, and people who help seniors, wanted to know about the criminal justice system. They were interested in learning more about when abuse and neglect of seniors is a crime, how to make reports to police or designated agencies and what happens after a report is made.

- **Police officers said they wanted:**
 - **print material**, “including a small card that we can put in our pocket with phone numbers on it rather than a binder or anything we have to read”;
 - **training sessions** in concert with community services which would allow opportunities to share information and build relationships;
 - **periodic review of protocols**, ongoing joint training and relationship building with community partners.
- The training needs described by **designated agency staff** were remarkably similar to what the police said they wanted:
 - **joint training sessions** for members of Community Response Networks, designated agency staff, police and victim service workers to enable people to share information and build relationships as they learn together;
 - **periodic review of protocols, ongoing joint training and relationship building** with community partners and police;

- **Overhead presentation: Abuse and Neglect of Seniors: The Community and Justice System Working Together As Partners.** This overhead presentation consists of 70 slides containing information about:

- abuse and neglect of seniors;
- barriers to reporting or getting help;
- roles of Community Response Networks (CRNs), designated agencies, police, victim service programs and Crown counsel;
- response of the criminal justice system to criminal abuse and neglect of seniors;
- Ongoing effects of abuse and neglect of seniors;
- increased vulnerability as seniors age;
- dementia and conditions often confused with dementia;
- indicators of abuse and neglect
 - “Look, Listen and Ask” ;
- tips for communicating with seniors who have a mental or physical disability; and
- sources of help, e.g., VictimLINK and victim service worker programs, the Public Guardian and Trustee, HRDC for federal pensions, BC CEAS for networking and advocacy.

- **ongoing training for new staff**, and staff who were not involved in the development of protocols within the health authority and police departments, about abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and related protocols.

Contents of the education kit

This kit contains: (1) information sheets for seniors and people who help seniors; (2) an overhead presentation for people working together

Community and Justice System as Partners (cont'd from p. 7)



Graphic courtesy Library of Parliament

in communities; (3) handouts that go with the overhead presentation; and (4) a sample of a small card that can be given to police officers to carry.

Our hope is that the kit will support people in communities around the province to:

- ▶ provide education about abuse and neglect of seniors and seniors' rights;
- ▶ share ideas, knowledge and information about responding effectively to abuse and neglect of seniors, and strengthen working relationships.

Included information sheets

- general Information (for seniors and people helping seniors):
 - abuse and neglect of seniors: is it a crime?
 - reporting crimes to the police and what happens when you make a report;
 - abuse and neglect of seniors and the criminal justice system;
 - where to get legal help.
- **Information for seniors:**
 - reporting abuse and neglect Under Part 3 of the *Adult Guardianship Act (AGA)*.
- **Information for people helping seniors:**
 - reporting abuse and neglect Under Part 3 of the *Adult Guardianship Act*.

The contents of the slides will stimulate thoughts and questions and viewers will share information,

experience and ideas. There are no speaker's notes. Individuals and organizations in the community are the resource people. When these slides are used for an educational event, ensure that there are people present who can talk about the roles and responsibilities of designated agencies, CRNs, police and victim service workers.

Most communities will have access to a laptop computer and projector to show these slides, along with tips for using the overhead presentation and the handouts.

Handouts

- **A chart** showing people and organizations working together under the *AGA* to support and protect abused and neglected seniors.
- **A handout** about
 - definitions of abuse and neglect;
 - examples of common crimes against seniors
 - what to look for (as indicators of physical, financial, psychological abuse and neglect
 - working with seniors or adults with cognitive impairments
 - sources of help, with room for local numbers.
- **A template** for a card for police officers to carry, which can be adapted locally after consultation with police officers. It contains information about the *AGA*, and examples of how police and designated agencies (health authorities) might work together.

The card includes tips for interviewing seniors or adults with disabilities, indicators of abuse and neglect, and space for contact telephone numbers.

