



COMING of AGE

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

CHUM loves schooldays

By Terry Harley

When Frank Pascoe was a kid, he didn't look forward to the start of school in the fall. Now, in his seventies, he could hardly wait to get into the classroom in September.

Last winter Mr. Pascoe spent Monday afternoons at Princess Alexandra Community School on Saskatoon's west side helping Grades 1 and 2 children with reading and mathematics. It was one of the highlights of his week. His wife says he would sit on the edge of his chair an hour before he was due at the school, wondering if it was too early to leave.

He is a CHUM, one of the SaskTel Pioneers who have adopted Princess Alex as a project. The Pioneers, current and retired employees of SaskTel and their spouses or partners, devote thousands of hours to community work. They're part of Telephone Pioneers of America, thought to be the world's largest industry-related volunteer organization.



Frank Pascoe, CHUM of Princess Alexandra students, with some of their gifts to him.

In contrast, Princess Alex has fewer than 200 students, approximately 90 per cent of whom are of Aboriginal or Metis

origin. About half have telephones at home, and only one family has a computer -- a far cry from the world of the modern telecommunications industry.

As befits people in that industry, part of the CHUMS project involves current SaskTel employees working with students through electronic mail. They're known as Off-Site CHUMS. Mr. Pascoe prefers to be an On-Site CHUM, working with the students in person.

He sees one or two at a time, working on basic concepts such as counting by tens -- that it works whether you start with 10, or 2, or 7. He says that once the students understand that, they're off and away, and nothing can stop them.

He's impressed with his students' high level of artistic talent. A pow-wow drum they made for him is kept in the family china cabinet with other prized possessions, and he proudly shows off a book of Easter egg thank-you letters from his students.

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Saskatoon's friend,
Sid Buckwold

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under way in city

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Dealing with the
death of a pet

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This garden angel, made by Mary Helen Richards, watches over her Saskatoon garden.

CHUM... *From Page 1*

Mr. Pascoe worked at Sask-Tel for more than 36 years and has been a Pioneer for about 25 years. The CHUMS project isn't his first experience of working with young people. He's been involved with Scouts for most of his life and is part of another Pioneer project -- building Buddy Bikes for children unable to ride on their own, such as the visually impaired.

Mr. Pascoe and his friends have built 21 Buddy Bikes, welding together an adult bike and a youngster's bike horizontally by metal bars so two people can ride side by side, with the adult acting as eyes for the child.

He is back at Princess Alex this fall. He's a modest man, happier talking about his students and his fellow Pioneers than about himself, but clearly he's making a difference for the better in the lives of many Saskatoon children.

Two kinds of nursing homes available here

By Mary Helen Richards

The term "nursing home" isn't too descriptive these days. Does it mean a home offering personal care or an institution giving professional nursing services for a lengthy period of time?

Both kinds of long-term care facilities look after people who are not acutely ill but no longer able to remain in their own homes. Each, however, is quite different.

Personal care homes are private homes which provide accommodation, meals and supervision in a residential, family-like atmosphere. They must meet high standards under the Personal Care Home Act, and are licensed and inspected by Saskatchewan Health. Because they are not subsidized, their costs are met solely by fees charged to residents. Admissions are arranged between the prospective resident and the operator.

Some 62 residences in Saskatoon and district are listed in the Personal Care Homes Directory.

Admissions to **special care homes** are made by referral from the patient's physician to

the Co-ordinated Assessment Unit which identifies the individual's unmet needs and matches them to suitable resources. Only people requiring Level III and Level IV care are now being admitted, although those at Level I and II who are already in residence may stay on.

Subsidy Paid

Saskatchewan Health pays a subsidy for each resident directly to the institution, using a complex formula based on the resident's level of care and financial status. These subsidies range from \$744 to \$963 per month.

Special care homes are non-profit organizations usually sponsored by a religious or community organization and managed by its board. They are licensed under the Housing and Special Care Homes Act. There are 18 within Saskatoon district.

From information supplied by Muriel Baxter of Sherbrooke Community Centre and from the Personal Care Homes Directory. Copies of the directory are available from the Co-ordinated Assessment Unit.

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Caring for tomorrow, too

From his apartment high above Spadina Crescent, Sid Buckwold looks out on the South Saskatchewan River and the Meewasin Trail rather than the downtown Saskatoon which his vision transformed.

Midtown Plaza where the CNR tracks once split the city, the Centennial Auditorium, the Idylwyld Freeway and bridge -- these are part of the house that Sid built in 11 years as Saskatoon's mayor.

Not so obvious, and rarely mentioned, is the achievement he values most: the primary sewage treatment plant that keeps raw sewage out of the river.

