

## OLDER AND WISER: New columnist makes her introduction

[Margaret Coates](#) / Contributing writer

July 22, 2016 01:12 PM

### Older and **WISER** Margaret Coates



As co-ordinator of Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society, it is my privilege to carry on the tradition of writing a column for and about seniors.

Mary Segal, Lionsview's first co-ordinator, started this column in 1989 and Tom Carney wrote the column for a decade. Following in their footsteps will be a challenge and I hope I am up to it.

First, a little about me. I am a senior. I have lived on the North Shore for 47 years. For 20 years, I have worked and volunteered with seniors. My involvement with Lionsview began three years ago. I value working for a research and planning organization dedicated to improving the lives of seniors on the North Shore.

Seniors everywhere have challenges and concerns. Many issues identified in the past continue to require attention today. The Older and Wiser column will continue to address these, with specific emphasis on seniors on the North Shore.

In 1989, Segal noted that the provincial government was cutting back on home support and was not addressing the need for affordable seniors' housing.

Concern about home support quality and delivery still exists. According to the B.C. Seniors Advocate report, "Monitoring Seniors Services" (2015), home support hours decreased in three out of five health authorities, while the number of clients increased in four out of five. As the seniors population of the North Shore is expected to climb substantially over the next 25 years, more seniors will require home support, particularly if government continues to encourage seniors to stay in their own homes.

Carney wrote in his farewell column, "Of all the issues that I have covered here in the last decade, the social vulnerability of seniors worries me the most." Social activities that bring seniors out of isolation improve their health and longevity. It is good to see organizations like the North Shore Keep Well Society providing exercise and social contact for seniors in centres across the North Shore.

Other challenges that face seniors include elder abuse, transportation, affordable housing, present and future caregiving, planning for retirement, income, mandatory testing for senior drivers and the list goes on.

Not all is gloom and doom. Lionsview, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, continues to address housing and homelessness by linking with North Shore community organizations working on the issue. Hollyburn Family Services, for example, supports vulnerable North Shore seniors by maintaining stable housing and promoting active community participation for at-risk seniors.

The City and District of North Vancouver, recognizing that affordable housing is an issue for seniors, for families and for young people, are working on the problem. Strategies include incentives for developers, and improving or sustaining existing affordable housing stock. Find more information at the city and district websites.

Better at Home, a program funded by the provincial government, managed by the United Way and delivered by North Shore Community Resources Society, provides some home support. However, home support is an increasing need that the program, as structured, has difficulty meeting.

Lionsview's most recent success is the Age Friendly designation awarded to all three municipalities. The Age Friendly approach is intended to improve the lives of North Shore seniors. Perhaps a future column will report on this. In the meantime, please get in touch with your ideas for future columns from the Older and Wiser desk at [lions\\_view@telus.net](mailto:lions_view@telus.net) ([mailto:lions\\_view@telus.net](mailto:lions_view@telus.net)).

*Margaret Coates is the co-ordinator of Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society. She has lived on the North Shore for 47 years and has worked with and for seniors for 20 of those. Ideas for future columns are welcome. Email: [lions\\_view@telus.net](mailto:lions_view@telus.net) ([mailto:lions\\_view@telus.net](mailto:lions_view@telus.net)). Info: [lionsviewseniorsplanning.com](http://lionsviewseniorsplanning.com) (<http://lionsviewseniorsplanning.com>).*

© 2016 North Shore News

[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your Inbox.](http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe)  
(<http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe>)