To review and download these educational materials, visit the BC CEAS website at www.bcceas.ca and look under the heading "The Community and Justice System Working Together as Partners" for the document called "Education Kit".

On the Road with Lucy Bloggs

And Margaret, That Dastardly Daughter!

Last fall and this spring, it was my pleasure to join Joyce Schmalz (who is the President of the Board of BC CEAS) and Carol Ward Hall (Executive Director), to deliver workshops to victim service workers around the province. The workshops were held in Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Prince George, Cranbrook, Kelowna and on Vancouver Island. We spoke about abuse and neglect and about how, by working together, we can more effectively support seniors.

The story of Lucy Bloggs always helps to put a human face to educational sessions and Joyce's superb acting brings Lucy to life. And, let us not forget Carol's valuable contribution playing Margaret. We met a few victim service workers who had attended the BC CEAS conference last October. They told us that when they came into the room and saw Carol, they thought, "Oh, there's that blankety-blank (think "dastardly") Margaret!"

You see, this roleplay is about a mother (Lucy) who ends up living with her daughter (Margaret) after being released from hospital. Lucy is very upset when she learns that Margaret has used a power of attorney to sell Lucy's house and all her personal belongings. We watch as Lucy frantically tries to regain some control over her life.

As the story unfolds, there are opportunities for other people to intervene and offer Lucy some support. During the workshops, victim service workers took part in the roleplay to speak with Lucy about what they could do to assist her. They gained knowledge and perspective about how to work with seniors. For our part, we gained a great deal of respect and appreciation for the fine job that these workers do.

There is a tendency to view abuse and neglect of

seniors as something that mainly happens when family members get a little greedy or caregivers are overstressed by their responsibilities. Victim service workers, who support adults and children who are sexually and physically assaulted, bring their experience and a broader perspective to our discussions. They remind us that there is every reason to suspect that some of the worse violence in relationships also happens, with devastating consequences, to very frail older people.

Designated agency staff, members of CRNs, neighbours, friends and caring family can provide the support and encouragement that seniors need to deal with abusive situations. Police and criminal courts can look after many safety issues and send a strong message that society does not tolerate some activities. Victim service workers

can ensure that the community and criminal justice system coordinate their activities on behalf of seniors who are criminally abused or neglected.

In this time of scarce resources, victim service workers can also provide practical assistance and ongoing support to seniors who are isolated and have no one else to help them.

by **Pearl McKenzie**



Margaret and Lucy (Carol Ward-Hall and Joyce Schmalz).

*Seniors, and people helping seniors, can call **VictimLINK** toll free, 24 hours a day. This service can offer immediate crisis support for victims of family and sexual violence, help for all other victims of crime, information about and referral to victim services and other resources, basic legal information and awareness of rights.*

*The telephone number is: **1 (800) 563-0808***

*For TTY call: **(604) 875-0885***



by **Chris Morrissey**, LGTB Generations Project

Recently, I had reason to go to City Hall in Vancouver. We had received a letter, addressed to me, reminding me to identify what size garbage and recycling bins we needed when the new system comes into effect. Since my partner had already responded to the city’s request, we were concerned that there might be a mix-up.

I approached an inquiry desk and asked my question. I used the word partner. I awaited the response.

Now it is important to know that I am a 62 year-old lesbian. I was not wearing any buttons or paraphernalia to announce my sexual orientation. Yes, I have short hair and no, I don’t wear make-up.

I was astounded by what I heard!

“Are you both listed on the property?”

“Yes”, I replied.

“Then it doesn’t matter if she was the one to respond. You’ll get the right bins.”

What was that?

The woman behind the desk said “she” and she was referring to my partner! The attendant, realizing what she had done, quickly added “or he”. I hesitated for a split second and then said, “You were right the first time.” I thanked her as I left and congratulated her, telling her that she was the first person ever to get it right.

The Presumption of Heterosexuality

It was the first time that I had ever experienced a “homosexual” assumption. It was quite a moment for me. I knew this was the subject for an article.