While he has been out of civic life since his appointment to the Senate in 1971, and out of the Senate since he turned 75 in 1991, and while he has slowed down some after minor surgery a few years ago, he still focuses in on major issues.

"I follow what's going on -- with some concern, by the way." What especially concerns him now is how younger Canadians will handle their old age, financially, when the time comes.

He refers to younger families "who in many cases are living reasonably well, and looking to the government to follow its normal practice of taking care of the aged. I can see down the way we'll have to be relying on self-sufficiency a lot more than we used to."

He is not sure people are preparing for such self-sufficiency, or are able to put away for a rainy day.

"You look ahead 25 years and you wonder how many families will be able to maintain their independence and their



health care. Health care as we knew it is likely to be much different. We've priced ourselves out of the universality we rightfully expect."

He casts no blame, but worries about what this will mean for families in the future -- and for Saskatoon, whose senior population is bound to grow.

"On the bright side, we've had a lot of good organization, planning and activities, and for the elderly who are able physically and mentally to participate, Saskatoon is a good place."

He enjoyed his time in business here, and his years on council (1953-57) and as mayor (1958-63 and 1967-71). His Senate service was satisfying, though he did not enjoy the bitter fight over the introduction of the GST, in which he had a pivotal role as chairman of the Senate banking committee.

"It's not the case that senators sit there half asleep," he says firmly. "If you're an active senator, you're really at the heart of things."

Now, retired a decade later than usual, he goes to his office every morning, plays golf three times a week, and does some travelling with his wife Clarice. He's identified some secrets to aging well: Good genes. Good health. Keeping busy and interested. Having a loving family. Being contented.

"The people who are contented are not always the most successful, but they live longer," says Sid Buckwold, who wasn't always contented with things in his city and successfully changed them -- and is also living longer.

*By
Jenni
Mortin*

Tuesday, Thursday are special for these seniors

By Jenni Martin

It's 10.45 Thursday morning, and the room at Mayfair United Church is jumping. Holiday Park Kitchen Band is pounding out a polka and it's dance and exercise time at the Live Smart Program for Older Adults.

Participants, volunteers, visitors all respond to the lively music wrought from piano, accordion, banjo, washboard, frying pan, butter churn and other homely instruments. This is fun!

Across the city in Lutheran Sunset Home, on an October Tuesday, participants in the TEMT Program for Seniors -- Travel, Eat, Meet and Talk -- are peppering Saskatoon District Health Board candidate Susan Wagner with questions.

They like her responses to their concerns. They especially like it that a candidate has come to meet them, and speak favorably of that after she leaves.

These programs are pilot projects initiated and developed by the Saskatoon Council on Aging, in co-operation with six other agencies and many volunteers, to break down barriers that contribute to the social isolation of seniors. Both offer participants opportunities to socialize, learn about nutrition and health, share a good meal -- and have fun.

TEMT began first, on June 6, with the help of funds from the Canadian Association on Gerontology, which received funding from Health Canada's Senior Independence Program. Evergreen Neighbourly Services provided some funds; the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan, is a sponsor.

Operating from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays, it is aimed at seniors in Nutana and Varsity View --



Sharing in popular Live Smart exercises are, from left, Helen McLellan, Mary Stratyckuk, Gwen Friest (in skirt), co-ordinator Lorna Marusiak, Alan Wright, volunteer Evangeline Fisher (back to camera).

although co-ordinator Andrea Guttormsson says the boundaries aren't rock-hard. It draws up to 15 participants, who pay half the \$10 cost per session.

Where I live there is no sociability," explains Marie Webb, one of eight participants at a recent session. She has lived alone since her husband died in 1989 and says she is "quite lonesome" in her high-rise suite. She attends the program for "the sociability in a Christian atmosphere."

Evan Battel, who also lives alone, says the program "puts in some time," adding that he likes the exercises and tries to do a bit of everything. He hopes the group will visit the Western Development Museum, where he once worked.

Fran Antonuk, one of three regular volunteers, greets people, distributes juice and helps with trays for the cafeteria-style lunch. An enthusiastic craftsperson, she has brought supplies so participants can make handy tee-holders which attach to a golfer's shoes. After lunch, they gather around a table and begin needlepointing the tee-holders. The atmosphere is convivial.

Alastair Seaton's eyesight rules out sewing, but he jokes with everyone, enjoying the company. Etta Barlow says relatives think she stays in too much since she was widowed. She can keep busy at home, she says, but "I enjoy people." Denver Crawford, who says the program "is supposed to keep you active," likes the exercises.

