



## North Shore News Column.

### Older & Wiser

By Tom Carney

## Survey's tangible results satisfy queries

By Tom Carney, Special to North Shore News March 26, 2012

ON a recent weekend, my wife and I drove up to Whistler to meet some old friends for dinner.

I've known John forever and Deb and I worked together previously at a health-care centre for children in Vancouver.

They both moved to Australia several years ago but they were back for a visit and a ski holiday at Whistler and then Banff.

We met at the Old Spaghetti Factory. I haven't been there since the early 1970s but, except for the dessert - they've taken the candied fruit out of the spumoni ice cream - the place hasn't changed much.

We were joined for dinner by three other couples from the ski tour and after the introductions and catching up on the latest news about family and friends, the conversation turned to what each of us was doing now.

There were eight of us at the table, two teachers, an engineer, a physiotherapist, a silk screener, a sales person, myself and one person who is semi-retired. When I tell people I work with seniors I always get asked the same question: How are "they" doing? I usually mumble something about seniors being a very diverse group and that it's hard to give a one-size-fits-all answer to that question.

I might throw in a statistic or two about seniors but I can tell, by the looks that I get, that most of the time the person asking the question isn't particularly satisfied with that type of response. And the truth is, neither am I.

So, a recent seniors survey conducted by the Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society ([www.lionsviewseniorsplanning.com](http://www.lionsviewseniorsplanning.com)) that looks at how seniors are doing was, as they say in the land down under, a "ripper." Good news for me.

I've written about the survey previously and I won't repeat the results here. I will note that in the survey, seniors were divided by age into four groups: boomers, aged 55-64; junior seniors, aged 65-74; senior seniors, aged 75-84; and, the elderly, aged 85+.

The server was taking orders for dessert by the time someone at our table finally got around to asking me the inevitable question about the "oldies" (seniors). This time I was ready.

"Well," I said, "the boomers are feeling a lot of pressure in their careers, with their finances, with their kids and they worry a lot about their aging parents. Junior seniors need some help transitioning into retirement, including looking at their housing options and lifestyle choices after they leave the workforce. Senior seniors need to focus

on a healthy lifestyle, staying engaged in the community, arranging their financial affairs and making sure they have advanced directives in place. And, both the senior seniors and the elderly want and need to learn how they can remain in their own homes for as long as possible."

How did my new boomer friend feel about all that?

"You've got that right," he said. "I'm feeling squeezed from all sides."

"Well," I said, "in my business, we say that you're part of the sandwich generation - kids on one side, parents on the other and you in the middle."

"Right on, I'll have to remember that," he said, before turning to answer a question from across the table.

He seemed happy with my response and I was delighted.

Now I'll have to see if that answer satisfies people here on the North Shore. It was the perfect ending to a perfect evening and to celebrate, I treated myself to a second dish of spumoni ice cream.

Tom Carney is the executive director of the Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society. Ideas for future columns are welcome. Contact him at 604-985-3852 or send an email to [lions\\_view@telus.net](mailto:lions_view@telus.net).