

*Hello MAC members & Whistler 55+ / Senior friends in our Community .... during these continuing unprecedented times in our world ...*

**The MAC Board had decided to defer our AGM (Annual General Meeting) as well as deferring all membership fees (for renewals and new members) until sometime in October, 2020. The exact date and format for the AGM will be decided at a later date depending on guidelines set out for COVID-19.**

*Here are some websites for updates and further clarification on the COVID-19 health & economic challenges.*

**Resources to keep you informed!**

**MAC Facebook (for the latest info!) – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/960888177281796/>**

**Community issues - <https://www.whistler.ca/>**

**local business impacts (open/closed...) - <https://www.whistler.com/>**

**Whistler Chamber of Commerce - <https://www.whistlerchamber.com/>**

**Vancouver Coastal Health – <http://www.vch.ca/>**

**Whistler Community Services Society – <https://mywcss.org/>**

**Sea to Sky Community Services - <http://www.sscs.ca/>**

**Better at Home - <http://www.sscs.ca/programs/sea-to-sky-better-at-home/>**

**Pique Newsmagazine - <https://www.piquenewsmagazine.com/>**

**BC Telehealth - [https://divisionsbc.ca/sea-sky/your-division/telehealth-appointments?fbclid=IwAR3fFbQ0u4KLDwHgBI\\_9\\_I5HSyVoCUg8kCG-BGbtT8qDWjNvIF9CjD0uznY](https://divisionsbc.ca/sea-sky/your-division/telehealth-appointments?fbclid=IwAR3fFbQ0u4KLDwHgBI_9_I5HSyVoCUg8kCG-BGbtT8qDWjNvIF9CjD0uznY)**

**BC Government: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/about-8-1-1>**

**Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>**

**BC Government Seniors - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors>**

**BC - 211: <http://www.bc211.ca/coronavirus-2019-outbreak/>**

**BC Government Financial resources - <http://bowinnmamla.ca/covid19/supports/>**

**the BC Government - Restart Plan - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan>**

**<https://www.411seniors.bc.ca/>**

**<https://canadatogogether.com/en/>**

**Looking for things to do in Whistler! - <https://www.whistler.com/activities/summer/>**

**Whistler Library Virtual Events - <https://www.whistlerlibrary.ca/events>**

*Also, Remember - many financial planners and banks will work with you to evaluate using a line of credit, reverse mortgage, deferring mortgage payments, etc....*

*Even if you can't see or visit friends and family, how about using tools like Facetime, Messenger, Skype, Zoom.us ... to be able to talk and even see your family and friends using your cellular phone, iPad, or computer.*

**Using Facebook** ( MAC Group = <https://www.facebook.com/groups/960888177281796/>) MAC uses Facebook on a regular basis to keep in touch with our members. Make sure your profile indicates you have ties to Whistler. The MAC group is 'members only' so you have to request access. We look at your profile before we allow access to the group!

*Need to talk to someone, need to be pointed in the right direction, know someone that you are concerned about in Whistler? Contact a MAC Board member by sending an email to [chair@whistlermac.org](mailto:chair@whistlermac.org) and let us know how we can help!*

### **Register for the New Safe Seniors Strong Communities Program**

If you can help or if you need help with non-medical essentials such as grocery and prescription pickup and drop off, meal preparation and delivery, friendly phone calls or virtual visits, call 211 or visit [bc211.ca](http://bc211.ca)

### **UPDATE ON FRESH BLUEBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES**

Bountiful beautiful blueberries!!

Who: bring your family and friends, tell your clients, coworkers, and neighbours, your pickle ball group or whatever social group you have.

If they don't come with you they just need to get in touch with me, please feel free to give my number.

What: blue-ti-ful, ripe , anti oxidant rich, Pemberton blueberries.

When: mon wed evening, 6-8Pm Thursday, Friday, Saturday Sunday 10 AM to 8 PM. Evenings are definitely cooler

Where: car pool to 9137 Meadows Rd. Pemberton. 21 km from the Village. Mc Leod Creek Ranch is a working farm with no amenities. We have benches and a water station set up by the 50,000 lbs of blueberries at the back end of the farm.