One of the first ways of creating a safe and welcoming environment for ageing and older lesbian,

gay, transgendered and bisexual people (LGTB) is to not make a “heterosexual assumption.” For most people, it is a habit. We are not conscious of what we are doing. We are speaking to or about a woman and we automatically assume that she is or has been married to a man. If we are addressing a man, we assume that he is or has been married to a woman.



If the woman at City Hall had said to me: “Is he listed on the property?” then I would have been put in the situation of having to decide whether to just answer and be invisible as a lesbian or to give an explanation. Making these decisions is fairly constant in my life and in the lives of other LGTB people when we come in contact with telemarketers, cashiers, office staff, care providers of all kinds, and people we casually meet at social events. The list goes on.

Systemic Abuse

At this point you might be wondering, “What does this have to do with abuse?”

Abuse is not only found in personal relationships. It is also experienced through institutions and systems. The assumption of heterosexuality is abusive for us lesbian, gay, transgendered and bisexual people.

Heterosexism, making the assumption that everyone is heterosexual, creates a significant barrier for older members of the LGTB community. They have lived much of their lives in secret because of having been called criminals, mentally ill and sinners. Many still fear that the care they receive will be compromised if someone knows about their sexual orientation. There are those who may not be “out” to family members. Some have lived a double

Watch Your Language! (cont'd from p. 10)

life for a long time. This is certainly abuse, though not one we are often conscious of.

So, you ask, “what can we do?” I suggest that you be as conscious of language as many of us are.

Begin to take notice of the times when you are assumed to be heterosexual. Even if you are! Also notice when you hear others making the assumptions of heterosexuality. Do a bit of a reality check. See if you find it pervasive.

Notice your own language. Ask if there are significant people in a person’s life. Speak or ask about spouses and partners. Use both “he or she”, “him or her”, “his or hers” when using pronouns.

Making these changes may not result in older people coming out and confiding in you. A lifetime

of being “in the closet” does not change easily. However, you are taking a very concrete step in contributing to the creation of a more inclusive environment for all. Someone may feel a weight being lifted off. Someone may recognize that with you, in this agency, a person is validated and accepted. You just may have someone share with you the details of his/her life.

If you are already doing this, thanks! Maybe your next step might be to notice what you see around you, where you live, work, volunteer. Notice the written materials, codes of conduct, visuals and forms that you come across to see if they are inclusive. If they are not, perhaps a word to someone who can do something about it is in order.

GIFT BC CEAS ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

Several members send in donations to BC CEAS that total their number of years of life, realizing that as a non-profit organization, we are always in need of funding for our advocacy and operations.

BC CEAS is a charitable organization and your donations are tax deductible. So far, the birthday fund has raised **\$1,451.**



THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS TO THE BIRTHDAY FUND

**Dena Dawson
Kathy Doerksen
Laura Watts**

**CHARITABLE DONORS
Capilano Lions Club
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MEMBER NEWS

Penticton

Submitted by **Phyllis Bentley**

Penticton reports they have been busy preparing for a Bankers' Breakfast in June and a presentation "Abuse Awareness for Financial Professionals".

Financial professionals are invited to meet with some of the members of the Penticton network in order to affirm and discuss the important role that we all play in identifying and responding to abuse of vulnerable adults.

Highlighted will be the *Adult Guardianship Legislation* and the Role of the Financial Professional: recognizing and responding to financial abuse, liaising with Designated Agencies and sharing information.

Cranbrook: "Not In My Neighbourhood!"

by **Ferne Senecal**, Coordinator,
Cranbrook Community Response Network

The "Not in My Neighbourhood" Project was custom-built for Cranbrook. Our inspiration was Joyce Schmalz's 'Lucy Bloggs Story'.

We have an active theatre community here, and took prevention of abuse/neglect to the streets in theatre format using some of the community's most impactful actors.

