

GRATITUDE ROCKS

Have you seen a “Gratitude Rock”? Have you held one in your hand and thought a “thank you” for someone or something special”? Do you keep a “Gratitude Rock” in your pocket?

One of my special birthday gifts this year was a small, shiny, golden box containing a small stone imprinted with the word “Gratitude”. It’s coated with a shiny veneer and bears a unique serial number. (Mine is #1328) A card inside the box with the stone reminds me to “Carry this rock as a reminder to have an attitude of gratitude”. The rocks were being sold as a special fund-raising project by a North Battleford youth group called “Kids for Community”. The organization’s slogan is “If you believe, it, you will achieve it!” (You can find out more about this at www.KidsForCommunity.ca)



What a great idea! There are so many things in our world to be thankful for. There are the magnificent mornings as we walk in the awesome glory of the autumn colours, listening to the fascinating sounds of the chorus of birds as they sing their farewells and begin to follow the sun southward. There are memories of friends and families gathered at special summer events. There’s the amazing variety and ac-

cessibility of the foods at our tables. (The orange I had for breakfast this morning was grown in Australia!) What an incredible world we inhabit!

Can you imagine how many pages there would have to be in each issue of “Gray Matters” if we were to list all of the things we appreciate! Just for fun, I “googled” “Gratitude Rocks”. I didn’t take time to review all 2,200,000 hits (thank goodness) but I did run into a few interesting concepts and some extremely lengthy lists of things people were thankful for. The final two items included in one list of 50 gifts were:

- 49—The light dusting of snow we had this morning.
- 50—The prospect of more snow this week end.

I had to think carefully about those two. They made me realize that there is a true beauty in winter—the sun sparking on the surface of the snowdrifts—the memories from years ago of etching images on the hoar-frost coating the inside of my bedroom window—the brilliant sun-dogs herding the sun along the southern horizon—the joys of Christmas—the many opportunities to enrich life through music, theatre, the arts and learning opportunities at Seniors Education Centers and the host of special social events that come with the season.

And here’s one more thing to be thankful for! I’m going to stop now. This will provide you with time to sit back and compile your own list of blessings. Enjoy!

-T. Quinn



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Trevor Quinn, Shirley Lomheim

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All editorial matter published in *Gray Matters* represents the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the publication’s editorial board or the S.S.M. Statements and opinions expressed do not represent the official policy of S.S.M. unless so stated.

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Articles for consideration for publication are welcomed. Reports of past, present and future activities and programs associated with member organizations are also invited. Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month preceding publication.

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**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING**



*From the Board & Staff of the
Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism*

**Saskatchewan Seniors
Mechanism**



is an umbrella organization that brings together groups of older adults who offer their wealth of experience, knowledge and time to work together in the interest of seniors in Saskatchewan. From a wide range of backgrounds, these groups work selflessly to better the life of older adults, whether advocating about issues of interest to seniors, providing specific types of programming, or sharing information to benefit seniors in our province.

Donations to SSM to support our seniors programs are gratefully accepted. Charitable receipts will be issued for gifts of \$15.00 or more.

Organizations represented on the SSM Board are as follows:

Seniors Working Together

- Saskatchewan Retirees Association
- Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association
- Saskatchewan Seniors Education Corp.
- Saskatoon Council on Aging
- Fédération des Aînés Fransaskois
- Senior Power
- Regina Senior Citizens Centre Inc.
- Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan
- Federal Superannuates National Assoc.
- Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated
- Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees
- SaskTel Pioneers Chapter 59

SENIORS HOTLINE 1 – 888 – 823 – 2211
OR CHECK OUR WEBSITE
www.skseniorsmechanism.ca

Seniors' Chat

Government Services



Hon. Graham Addley

As Minister Responsible for Seniors, I would like to update you on several government services that may be of particular interest to you.

Flu shots – Now that fall has arrived, flu season is fast approaching. Although the flu can be a serious illness, your chances of catching it can be reduced significantly by

getting a flu shot. With this in mind, I would like to advise you that flu immunization is available free of charge to people 65 years of age and older. Starting Monday, October 15th, public health offices in all health regions will hold flu clinics. Check with your public health nurse or physician about getting this immunization. Last year, 93,000 Saskatchewan seniors (63% of people aged 65 and older) received this shot.

HealthLine – The Government of Saskatchewan recently marked the fourth anniversary of HealthLine, our toll-free health information telephone line. Registered nurses staff this service and can provide you with immediate, professional health advice or information – 24 hours a day, seven days a week – at **1-877-800-0002**. Since HealthLine's inception in 2003, RNs have responded to more than 440,000 inquiries on a variety of topics. In 2006, we expanded this service to the Internet. HealthLine Online – **www.healthlineonline.ca** – is a web-based complementary service providing you with medically approved answers to basic health questions.

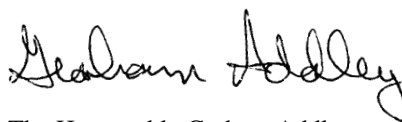


Government of
Saskatchewan

A Health Profile of Saskatchewan Seniors is the first report of its kind in Saskatchewan. It provides the latest available information about the health of seniors in Saskatchewan. The report provides statistical information for government and health regions to use in planning and setting priorities within the health care system. At the same time, the publication will be of interest to anyone wanting to learn more about the health of Saskatchewan seniors, including seniors, health regions, seniors' organizations and clubs, educators, researchers and planners. For a copy of the report, visit the Saskatchewan Health website at **www.health.gov.sk.ca**, and click on "publications" and "seniors."