Why: thanks to COVID the foreign workers couldn't get here so the berries are ready for the picking by cash donation only.

For a charity donation 75% or more should go to the charity and balance to the volunteer pickers.

How: come with a great attitude, plastic pail and boxes, (we do have spares) water bottle, sun hat, sunscreen, bug spray, but they have been non existent so far ....

With 14 acres, social distancing is not an issue for those concerned.

Any questions give me a call.

Btw cell service is virtually non existent after 15 km from village.

Looking forward to seeing how blown away you will be by the berries.

Anastasia and Daniel  
604-902-1081

## **Rotary Clubs of Whistler fundraiser**

From August 29th to Sept 6th the Rotary Clubs of the Sea to Sky are joining to raise funds for Rotary's ongoing global initiatives in Polio eradication. Our initiative is the **Rotary Sea to Sky Pedal for Polio**, a virtual event that involves Running, Walking or Pedaling as a means of raising funds. Every \$1 raised by our event is matched 2 for 1 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. You raise \$100 and the Rotary drive for the eradication of Polio receives \$300.

The number of cases of polio has been rising recently in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, global immunization programs have had to be suspended. Once health care workers and volunteers from organizations such as Rotary International can access communities, there will have to be a very large-scale effort to ensure that there are no significant outbreaks of polio in many countries. Please support the efforts of the Rotary Club of Whistler, the Rotary Club of Whistler Millennium, the Rotary Club of Pemberton and the Rotary Club of Squamish to help avert the spread and incidence of the crippling disease of Polio which spreads very quickly amongst children.

We have 3 simple asks:

1. Sponsorship: A \$100 donation will feature your organization's logo on the banner of our promotional material.
2. Participation: Form a team of individuals within your organization and set goals for fund raising and distance - running, pedaling or walking.
3. Prizes: We will be awarding prizes for various categories. A donation of a prize or gift certificate would be much appreciated.

To register, and for more information on Rotary, Rotary's Polio Initiatives and the event itself, please visit the event website at [www.bit.ly/Rotary-Pedal-for-Polio](http://www.bit.ly/Rotary-Pedal-for-Polio).

Please contact Gill Forester at: [gillforester23@gmail.com](mailto:gillforester23@gmail.com) if you would like your logo published or are able to donate a prize.

Thank you

Gill Forester President of the Rotary Club of Whistler and Event Coordinator 604 905 8702

Brian Brown President of the Rotary Club of Whistler Millennium

**E-Bikes** – contact Ash Conrad at Whistler E-Bikes - offering (4) participant bike tour for price of (3) & learn to ride e-bike & tips. [www.whistlerebikes.com](http://www.whistlerebikes.com)

## **Grey Angels EBike Club**

Article contributed by Michael Blaxland.

So you want to be a member a full patch member of the Grey Angels EBike Club of Whistler? it is very simple just buy an E bike and express an interest. We have 50 members and two years of history riding together on the trails of Whistler area. Once you are a member you can suggest a ride and find buddies to ride and probably share a drink afterwards.

It all started 4 years ago when some of us grey hairs saw huge numbers of Europeans were riding electric bikes and when we tried an E bike we found out why. IT IS FUN! All of a sudden, we could bike farther and faster on much hillier paths than our bodies would otherwise permit. Whistler older folks are continuing the trend and E bikes now make up a much higher proportion of bike sales at Whistler. While often we enjoy the solitude of riding alone, what is missing is companionship while riding, and confidence to ride more than the Valley Trail.