The project was pulled together to support "Prevention of Violence Against Women Week",

NEW MEMBERS OF BC CEAS
March 1, 2005 onwards
Allan Homeniuk Burnaby
Nestor Ablog Coquitlam

for which we received funding from the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. The Canadian Mental Health Association for the Kootenays administered the funds.

Three skits were performed repeatedly, at three different locations in the city on two different days. Two of the skits focussed on older women who had become vulnerable to financial abuse.

Professional counsellors, coordinators and service providers were present to moderate at each performance. We believe "Not in My Neighbourhood" resulted in increased awareness of abuse/neglect of women (including older women), raised consciousness of established avenues of help for people in these circumstances, and informed the public of ways to access help when it is needed.

We found live drama to be particularly effective in getting the message out! As well, project participants enjoyed this unique opportunity to exchange information and lend one another support in a common cause.

BC CEAS MAC Advisory Committee



At Capilano Lab



At Guru Nanak Temple, Surrey, B.C.

Income Security Programs

Submitted by **Christa Thelker**, ISP Outreach, Department of Social Development Canada

The Winter 2004/2005 edition of "A Shared Concern" ran an article entitled "A Rallying Cry For Pension Reform in Canada"

The Department of Social Development Canada, Income Security Programs, wishes to clarify several of the points made in the article about its programs, The Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Pension.

CPP Benefits

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) covers all parts of Canada (except Quebec which set up its own, similar, pension plan in 1966). The CPP covers us all in the same way. There are no differences in benefits among provinces or territories. The Canada Pension Plan pays a Surviving Spouse's pension (among others). This pension, for a surviving spouse who is over 65, is 60% of the deceased spouse/partner's CPP retirement pension. The formula has been the same since the CPP began.

The CPP has a provision called the Child Rearing Dropout. This ensures that reduced earnings during the early child-rearing years will not result in lower future pension benefits.

OAS Benefits

All Old Age Security (OAS) benefits are paid out of general tax revenue. Entitlement to the OAS pension is based on three things; your age (you have to be at least age 65), your legal status in Canada (you must be either a Canadian citizen or a Permanent Resident in Canada) and the length of your residence in Canada. Entitlement to the OAS is earned at the rate of 1/40th for each year that you live in Canada after age 18 with a minimum

residence requirement of 10 years. E.g. 10 years of residence would entitle you to 10/40ths of a pension, 14 years of residence would entitle you to 14/40ths of a pension, 25 years of residence would entitle you to 25/40ths of a pension, and so forth.

We want you to know that there are several income-related benefits available under the OAS

Program that serve to augment the incomes of individuals and families of pension age whose incomes are limited.

The Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) provides an additional income for Old Age Security Pensioners

whose incomes are low or moderate. **The Allowance and the Allowance for the Survivor** are benefits for the pre-senior group (60-64) with low or modest incomes. They're designed to bridge the gap until this group is eligible to receive the OAS pension. In addition to the income eligibility requirement, applicants for the Allowances must meet certain legal status and residence requirements. The GIS and Allowances are paid in five different family composition categories with different income limits for each.

The above information is for clarification purposes only. It is by no means a comprehensive overview of the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Program. For further information about these programs, please visit our website or call us at our information phone lines, at

1(800)277-9914 English; or

1(800)277-9915 French.

Our website is: www.sdc-dsc.gc.ca/isp.



Graphic courtesy - Government of Canada

B.C. HealthFiles on Abuse of Older Adults

BC CEAS and Charmaine Spencer (Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University) are pleased to announce the completion of five information sheets developed for the BC HealthFiles. These useful one page handouts provide basic information on different aspects of abuse and neglect of older adults.

The BC HealthFiles are a series of over 150 easy-to-understand fact sheets about a wide range of public and environmental health and safety issues.