This year **Seniors' Week** is Oct 1st - Oct 7th. In Saskatchewan, Seniors' Week offers us an opportunity to celebrate seniors by recognizing the many contributions that seniors make every day to the quality of life we all enjoy in our province. Our government is committed to providing the best programs possible, and will continue to consult with you to strengthen services for older people in our province. For example, the **Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan** was developed from various consultations with seniors and provides Saskatchewan residents 65 years and older prescriptions covered under the Saskatchewan Formulary for no more than \$15.

If you have any ideas or concerns about issues relating to seniors, please feel free to write to me at Room 345, Legislative Building, Regina, S4S 0B3, e-mail me at ministerhl@health.gov.sk.ca, or phone my office at (306) 787-4983. Your comments are always welcome, and I look forward to hearing from you.



The Honourable Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
and Minister Responsible for Seniors

PRECIOUS MEMORIES OF PRAIRIE WAR HEROES



The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism was delighted to write a book honouring Saskatchewan and Alberta WWII Veterans. It is our desire that these stories be handed down to the next generation as a legacy to freedom won. While this book is serious in nature, we have tried as well to incorporate a humorous, or light-hearted, side to better portray real-life situations encountered by those who served overseas.

We are excited to offer 'Precious Memories of Prairie War Heroes' to the public for \$21.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping & handling. If you wish to order by mail, please send your cheque to:

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
112-2001 Cornwall Street
Regina, SK S4P 3X9

Or in the very near future you will be able to order it through our website:
www.skseniormechanism.ca



Caregiver Information Centre Forum Oct. 24, 2007



SASKATOON
COUNCIL
ON AGING INC

Where: McClure Place
When: October 24, 2007
Cost: \$15.00 (includes lunch)

A forum to connect unpaid caregivers with other caregivers to share common problems and concerns will be held.

For further information call:
Caregiver Information Centre (*located at the Council's office*) 652-4411.
or the Council at 652-2255.

CRYPTO CORNER

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(solution on page 17)

SASKATCHEWAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION INC.

NEWSLETTER

Please send all your news and comments about the newsletter to:

Fern Haight, Box 393, Hanley, SK.

Fax: 544-2757, Email: fern.h@sasktel.net

Presidents Message

Hello Seniors of Saskatchewan

Hope your summer went well and that you had a little break from the daily routine of your lives.

Fall is here now and with it, all the beautiful colors. Really a picturesque time of the year. Harvesting is in full swing. Everyone is busy, busy, busy. That's the way the senior centers across the province will soon be. By the time you receive this newsletter, all the special activities for Senior Week (first week in Oct.) will have been enjoyed, as well as all the other fall activities. Each club will be working on deciding and organizing the next activities. This is good because when you're busy you are happier and healthier, and statistics tell us that this is what promotes longevity.

We had another good convention in Shaunavon this year. Our SSAI correspondent, Len Fallows has submitted a review of the convention for this mail out. I might add that Len has had hip revision surgery and is recovering at the present time. We all wish Len a speedy recovery.

We are still in need of representation from Regions J, K, N, and O. It would be so advantageous if someone would help us out in these areas. Please phone me if you could lend a helping hand. 1-306-544-2737. We need you badly.

Best wishes to everyone and may you all have a great year ahead filled with fun, laughter and good health.

Respectfully submitted,
Fern Haight

Len Fallows' Report 1st Vice President

Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. 67th Annual Convention

SSAI held its 67th Annual Convention on June 6 and 7th in Shaunavon, a small town in the south west corner of the Province. It was maybe a small town but its hospitality was huge, thanks mainly to the work of Lawrence Pommier, the president of the local Pioneer Senior Citizens Center.

Prior to the convention an afternoon was spent on an orientation workshop for all directors and coordinators acquainting them with the origin, history, purpose and work of the Association and their role within this body.

This was followed the next day by preparation of the Catholic Church hall in readiness for the convention and by registration of delegates. There was time however for some of the delegates to spend an afternoon at Eastend with T. Rex, which was very enjoyable.

Convention got underway promptly at 9:00 a.m. on the 6th June with the chairman Lawrence Pommier welcoming all delegates and visitors to Shaunavon and hoping that they would enjoy their stay. This was followed by greetings from the Mayor, Sharon Dickie and representatives from the RCMP, Elks, and the Royal Canadian Legion. Letters were read from Art Field, President of NPSCF who was unable to attend and from the local MLA, D. Elhart, who had a prior commitment.

Fern Haight, the president of SSAI, then welcomed everyone present to the convention. She reminded us that SSAI is a forum for all Saskatchewan seniors. It offers opportunities for seniors to carry out programs and activities involving fun, socialization and friendship in a non-racial,

non-sectarian atmosphere within their communities. Convention is the vehicle used by SSAI to bring together delegates from over 160 senior centers all across the Province to discuss and debate the concerns of seniors by means of resolutions. These concerns are then conveyed to the appropriate levels of Government for consideration.

This was followed by a formal acceptance of the convention agenda.