About 2 years ago four of us formed the Grey Angels so we could socialize and safely explore more trails. Any senior with an E bike that we met we invited to join. Now we have 50 names on our email invitation list. Anyone can select the E bike route for their level and head up a ride. We try to mix up the type of rides and ride groupings to be COVID smart and safe. Riding in a group is much more fun and there is someone to help if you have a breakdown. Sometimes even the most advanced biker is challenged by the selected route but not often. A typical ride is selected with options so the less experienced riders can get tips to improve their confidence to ride and often includes narrower, twisty green trails such as the Sea to Sky trail. Everyone is challenged the first time down the Sea to Sky trail but with practice and coaching it becomes more fun and stress free.

After two years of day trips around Whistler we are still discovering new trails and places we have never been. In the future we will start more drive and bike trips to Squamish, Pemberton and Vancouver. The battery life of our E bikes permit a ride of up to 50 km return. We look forward to the opening of Garibaldi Park so we can do the ride to the end of Cheakamus Lake and back. We also are expanding hike and bike trips. We hope to bike up the Flank trail to the Skywalk hiking trail and start hiking thereby cutting off hours of hiking time.

Recently we have had wet weather but when sun is forecast we usually schedule a ride a week. See you on the ride!

Contact:

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NEWS WHISTLER

## DIY housing models becoming attractive option as more Whistler seniors look to age in place

LOCAL SENIOR POPULATION GREW 68% BETWEEN 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS

BY BRANDON BARRETT

WITH COVID-19 reinforcing concerns around long-term care facilities, members of Whistler's growing senior population are thinking creatively to find ways to age in the community they call home.

One of those seniors is Sue Lawther, board chair of the Whistler Community Foundation, who has been exploring a concept with a handful of other seniors that would see them fund the hiring of two caretakers to tend to the group of 12 and live onsite in a spare bedroom at two of their townhomes in Cheakamus Crossing's The Rise complex. Along with preparing meals for the group, the caretakers would also ferry the seniors around in a wheelchair-equipped, eight-passenger van they are contemplating buying.

"We just thought that would be a more viable option, to bring the caretaker into our environment and create our own little better-at-home homecare unit," she said. "It's only a concept, but I think it indicates that seniors are trying to think outside the box."

Making up seven per cent of the resort's

permanent population, the proportion of seniors in Whistler still falls well below the national average of 18.3 per cent, unsurprising for a community that relies so heavily on a younger workforce. But the rate at which Whistler's senior demographic is growing is astonishing nonetheless: between the 2011 and 2016 census, the resort's senior population rose by a whopping 67.7 per cent.

And with long-term care facilities sitting at the centre of numerous COVID-19 outbreaks across the country, seniors may be looking to other housing options as they move into the later stages of life.

"Going into these long-term care homes, that's now become something people really want to avoid," said Councillor Cathy Jewett. "The other thing is we have a wonderful place to live here, so trying to stay in the community is really important. I know that's my intention, but at what point will that be impossible?"

Whistler's relatively low ratio of seniors has added to the challenge of accessing resources here. Many seniors are forced to travel outside of the resort for medical care, and even determining the need for

a hospice—a four-bed facility opened in Squamish last year—was based off of the Sea to Sky's entire population, rather than just Squamish. And while the Whistler Housing Authority has built designated seniors housing in Cheakamus and Rainbow in recent years, it's not realistic to think the resort will be home to a long-term care facility anytime in the near future.

"I think it's being realistic and working with the conditions we've got at this time," Lawther said of her DIY housing concept. "Sure, I could sit there and say, 'I wish the government was doing everything,' but I don't think we can look to the government to solve all our problems. I think it's possible to do things on our own."

Alternative housing models, like co-op living, are another option. Lawther believes, although similar projects floated in the past have failed to gain much traction.

"Pat Frewer, his company is called Seniorhome, we've met with him many times and he's expressed a huge interest in developing some sort of facility that would respond over time to seniors," she noted. "He's built quite a few of them throughout the Lower Mainland and on the island.

They've been very successful, but they take a huge population. He'd really have to sharpen his pencil and council would have to come to the table not necessarily with free land but really cheap land, and they don't have that to give him."

Kathy White, chair of the Mature Action Community (MAC), said the group is working with the municipality and other organizations to try and make Whistler a more welcoming place for seniors, based on the World Health Organization's concept of an "age-friendly" community.