The topics covered in the “Elder Abuse Prevention” series include:

- Preventing Abuse and Neglect in Later Life (#93a);
- Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults: Information for Family Caregivers (#93b);

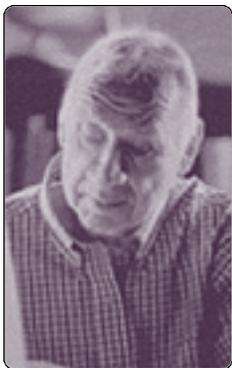
- Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults: Understanding Gender Differences (#93c);
- Health Effects of Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults (#93d); and
- Financial Abuse of Older Adults (#93e).

In addition to being accessible on the website, the BC HealthFiles are distributed through the province’s 120 health units/departments and 330 various offices (i.e. government employee health services, native health centres, physicians offices/clinics, and nursing stations).

The files can be downloaded from the Internet in an HTML or PDF version at:

www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/httoc.stm

Submitted by Charmaine Spencer



Preventing Abuse and Neglect in Later Life

Older adults can experience several different kinds of harm from people they rely upon or trust.

Abuse and neglect in later life can affect an adult’s health, happiness and safety.

Abuse is not limited to older adults of any particular culture, ethnic group, social background or religion. Approximately one in 12, or 46,000 older adults in British Columbia, experience abuse or neglect at some point. Abuse of older adults can occur at home, in the community or in institutional settings. Those who abuse are most often family members (the person’s spouse or children), but they can also include friends, landlords and staff of institutions.

What types of abuse or neglect can older adults experience?

Abuse and neglect can take many forms, including physical, emotional, financial, sexual, spiritual or social. Some types violate the older adult’s basic rights and several types are crimes.

- **Physical abuse** includes violence or rough treatment, even if it does not leave an injury. A push that might not hurt a younger person can be very harmful to an older adult.
- **Emotional abuse** includes name-calling, intimidation, threats or any treatment that offends an older person’s sense of dignity and self-worth. Emotional abuse is often a way that people attempt to control an older person.
- **Financial abuse** is the most common form of abuse that older adults face. Examples of financial abuse include pressuring an older adult with requests for money; family or other people using an older adult’s property or money without the person’s full knowledge and consent, or the improper use of power of attorney.
- **Sexual abuse** is when a person pressures an older adult for intimacy or sexually harasses or sexually assaults them. Sexual abuse can also include sexual comments or jokes, touching or leering. People of any age can experience sexual abuse, and it happens more often to older women than older men.

- **Violations of rights** means ignoring older adults' rights to privacy, information or community supports. In some cases, rules or policies may violate an older adult's rights.
- **Neglect** refers to situations where a person has a duty to provide care or assistance to an older adult, but does not. For example, the caregiver might stop paying the bills or providing food, medication or other forms of assistance that the older adult needs. Some people may do this on purpose. Others simply do not know how to help.



Why does abuse happen?

Some people learn to use violence and control in their relationships with other people. Many people in society have negative beliefs about older people or may not understand them. Others do not treat older adults with respect. This may increase the risk of abuse or may be the excuse people use for their abusive behaviour.

Some people experience personal problems or stresses that may increase their risk of harming or neglecting others. Living together with older adults or poverty may create family tensions and may lead to abuse or neglect. In some cases, family pride can keep abuse hidden, but caring communities can also help protect people from abuse and neglect. It does not matter who the abuser is, or what the person's reason is, no one deserves to be abused or mistreated.

Abuse and neglect hurt

When abuse or neglect happens to an older adult, it often affects the person's physical and emotional health. Abused older adults lose trust and sometimes begin to question their own judgment and decision-making. They can feel depressed and even suicidal. Abusers can also feel mixed emotions about their harmful behaviour. Abuse and neglect have significant impacts on families and communities.

Abuse and neglect can be prevented

Abuse or neglect rarely stops by itself. It takes many people working together to make it stop. There is no law in British Columbia that requires people to report abuse and neglect of older adults. However, you can help an abused or neglected senior to get help and prevent the situation from getting worse.