Reports from the minutes of the 2006 convention were accepted, as was the treasurer's report for the financial year just passed. This was followed by reports from both vice presidents and by the president's report.

After a short break for coffee we were all introduced to Beverley MacLeod, Executive Director, Sask. Seniors Mechanism. She spoke on the necessity of all seniors groups working together and sharing information when making requests to governments. She also urged us to heed the words of the Minister for Seniors, Graham Addley who advises seniors to prioritize what is important to seniors, do your research and be prepared to offer solutions and not just your concerns. Will we listen?

Joy Bateman, Community Liaison Officer, Program Services, Canada reported on the New Horizons program giving some details on the current seniors grants and the 2007 funding applications. New capital grant application details will be available in the fall of 2007 regarding seniors, community buildings and equipment which will be a welcome addition to the present New Horizons program. This presentation by Joy was extremely informative and she made every effort to answer all the questions fired at her and she is available to assist with the preparation of applications.

After lunch Premier Lorne Calvert arrived to talk to us. He had traveled by road, as his plane was unable to land at Shaunavon due to bad weather. We were only able to offer him coffee as he had already eaten lunch at a Dairy Queen. He brought greetings from Princess Anne, whom he had left in order to attend this convention. The Premier gave us a somewhat down home presentation focusing on the economy of the Province, adding some

humor to the moment when in his own words he said "never accuse the government of having common sense". The Premier spoke about the seniors Gold Card Plan and the capping of prescription drug charges. We were also reminded that he would be a senior on December 24th and that we should send him a membership card soon after that date. He was able to answer a few of our questions before leaving us for affairs of government. All the invited guest speakers were thanked and presented with small gifts on behalf of SSAI.

At the banquet Fern Haight and the Mayor of Shaunavon were able to do an excellent job in covering for the absent guest, the Hon. Dr. Gordon Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan, who was unable to attend as planned.

The next day the guest speaker was Chad Nilson an elder abuse researcher from Prince Albert who spoke to us about the increasing incidences of elder abuse amongst seniors, families and communities. His figures showed that nearly 13% of seniors are coming forward with details of this particular problem. This was indeed an eye opening discussion for all of us.

During both days of the convention, the 131 delegates present had considered and debated some 29 resolutions. Resolutions were brought forward dealing with problems ranging from home care, taxes and identity theft. Difficulties with seniors not being able to cope with the rising costs of maintaining, heating and lighting their centers – difficulties experienced by seniors being saddled with increasing municipal and school taxes – the ever present difficulty with seniors being admitted to long term care homes far away from their families and friends. Concerns with food and drug labeling, future supplies of good clean water, poverty and the well being of seniors were all among the issues brought forward and debated. The seniors who attended this convention did all this while still maintaining pride and gratitude in being able to live in freedom and safety in this great Province and country we call Canada.

Those resolutions dealing with matters pertaining to the Provincial Government will be assembled into a brief and presented to the

appropriate Ministers. Those resolutions pertaining to matters of a Federal nature will be brought forward at the next convention of the National Pensioners and Seniors Citizens Federation, which will be held in Saskatoon during the month of October.

Elections were then held for the position of President and first and second vice presidents. Elected to the position of President was Fern Haight by acclamation with a sad note that she was only going to be doing this for one more year. An election for 1st V/P was held with Len Fallows being elected. Bob Walker was named 2nd V/P by acclamation. Isabel Fowler agreed to be the Treasurer and Betsy Redstone agreed to carry on with the job of Secretary. Thanks to all who allowed their name to stand.

In closing the convention, chair, Fern Haight once again gave thanks to the town of Shaunavon and in particular to Lawrence and his willing helpers. They did indeed make this a memorable convention.

Rosetown Seniors Visit Rare Sites

You have to see it to believe it! July 14th was a very hot day when 42 seniors set out on a chartered bus trip, arranged by Edna Foster, retired travel agent. They were anxious to see the **crooked bush**. They had heard about it and tried to visualize it, but it was impossible. You have to see it to believe it!

The day started out with a visit to the Homestead Museum near Biggar, Sask. The proprietor, Roger Martin, while serving drinks and cookies, told us how he had accumulated thousands of pieces of memorabilia. His general store and the furnished house, including his wondrous doll collection, hold enough artifacts to set three museums. The church, school and other buildings brought back many fond memories.

Any seniors' tour to be complete must include food, so we enjoyed a delicious smorg lunch in North Battleford before going to visit the Allen Sapp Gallery.

Then came that wonder of wonders, the crooked bush, east and north of the Battlefords. This is a grove of aspen trees, about the size of a city block, where every tree trunk is wildly twisted and contorted. There is not a straight tree trunk to be seen. It is an eerie place. It is said that peoples' pet dogs will not enter the area. No one knows why the trees grew in these wild shapes, but there are various stories told, including one that a UFO landed there many years ago and the passengers got out and peed on the ground. Who knows? Maybe that's right. Regardless of the cause, it is an awesome sight!

A group of Doukhabours immigrated to a site near the North Saskatchewan River in 1899. The Doukhabour house, about 436 square feet, was dug into the riverbank and for about five years it was home to about 40 people while they built their village nearby. Here we were able to visit the ruins of the dugout house, see the original walls, see laundry being done by hand at a nearby spring, view the area where archeological students have been at work. The women even had an opportunity (if that is the right word) to pull a plough as did the Doukhobour women of long ago. Doukhobour bread, using the old 1899 recipe and baked in the outdoor oven was available for sampling and for purchase.