"Behind us, there are a bunch of people in their late forties and fifties going. With COVID, how do I want my senior years to look? Do I want to stay here? Do I want to downsize out of my house and buy a one-bedroom condo and a townhouse, and have an investment property? How do I want to structure my life?" she said.

"Those kind of conversations are the next priority: Communication and engagement not only with the resort, but with other community organizations to figure out how we can help each other."

To share ideas with MAC on aging in place, email [info@whistlermac.org](mailto:info@whistlermac.org). ■

NEWS WHISTLER

## Whistler seniors well supported during COVID-19

HELP AND RESOURCES FOR SENIORS AVAILABLE ONLINE

BY BRADEN DUPUIS

WHEN WHISTLER'S Mature Action Community (MAC) was first formed in 1995, one of the key goals was to help local seniors (aged 55 and over) feel connected.

Twenty-five years later, in the age of COVID-19, those connections have never been more important.

"Because our membership has so many years of experience in living here in Whistler, many of them have formed their own coffee groups, their own networks of calling each other and supporting each other over the phone, and then MAC is a backup for that, to say if you need other services in the community, we are here to help you," said MAC chair Kathy White.

"So we're self-distancing, self-isolating, but we're not alone."

About 25 per cent of Whistler's population is over the age of 50, White said, and MAC itself boasts more than 200 members—but Whistler "seniors" don't fit the typical description.

White pointed to local ski instructors Marcel Richoz and George Tjelloo-Nicholas—

highlighted in a recent documentary called *The Fit Generation*—as just one example (see *Pique*, Jan. 20: "The Fit Generation offers inspirational look at aging").

"They are a great example of active, engaged seniors who are very healthy here," White said. "So we wouldn't be your atypical senior—we're not sitting around very much."

That said, COVID-19 could present stressful situations for seniors, especially those who are at a higher-risk of developing symptoms and needing hospitalization if infected.

Is there a greater fear or anxiety amongst Whistler's senior population these days?

"Sure, and rightly so. So we have to take extra measures," White said. "I think a lot of people are taking extra measures to stay safe, and not go out as much right now."

Delivery services and earlier hours for seniors at grocery stores are appreciated, White said, as is the free transit offered by the Resort Municipality of Whistler.

For those struggling with mental health, the Whistler Community Services Society can offer counselling, White said.

"I think people forget to ask for help, so we're asking our seniors to reach out,"



**ON THE GO** Whistler's seniors—like ski instructors George Tjelloo-Nicholas (right) and Marcel Richoz, who were both featured in the recent documentary *The Fit Generation*—don't always fit the stereotype. But those who need help during COVID-19 can find resources through the Mature Action Community.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EYES MULTIMEDIA

White said. "We connect with them through a newsletter that says, here are the places to go to get that help. We aren't going to push you, but you need to find motivation to get help where needed."

White also recommended a free mental health skill-building program called BounceBack (find more at [bouncebackbc.ca](http://bouncebackbc.ca)).

More health resources, including a page dedicated to COVID-19 information, can be found at [whistlermac.org](http://whistlermac.org).

During these days of physical distancing and self-isolation, it's important to stay connected—even if only with the people in

your neighbourhood, White added.

"The families in town, too, they might be missing their grandparents. Sometimes just reaching out to the local senior in the neighbourhood, for kids and seniors out and about in the community, it kind of reminds them of their families," she said.

"I would just remind seniors and people in the community that we're not alone, and that Whistler MAC is filled with a group of 55-plus people that have been younger, longer."

"We've been here through this before, through many life challenges. Nobody is alone in this community, that's for sure." ■

# To all Resort Municipality of Whistler and community volunteers – thank you!

Volunteers are an integral part of Whistler's passionate and engaged community. This National Volunteer Week, we recognize your dedication and service. Thank you for your contributions during these challenging times and always.

Resort Municipality of Whistler  
[whistler.ca/volunteers](http://whistler.ca/volunteers)