- Recognize abuse and neglect and speak up about it.
- Listen to the older person in a non-judgmental manner.
- Respect the person's choices.
- Know where to call to get information.
- If you are a service provider working with older adults:
 - help older adults and families learn more about their rights and responsibilities;
 - help older adults build or regain their confidence and skills;
 - help to reduce the person's social isolation; and
 - have appropriate resources in place to help older adults and families.

If you discover a crime or dangerous situation is occurring to an older adult, call the police or

911 immediately. If you're not sure if an older person is being abused or neglected and want to talk to a health professional, call the BC NurseLine 24 hours a day for information and advice.

For resources available in your community, contact the **Home and Community Care Office** in your local health authority or contact the **B.C. Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Older Adults** at 604-437-1940 or at <http://www.bcceas.ca/>.

The staff of your local **Home and Community Care Office** has a responsibility to investigate more serious reports of suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults. The **Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee** may be able to help if the older adult is not

Senior Role Model: *William M. Summersgill*

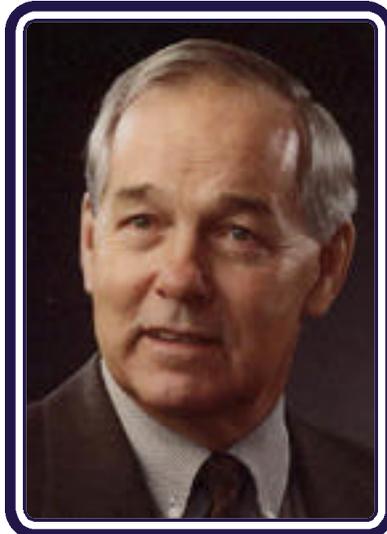
Backgrounder

Bill retired in 2002 and since then he has been involved in a volunteer capacity with the BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors, where he is currently the 1st Vice President. In 2004 he was also appointed to the Chair of the Board of the Benny's Hope Women's and Children's Foundation of Canada, an organization that raises funds and relief goods for the people of Malawi, Africa.

Bill's interest in abuse of senior's issues started when he was employed as an investigative officer in the Ombudsman's office for the Province of British Columbia and attended a seniors abuse workshop in North Vancouver in the late 1980s. Shortly after this conference he convinced the Ombudsman of the day that the Ombudsman's office should have an investigator who specialized in seniors' issues. Thus began Bill's involvement in seniors' issues and his involvement with BC CEAS.

Intelligence Analyst

Bill was born in Edmonton, Alberta and lived there until he joined the Canadian Forces after graduating from High School. He initially served for seven years as a paratrooper in the 2nd Bn. of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Calgary and Edmonton. He then spent 15 years as a member of the Canadian Intelligence Corps. Bill was an investigator and intelligence analyst and was stationed in Edmonton, Germany, Rivers (MN), Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. As part of his professional intelligence training, Bill completed three investigator courses (basic to advanced) at the National Intelligence School in Camp Borden, Ontario. In 1968 as one of two foreign candidates, Bill qualified as an interrogator at the British Military Interrogation School in Ashford, England.



Bill Summersgill

Bill also qualified as an intelligence analyst and aerial photographic interpreter during his time with the Intelligence Corps. In September 1978, Bill retired from the Regular Force as a Warrant Officer. He was then commissioned Captain and served for an additional three years as the Officer in Command of the Intelligence Section, Headquarters, Militia Area Pacific, Vancouver. Bill was awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration (C.D.) in 1968 and the clasp in 1974. While stationed in Montreal, Bill attended Sir George Williams University (Evening Division) part-time for four years, but was posted before completing a degree.

Internal Investigations

After his retirement from the Forces, Bill began a second career with the B.C. Government. He initially worked as a Fraud Investigator with the Ministry of Human Resources, where his primary task was the investigation of irregularities in the administration of departmental financial assistance programs. Bill was also involved in several internal investigations concerning staff-initiated fraud. In 1979 and 1980, Bill was responsible for discovering and subsequently coordinating the investigation and the laying of charges in a complex fraud scheme, involving three people who used 60 aliases to defraud the Province of over \$260,000. To that date, the case was the largest welfare fraud successfully prosecuted in Canada.