Our last stop was in Waldheim where a friend of Edna's had a tasty cold supper laid out for us. This was a great finale for our wonderful day. Where will we go next year?



Rosetown ladies pulling the plow at the Doukabour Dugout

Hello from Biggar New Horizons

We held our annual meeting in May and the following officers for the year are:

- President: Geoff Cook
- Vice Pres: Don Suyryda
- 2nd Vice Pres: Don Loives
- Past Pres: Myrtle Althouse
- Secretary: Margaret Molberg
- Co-ordinator: Joanne Kral

We have a very busy organization. We raised enough cash to buy a new courtesy car. We had a busy bunch make elephant ears towards it. We have an air-conditioned hall. The building committee is busy with all other improvements.

We have Kaiser, Crib, Whist and Hearts during the week. We hold Bingo twice a week, and also have a pot luck once a month. We have conveners to organize the monthly calendar that is put out once a month by our co-ordinator. We have half and half once a month at 3 for \$1.00. We rent our hall quite often. We have a few Kaiser players that play everyday if the hall is available. We have bus trips. Allan Hoogaveen is one of our faithful bus drivers.

We will be holding the Region E fun day next year. Some went to Vanscoy and got some ideas. We have members that attend the Conventions. We are proud of our New Horizons – we don't know what we would do without it. We have over 200 members at this time. Come and visit us, you are always welcome and the coffee is on every day. We are closed on Saturday and Sunday and holidays.

We'll have a Bazaar in the fall.

Myrtle Althouse

“SHENANIGANS IN THE PARK”

ANOTHER MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR THE RIVERHURST PLUS 50 CLUB

On Saturday May 19/07, inclement weather necessitated last minute changes to the manner in which our event was presented. Still “Shenanigans in the Park,” a family evening of music, song and dance was a huge success.

The evening's entertainment began with a very enjoyable session of Country and Western music and song, capably handled by the Solberg's from Gouldtown. Thank you, Terrance and Marion.

Our main feature was an impersonator from Steinbach, MB, who was simply fabulous. His main character was “The King”, and he did Elvis proud. Others that were a part of his program included George Burns, Cher, Willie Nelson, Ray Charles, Johnny Cash, Elton John, Celine Dion, plus others. He did a wonderful job of them all and instantly became an audience idol.

Thank you very much Corny Rempel for a performance so professionally presented. We cannot forget our most capable Security contingent of Vera Hunter, Marilyn Bartusek, Marion Hackney and Jean Armstrong who did a fine job of protecting our Star performer and keeping the enthusiasm of the crowd at a high level. Thank you gals, you looked beautiful in your outfits and did a fabulous job.

To our critics, who think that if you have seen one Elvis impersonator, you've seen them all, you'd better see this “Elvis”! It will certainly change your thinking.

The final event of the evening was the wonderful and amazing dance music presented by the Kako's of Outlook. Although, there was only an Accordion and Base, the system developed the sound of a large orchestra. It was great. Thank you, Wilho and Audrey.

A special thank you to John Schmidt of Saskatoon for enduring the cold and rain to cook burgers. Also a special thank you to Jack McClendon for supplying deep fryer and cooking the chips. Our food crew was led by Ron Bartusek; Bar crew led by Millar Hackney; Tickets and money by Mary Jones and Ray Lambert, All other Plus 50 members and all the support workers from the area deserve a big thank you for all the effort that was put into this venture.

As a fundraiser, a 50-50 draw was conducted and netted a payout of \$140.00. This was won by Lorraine Hartell from Tugaske. Two door prizes were drawn for during the evening. The first, a set of 12 wine glasses, donated by Canadian Tire Stores of Moose Jaw, was won by John Mytopher of Riverhurst. The second draw was for a 1-½ hp air compressor donated by Home Building Supplies of Moose Jaw, and won by Elaine Mytopher of Riverhurst. Congratulations to Lorraine, John and Elaine.

Last, but not least, the hardy crowd that faced the elements to show their support; you're a must for the success of any endeavour.

On behalf of the Plus 50 Club a general “thank you to everyone.”

Grant Armstrong,
Chairman

**F
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Identity Theft

Identity Theft is the unauthorized use of personal information, such as your name, date of birth, address, credit card information, social insurance number and other personal identification numbers. This information can be used to have your mail redirected, open bank accounts, access current bank accounts and apply for credit cards in your name. If this happens, you could be left to deal with financial losses accumulated in your name.

There are many ways in which you can fight identity theft. Below are some recommended suggestions to help minimize your risk and guard you from becoming a victim:

- ◆ Never provide personal information on the telephone, by electronic mail, or to a voice mailbox, unless you initiated the contact and know who you are dealing with.
- ◆ Pay attention to your billing cycle. If credit card or utility bills fail to arrive, contact the companies to ensure that they have not been redirected without your knowledge or permission.
- ◆ Key in personal identification numbers privately by covering the keypad with your hand when you use debit purchase terminals, bank machines, or telephones.
- ◆ Be careful what you throw out. Shred or otherwise destroy personal financial information such as statements, credit card offers, receipts, insurance forms, etc.
- ◆ Choose difficult passwords; memorize them; don't write them down and leave them in your wallet.

If you discover you've been victimized, immediately report it to the police and take steps to undo the damage. Contact your financial institution, credit bureau, credit card issuers, telephone, cable, as well as utility companies and advise them that someone using your name could try to open new accounts.

*Submitted by Constable Jody Vail
Commercial Crime Unit, RCMP*

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A division of CBI Health

Comments from 1955....

"I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now."

"It is too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women are having to work to make ends meet."

"Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long before \$2000 will only buy a used one."



SSM RECOGNIZES SENIORS' ISSUES

In June 2006, the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism identified current issues of concern to seniors based on consultation with our membership. When member feedback was consolidated, common themes began to emerge, and the following list generated:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Health◆ Home Care◆ Housing◆ Income◆ Elder Abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Physical Activity◆ Life Long Learning◆ Social Inclusion◆ Employment◆ Transportation |
|---|---|

SSM recognized that all of these issues are interwoven and seniors' access to almost all of these is impacted by **economic and financial barriers**. Thus was borne the theme for our spring, 2007 conference 'Limited Income Restricts Seniors Access to Services'.

How has SSM contributed to the solutions to these economic barriers? First, we have attempted to identify where programs currently exist that offer financial assistance in areas of health, housing, and active living for seniors. We will continue to promote and share information about these programs. We have also identified gaps where social safety nets have yet to be created. We adopted resolutions which we have brought forward to our municipal, provincial and federal decision makers to raise their awareness of seniors concerns about these gaps. A big part of our contribution to the solution is, therefore, to identify what issues seniors want addressed, and then to communicate these to decision makers. Our efforts in this area are ongoing.

We have concluded, however, that we can be even more effective by focusing on one of the ten issues listed above. This will allow our organization to:

- ◆ thoroughly research this issue's current status in our province
- ◆ identify all the stakeholders
- ◆ communicate with these stakeholders
- ◆ do things like obtain research and program grants that will allow service delivery related this issue.

Based on this conclusion, we decided to circulate a survey this spring among seniors organizations to help us identify this topic.

After soliciting responses on the ten key issues listed above, we found the #1 concern was "Health". This, of course, includes many facets such as: availability of doctors/health care, wait times in doctor's offices, transportation to receive health care, availability of someone to accompany someone to the doctor, availability of space for level 3-4 patients in rural nursing homes, wait times for surgery, amongst other concerns. We are thankful to each one who contributed to our survey. The next step is to diligently research and work on contributing to solutions to these problems. This and the other 9 areas of concern will be discussed fully by the SSM Board and a consensus as to the best avenue to pursue will be determined.

Graham Addley, Minister Responsible for Seniors, wants to help seniors, but the provincial budget is limited. He will happily advocate on behalf of seniors, but has clearly communicated that he needs senior organizations to prioritize what they wish him to address.

The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism continues to act as a voice for seniors in Saskatchewan.

-Issues Committee

SENIORS WORKING TOGETHER

Coming Spring 2008

WHAT CAN I DO WHEN I RETIRE?

The Regina Senior Citizens Centre, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, wants to help up-and-coming, as well as current, retirees discover the many opportunities to stay busy in retirement.

A showcase that will highlight the many and varied things to do after individuals transition into retirement life will be held in Regina late in the spring of 2008. Moving from working full time to a time of leisure can be difficult for many people. They may feel they are forced to “reinvent” themselves, but they don’t know how.

Our showcase will offer many lifestyle choices for people to investigate. From hobbies, recreational pursuits, entrepreneurial potential, to physical activity, life-long learning, and social events, the options are endless. We simply need to put information about these choices in one place, and then invite everyone to explore how to become involved in what interests them.

This tradeshow is still in its formative stages, but as more details become available, we will share them with you in the next edition of Gray Matters.

GALA LUNCHEON 2007

The 2007 Gala Luncheon, the launch event for Seniors Week in Regina, was held at the Regina Inn on Monday, October 1, 2007. The purpose of our annual luncheon is to celebrate seniors and the contributions they have made to society. Three community partners hosted our event: the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, the Rotary Club of Regina, and the Kiwanis Club. This year’s theme was “Volunteering in Community”, with the special guest speaker being the Rotary District Governor, June Arbon-Cathcart. Today’s seniors consistently volunteer selflessly. They make a significant contribution to maintain vibrant communities. However, things are changing. Will seniors of the future make the same contributions? Will they have the same feeling of community spirit? How do we make this happen?

Our thanks to the many sponsors of this event, including: SaskTel, Lifeline Saskatchewan, Medichair, Regina Renaissance Retirement Residence, Federal Superannuated National Association, Seniors Education Centre, SaskTel Pioneers, Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan, Osteoporosis Canada, and many others. Without their support we could not celebrate seniors in this manner. Thank to the seniors who participated. We appreciate you and everything you have done for us.

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DO YOU AGREE??

Hidden Wedges

Samuel T. Whitman wrote a story called 'Hidden Wedges'.



Whitman wrote, "The ice storm that winter was not generally distinctive. Some wires came down and there was a sudden jump of accidents on the highway. Normally, the big walnut tree could have easily borne the weight that fell on its spreading limbs. It was the large iron wedge in its heart that caused the damage."