Former Ombudsman

In 1985, Bill was selected to be an investigative officer by the Ombudsman of British Columbia and spent the next 13 years working in the Ombudsman's Vancouver Office. He investigated complaints about government ministries, agencies and crown corporations; and, from 1992 to 1999,

Senior Role Model Bill Summersgill (cont'd from p. 16)

specialized in investigations involving issues related to Pharmacare, Long-Term Care, Community Care Services, Mental Health Services, hospitals and seniors' issues. While with the office of the Ombudsman, Bill completed two negotiation/mediation courses at the Justice Institute of British Columbia and a Labour Law course at Capilano College.

Police Complaint Investigator

In 1999, Bill was offered a secondment to the Police Complaint Commissioner as an investigator, which was made permanent in July 1999. Bill's investigative duties included the review of internal investigations done by professional standards/internal affairs units of municipal police departments, to ensure compliance with the *Police Act*, and to ensure fairness in the police complaint process. Bill was also the OPCC liaison for the five police departments in the Victoria region. While employed as an OPCC investigator, Bill successfully completed the



In military garb

Internal Investigator course at the Justice Institute of British Columbia and also participated in the National Internal Affairs Investigators Association Conference at Lexington, Kentucky in October 1999.

A Travelling Man

Bill is married and has three adult children. His daughter is a Librarian in Burnaby; his oldest son is the operations manager of a security company and his youngest son is a film editor and director. All are married and live in Vancouver. Bill and Midge are the proud grandparents of five very special children ranging in age from 4 to 19. In addition to his volunteer work, Bill and his wife enjoy travelling. In 2003, Bill and Midge spent months 'on the road' in a 5th wheel trailer travelling to much of the USA and the Canadian Maritimes. Last year they spent a month and a half in Scotland and England. Future trips planned in the next few years include a return to Scotland and a tour of the Greek Islands.

HealthFiles on Abuse of Older Adults (cont'd from p. 15)

For information on legal services, including how to access legal aid and advice, contact the **Legal Services Society of BC LawLine** at 604-408-2172; or outside greater Vancouver at 1-866-577-2525 or visit <http://www.lss.bc.ca/>.

VictimLINK also provides information for victims of family and sexual violence and crime. You can call 1-800-563-0808 any time and from anywhere in British Columbia. **VictimLINK** offers multi-language services and services for people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

mentally capable of making decisions or judging his/her own ability to live at risk.

For more information, see other topics in the **BC HealthFiles Elder Abuse Prevention Series**.

For general health information and advice, please call the 24-hour BC NurseLine and speak to a registered nurse.

- In Greater Vancouver, call **604-215-4700**
- In B.C., call toll-free **1-866-215-4700**
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call toll-free in B.C. **1-866-889-4700**
- Pharmacist available 5 pm to 9 am every day

Upon request, translation services are available in over 130 languages.

VoicePrint Canada

by **John Harris**

Seniors, volunteers and staff will be interested to discover that there is a unique service available to those who suffer from vision and print restrictions. VoicePrint Canada is the worlds largest non-profit broadcast reading service, available in about 8 million homes.

VoicePrint Canada is mandated to lower barriers to media for people with vision and print-restrictions. Our mandate includes the establishment of 100 Local Broadcast Centres (LBCs)



across the country in the next five years. So far, we've opened 16 LBCs, including 8 in Ontario.

VoicePrint: Hearing The Local Paper

Canadian readers now suffering vision and print-restrictions can access 15 years of news from local and national newspaper stories using VoicePrint Canada. A non-profit service established to remove barriers to the media for vision and print-restricted Canadians, VoicePrint Canada relies on an army of

volunteers who clip, gather, read and record daily news stories. The recordings are added to a national audio-stream carried across the country on the Secondary Audio Program of CBC NewsWorld.