The story of the iron wedge began years ago when the white-haired farmer (who now owned the property on which the tree stood) was a lad on his father's homestead. The sawmill had been recently moved from the valley and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered around. On this particular day the lad found a fallen wedge, wide, flat and heavy, a foot or so long and splayed from mighty pounding. The wedge was used to help fall a tree. It is inserted into a cut made by a saw and then hit with a sledge hammer to widen the cut. Because the young boy was late for supper, he laid the wedge between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after supper.

Truly he meant to, but he never did. The wedge was between the limbs when he attained manhood. It was there now firmly gripped when he married and took over his father's farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew had lunch under the tree. Grown in and healed over now, the wedge was in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

In the chill of that wintry night, one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the rest of the tree, that the whole tree came down.

The next morning the farmer went out to mourn the loss. Then he saw it, laying in the splintered ruins. "The wedge", he muttered.

I wonder how many of us have hidden wedges in our hearts. Things that we failed to resolve or look after.

Do these wedges prevent us from reaching our full growth or potential? Do they weaken us in some way or another? Are there things we have to resolve with our children or our spouses? I believe as we age, that we can sometimes brush these things aside and not resolve them hoping that somehow they will resolve themselves.

At this time of year, we celebrate Thanksgiving, a time when we need to be thankful for what we have and I feel the most important thing to me is relationships. I hope that none of us are carrying any hidden wedges deep in our hearts that prevent us from enjoying the people around us and the relationships that we have with them.

The wedge fell the mighty walnut tree—the wedges in our hearts will bring us down too.

- John Knight

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Seniors Education Centre 6th Gerontology Institute

Nov 15, 2007
Ramada Hotel
1818 Victoria Ave
Regina, SK

Theme: **Enhancing Quality Care for Seniors**

Registration fee: \$100.00
*65+ & SUG Members \$50.00

Registration deadline: Oct 31, 2007
(Late fee of \$25.00 applies to all registrations received after Oct 31, 2007)

*Mastering the art of communication is a central theme of the 2007 Gerontology Institute which will include **Rachelle Lamb**, Non-violent Communication Trainer and Coach, as resource person. A panel presentation 'Working together to enhance and integrate services for seniors' will be moderated by **Judy Junor**. There will also be a number of smaller workshop sessions.*

YEAH BUT.....

It seems that of late, there is a lack of common courtesy in the world. I spend each morning going for long walks and as I do, I find that cars do not seem to like pedestrians in the crosswalks. Other people walking don't say 'good morning' or 'hello'. Customers or clerks in stores seem to be less than helpful or courteous.

What would happen if we all took the time to be a little more courteous in our lives as we react with other people.

The 'Yeah But' to this scenario is:

- ♦ probably I don't have time to say 'Thank you',
- ♦ I am in a hurry to get to work, I don't have time to stop for pedestrians.

'Yeah But' wouldn't it be nice to spend a little time helping or being courteous to others?

- John Knight

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2008 - SSFA 55 PLUS GAMES CELEBRATE 10th ANNIVERSARY!

The “first-ever” Saskatchewan Senior Games (55Plus) were held in the city of Melville on July 11, 12 and 13 of 1988. Historical reports and evaluations of provincial and local organizers, volunteers, participants and the general public, proved the games to be a success in every respect. Since the inception of the games in 1988, the games have grown exponentially both in terms of events, participants and responsibility of organizing an event of this magnitude.

The Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association (SSFA) envisioned and pursued the idea and concept of province-wide games in which adults 55 years of age and over might participate. We are thankful to the dedication and personal effort of the SSFA Board led by the late Marjorie Willson of Moosomin who was President at the time. Marjorie remained active in SSFA until the time of her death in February, 2003.

Here we are 20 years later - we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the games. The games will be held in Zone 4 in Yorkton, July 8 to 10, 2008 rather than the original site of Melville.

The 1988 Chairperson of the Host Committee was Rev. Harry Miller, a resident of Melville. He was an avid athlete with a passion for track and field, participating in Canada as well the United States. Harry was an inspiration and provided encouragement for many to participate in the games. He remained active in SSFA until his death in February 2007. He was 88 years old.

Anita Bella was a member of the Host Committee as the Public Relations coordinator along with Bernie Dielschneider. Anita still remains active in SSFA and the community of

Melville. She is the Zone 4 President and continues to oversee the zone games. Referring to the 1988 games, she states, “The first-ever SSFA Provincial Games were exciting! Those of us on the Games Committees soon realized that the people having the most fun were the participants! They danced after breakfast! At 7 o’clock in the morning, they were raring to go. I promised myself that next time around I would participate!”

The planning and organizing of the 2008 games and the celebration of the 10th anniversary is underway. The Yorkton Host Committee is looking for community support, volunteers and participants to make the event a success.

The following events will be offered: carpet bowling, contract bridge, cribbage darts, 5 pin bowling, floor shuffleboard, golf, horseshoes, Kaiser, whist, poetry & short story writing, scrabble, band shuffleboard, slo-pitch, snooker, swimming, tennis, track & field, duplicate bridge, 8 ball, badminton and much more. Ice curling will be held in March, 2008 in Watrous.

The games are more than just an Athletic competition for older adults. They are the celebration of the spiritual, mental and physical well-being among Canadians 55 years and older. Everyone is encouraged to be part of this “Olympic style” celebration. Plan to take the opportunity to stay active and have fun at the same time.

The Canada Senior Games will be held in Dieppe, New Brunswick from August 26 (registration day) to 31, 2008 (departure day). Participants must first qualify in the SSFA 55Plus games to compete at these games.

Submitted by Margaret Gailing

For more information regarding the SSFA games, you may contact the president of your zone as listed :

Zone 1 - Alex Pendrigh	442-4583	Zone 5 - Len Becker	484-2220
Zone 2 - Don Veitch	545-5131	Zone 6 - Sheldon Kraus	242-9452
Zone 3 - Keitha Friesen	672-3547	Zone 7 - Ollie Marciniuk	549-2179
Zone 4 - Anita Bella	728-5163	Zone 8 - Rose Marie Gallais	275-4516

More information may be obtained by accessing the websites, www.skseiorsmechanism.ca and www.canadaseniorgames.ca

You may also call the SSFA Provincial President at (306) 842-4807

Let's Build Better Bones Together!

Osteoporosis Canada is celebrating their **25th anniversary** this year with a new bone health campaign **Beat the Break 25**. The 25-week campaign encourages Canadians to take action to protect your bones. You can get the information you need to reduce your risk of fracture and osteoporosis by calling one of their toll-free information lines:

English 1-800-463-6842 or
French 1-800-977-1778 or
on their website www.osteoporosis.ca,

There are 2 chapters in Saskatchewan: Saskatoon and Regina. The Regina Chapter has Support Group Meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except for June, July, August & December). For more information call 757-2663 (BONE), 414 B Victoria Avenue, or email:

osteoporosis.regina@sasktel.net

November is Osteoporosis month throughout Canada, and Bone China Teas are held as the main fundraisers. The Regina Chapter is hosting their **7th Annual Bone China Tea on Sunday, November 18 at the Conexus Art Centre**. Their Guest speaker is Dr. Diane Thériault, rheumatologist from the Dartmouth General Hospital, and consultant with the Scientific Advisory Council, Osteoporosis Canada. Tickets can be purchased through the Regina Chapter or one of their volunteers.

Osteoporosis is often called the "silent thief" because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Osteoporosis is sometimes confused with osteoarthritis, because the names are similar. Osteoporosis is a bone disease; osteoarthritis is a disease of the joints and surrounding tissue.

Submitted by Alice Gaveronski

Become a member of Osteoporosis Canada, and you will receive:

- *An annual subscription to Osteoblast, the organization's national donor/member newsletter. Osteoblast features the latest in medical news and treatments, exercise and nutrition tips and inspirational stories of those overcoming the challenges of osteoporosis.*
- *Access to up-to-date information on osteoporosis.*
- *Notice of educational and support activities in your community.*
- *Discounts on Osteoporosis Canada's materials and merchandise.*
- *The important privilege of voting at the national, Chapter and Division annual general meetings as well as the right to hold office within the organization.*

The cost for a one-year membership is \$25 and \$45 for a two-year membership. This membership will ensure that you stay up to date with osteoporosis information and research advancements as well as give you the opportunity to support a national organization that makes a difference in the lives of individuals with this debilitating disease.

Contact: Regina Chapter at 757-2663 (BONE) or osteoporosis.regina@sasktel.net

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- *Are managing a medical condition*
- *Are considering a move to assisted living*

If you or a loved one fall into one or more of these categories then it's important to feel safe at home and have access to immediate help.

In emergencies, every second counts and studies show that delays in receiving medical care can jeopardize a healthy recovery.

The service is easy to use:

Lifeline is a medical alarm designed to reduce the risk of living alone. It allows you to summon help any time of day or night – even if you can't speak. Simply press the Lifeline button that you wear (on your wrist or as a pendant) to activate the Lifeline Home Unit. The Home Unit then dials the Lifeline Response Centre (a toll free number) and establishes two-way communication. Within seconds one of our professionally-certified Response Associates quickly assesses your situation. They will contact a neighbour, loved one or emergency services to ensure you receive help – quickly.

Signing up for Lifeline is easy...

- ◆ The Lifeline service is accessible in every community across the province.
- ◆ Please note that Veterans Affairs Canada **may** be able to cover the cost of the service (contact Veterans Affairs directly—1-866-522-2122).
- ◆ We offer complementary, in-home visits if you are interested in seeing how the service works.

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CENTURY CLUB HOUR



Several members and friends of the Century Club gathered at the Renaissance Retirement Residence in downtown Regina on Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 5, for a special "Century Club Hour". Entertainment was provided by Alvin Kelln singing, playing the accordion and guitar (but not at the same time) and provoking many a smile with his huge variety of funny stories. These events, which take place in the pleasant surroundings of the Residence's recreation space, are scheduled for 3 P.M. to 4 P.M. on the first Wednesday of each month. They provide a warm atmosphere for visiting, being entertained, learning about opportunities for active living and enjoying tea or coffee and goodies. The Century Club extends a sincere "Thank You" to Chartwell Select and the staff at the Renaissance Retirement Residence for initiating this special program. For more information about upcoming events, call Tracy Thompson, the Residence's Community Relations Coordinator, at 525 8686 or contact S.S.M.. (see page 2 for contact info)

-T. Quinn

Comments mad in the year 1955...