VoicePrint Canada is free to the public and available 24 hours a day, producing award-winning programs based on community issues from across Canada. The service is also available in streaming audio from the VoicePrint Canada website, with access to archives of recorded material dating back to its beginnings in 1989.

Best wishes to BC CEAS for continued success.

John Harris

Regional Coordinator, VoicePrint Canada

604-677-0677

www.voiceprintcanada.com



JOIN BC CEAS:

Senior	\$20.00
Individual	\$40.00
Non Profit / Senior Group	\$50.00
Corporate	\$75.00

Tel: (604) 437-1940

Fax: (604) 437-1929

304, 5050 Kingsway, Bby, B.C. V5H 4C2



Graphic courtesy - Voiceprint Canada Website

Protect Your Money

Submitted by Mary Martin Sharma, Program / Volunteer Co-ordinator

Do you 'invest wisely'? Find out by booking a presentation of 'Protect Your Money' for your seniors' group.

Every year in British Columbia, thousands of seniors lose millions of dollars to investment fraud.

In an effort to control these losses, the BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors (BC CEAS) is partnering with the BC Securities Commission (BCSC) to host 'Protect Your Money' – an interactive, one-hour presentation, 'for seniors by seniors', on how to avoid investment frauds and scams.

In this free one-hour interactive presentation, seniors, whether novices or seasoned investors, will learn from other senior volunteer speakers how to protect their hard-earned money from con artists by recognizing the '3 Knows – know



Mary Martin Sharma

yourself, know your advisor, know your investment' and by following the most important rule of investing – "investigate before you invest".

This program is available, free of charge, to seniors' groups of 25 or more, in the Lower Mainland.

The BC CEAS Senior Volunteer Speakers look forward to presenting 'Protect Your Money' to your seniors' group.

To book a presentation or for more information please contact:

Mary Martin Sharma,

Program Co-ordinator

BC CEAS

304 – 5050 Kingsway, Burnaby, B.C., V5H 4C2

Tel: (604) 437-1940 Fax: (604) 437-1929

Toll Free: 1 (866) 437-1940 email: ceas@telus.net

USER HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE BC CEAS WEBSITE

Over the past 11 months, from June 2004 to May 2005, 20,823 people have visited the website, making a total of 47,168 hits in that time period. Visits, of course, means the number of people that visited the site; hits the number of clicks that happened as people moved from one page to another. In April 2005 over 3,229 people visited the BC CEAS web pages, with statistics not available yet to the end of May.

Statistics courtesy of BC CEAS' webmaster

VISIT US ONLINE

Our email address is:
ceas@telus.net

Our website is:
www.bcceas.ca

SCOTIABANK OFFERS TIPS FOR DEBIT CARD HOLDERS

Submitted by Scotiabank

Selecting a Personal Identification Number

- Select a unique PIN for each of your banking cards;
- select a PIN that you can remember;
- memorize your PIN. Never write it down and carry it with you;
- avoid selecting PINs that are easily guessed, such as birth date, telephone number or address; and
- never disclose your PIN to anyone.

If you are suspicious that someone has obtained your PIN or there are missing or unauthorized transactions on your account, cancel your PIN immediately and obtain a new one.



Graphic courtesy of Scotiabank

Debit card or ABM transactions

- Always shield the keypad when using a banking machine or when making an Interac Direct Payment purchase;
- never let your banking card out of sight when conducting a transaction;
- keep all receipts, no matter how small the purchase. Always check the amount on the receipt after completing the transaction;
- review your monthly bank account statements or bank books on a regular basis. Look for extra transactions or missing transactions. Report any discrepancies to your bank immediately.
- if your card has been lost, stolen or retained by an ABM, notify your financial institution immediately.



Graphic courtesy
Scotiabank



BC CEAS wishes to thank **Scotiabank** for their continued funding of *A Shared Concern* in 2005.

Scotiabank Fraud Awareness Program: ABCs of Fraud

To book presentations to senior groups, call BC CEAS at (604) 437-1940
“Make seniors a tough target to fraud”