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Century Club Corner

SYLVIA BIRNIE – PIONEER POET



Sylvia Birnie, a leading figure of the Saskatchewan Century Club, passed away recently in Saskatoon at the age of 102 -- though not before completing her biography, *Poet of the Pioneers*. What follows here is a condensation of her book, which is available from the Seniors Mechanism office, or Willow River Press (32 Porteous Cres. Saskatoon, S7J 2S8).

A lifelong teacher, Sylvia became a writer in her senior years, and was celebrated as the author of four books. As a child, she dreamed of being a writer – but she was 95 when she published her first book, *Dreams of a Lifetime*. How did Sylvia Birnie retain this astonishing creativity in her nineties? She explains in a poem, 'Wrinkles'.

I wish I didn't have to get wrinkles
for I don't feel wrinkled inside;
My heart skips a beat like it used to
when I walk by the river's side
and feel and see all about me
the awakening fragrance of spring,
the good black earth gently teeming
with life – what a wonderful thing!

Sylvia was probably the last of the "Territorians" – persons born in Saskatchewan when it was still the North West Territories. What's more,

she was born in a proverbial sod hut out on the open prairie. She wrote, "I was the eldest of nine children born to Edward and Ethel Surring, who emigrated from Summit, South Dakota, at the turn of the 20th century. Dad came first in 1901 -- drawn by the promise of free homestead land." (It cost \$10 to register a quarter-section claim.)

Dropped off the train at Weyburn, Ed Surring joined the troop of land-seekers looking for a perfect farm-site in the sea of grass spread before them. Sylvia described his odyssey in her family history *The Surrings* (2003): "Some were on horseback, others rode in buckboards, and some walked. Far as the eye could see, the prairie grass rippled in the wind...A green sea of promise met the eyes of the homestead seekers – a confusing green sea of promise, for one quarter section looked the same as any other. There were no trees, no hills, no valleys, no streams.

"At last, far ahead, an object began taking shape. An object or a mirage, he thought, for he had read that the prairie could create optical illusions. It was a tree, a lone willow, the only tree to be seen on this vast sea of waving grass. The willow had set its roots in the cool mud at the edge of a slough."

Ed Surring stood on a quarter-section nine miles southwest of Weyburn, and he immediately named it Lone Willow Farm. That first year, Ed ploughed one corner of the quarter-section for the sod blocks to build the required shack on his homestead. Poplar poles supported the soddy's roof. He then went back to the States and married Ethel.

Two years later, Sylvia was born on March 10, 1905, and delivered by Weyburn's legendary frontier doctor, Dr. Eaglesham. There was no telephone. Ed Surring had to ride a horse to

Weyburn to fetch him, but the doctor arrived in time to deliver Sylvia.

The Surring farm prospered, and soon other children followed. "The winter of 1907 was severe, with cold winds and drifting snow. My exhausted mother gave birth to a third child, Beatrice, on June 3, 1907. Dad decided it was time to build a real house. It would seem like a mansion after the sod shanty: two storeys with a concrete foundation and cellar, five rooms and a veranda to provide a cool place to sit when the days were hot. Perhaps the most memorable feature was light. A picture window facing east topped with a pane of red glass brought rainbow hues into the parlour, and created the illusion of a veritable fairyland."

Sylvia said she divided the 20th century into two periods. "I've lived in two ages -- the Do It Yourself Age, and the Push Button Age. I've also been asked which was better, and there is no easy answer. What do I miss about the old days? Families that sat around the table for their meals. Mothers that worked at home. Children today are so lost. Most of them are left alone from 3.30 to 7.30. They get into mischief."

Sylvia grew up on Lone Willow Farm with a host of siblings. Ed Surring's grain wagon was a common sight on the Weyburn trail (there were few roads yet), hauling loads of Red Fife to the elevator with several children buried to

their necks in wheat. He never went anywhere without a diaper bag. He often carried a string of safety pins dangling from the bib of his overalls, which led to teasing from the elevator agent.

"Two miles south was a little white schoolhouse known as Weyburn Plains School. Mother insisted on keeping me at home until I was seven, but soon there were four of us taking a buggy to school, and I learned to drive a horse at the age of nine." At least until 'Old Doc' crashed into a gate post and injured three of the children."

When war broke out in 1914, the children became farm workers, for all the young men had joined the services. Ed had to work alone. During the day he cut the crop, and after school and in the evening, the four oldest children went with him to the fields to stook grain. "Long stockings with the feet cut off were pulled from the wrist to the shoulder of each small arm and pinned there. This was protection from the mosquitoes and from scratches which the straw and the stubble were bound to inflict. The thumbs were left free to pick up the bundles by the binder twine which bound them, and set them upright. Pieces of cloth were tied around the neck to ward off the mosquitoes, which were many and vicious."

(to be continued in the Winter 2008 Edition)

- Ken Mitchell

SASKATCHEWAN CENTURY CLUB



The Century Club is

- ◆ *A province wide association of Seniors who have reached the age of 90 years and beyond*
- ◆ *And are determined to live in as full and active a style as possible to the age of 100 and beyond*
- ◆ *Pursuing physical activity, mental agility, social and spiritual creativity*
- ◆ *There is no membership fee*

You may join the Century Club by calling :

- ◆ Toll free 1-888-823-2211 or 359-9956 (Regina)
- ◆ or send a note to Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
112-2001 Cornwall Street, Regina, SK S4P 3X9.

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