Exercise is built into both programs, to help seniors keep active. Live Smart's exercises are led by Loretta Messier, a Red Cross fun and fitness volunteer who also teaches a fitness and walking class at the YWCA. The 20 participants and 10 helpers were sitting listening to the Holiday Park Kitchen Band, with just a few dancers, when she arrived but she soon had most of them up moving.

Volunteer Ferne Robinson, a member of the program organizing committee, says some participants rarely spoke in early sessions. Those who came in groups stuck together. "Now, they all mix. They just seem to get a little more life every day."

"It's something to look forward to every Thursday," says one participant who withholds her name. "It's a place to go, and I enjoy it," says Alan Wright. "I've lost a lot of my friends."

One difference between this program, which began August 31, and TEMT is that many Live Smart participants are active outside their homes. Pauline Strelieff and her husband go dancing regularly, but still she finds these Thursdays "a fun time."

Elsie Dickson is a volunteer, her husband Ernie a participant. But he pitches in to arrange chairs and tables before the 10 a.m. sessions and stack them up at 1 p.m. "I think this program is just simply super," says Mrs. Dickson. "My husband and I both enjoy it immensely." They especially like the friendship and the exercise, she says, but corrects herself. "Actually, I like the whole thing. The lunches are lovely. The information they give us is wonderful."

Both programs lay emphasis on health and often have speakers from the Community Health Unit or

other community agencies to talk about nutrition and other health topics.

Many Live Smart participants have Mayfair United Church in common, and heard about the program through the church or by word of mouth. But it is open to adults 55 "or better" living in Caswell, Mayfair, Westmount, Mount Royal and Hudson Bay Park, says co-ordinator Lorna Marusiak, who interviewed each participant.

Some participants have brought friends. Most drive to the sessions with friends, though one comes by taxi and the program helps pay. Lunch is often build-your-own sandwiches but sometimes there is pizza or catered lunch. Funding comes from Sask Lotteries and the Council on Aging, plus some from SaskTel.

Many TEMT participants were referred by the

Co-ordinated Assessment Unit of the Saskatoon District Health Board. They taxi to the program in groups. Co-ordinator Andrea Guttormsson plans each session to include socializing and exercises, lunch and crafts or entertainment or other activities.

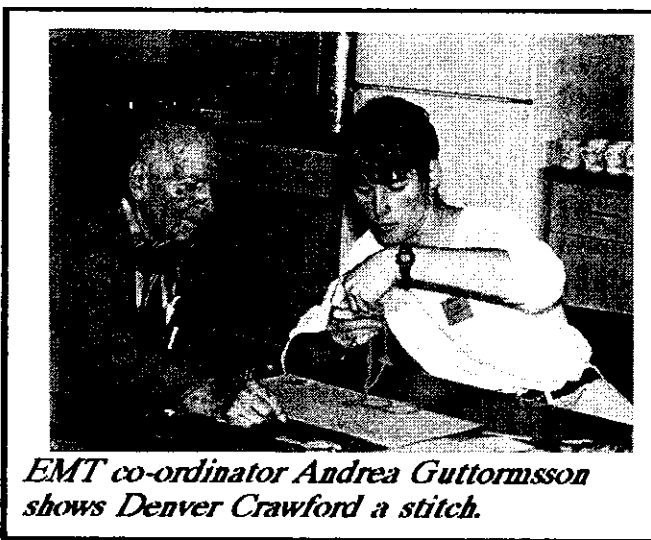
She interviewed each prospective participant and measured their social isolation. Most were moderately isolated, and

"a good three-quarters went to nothing." She encourages them to suggest activities, but finds "they are just happy to be around people."

Both programs end in mid-December, which worries everyone involved. Many participants volunteered that they would like to continue; co-ordinators and volunteers agree. Neither budget is large, but they run out in December.

"We would like to find a way to keep them going and extend the pattern in the community," says Wilma Mollard of the Council's isolation project committee, which is searching for funds.

"We want to continue because the people want to continue."



EMT co-ordinator Andrea Guttormsson shows Denver Crawford a stitch.

Saying goodbye to pet leaves scars

By Terry Harley

Like many seniors, Marj Tupper faced a special problem when she moved from her family home to an apartment -- what to do about her dog, Nahanni.

A much-loved family pet for 10 of her 15 years, the Scottish terrier had joined the Tupper's as a companion for Miss Tupper's mother when her father died. When Mrs. Tupper lived in a nursing home, Nahanni visited regularly, and after her mother died, Miss Tupper "never felt lonely" with Nahanni in the house. Their twice-daily walks were good for both of them.



Mrs. Tupper, Miss Tupper and Nahanni in 1987. Top, Nahanni's favorite pose.

But when Miss Tupper didn't want to keep up a house and yard, and moving to an apartment seemed logical, she wondered what to do about Nahanni. "It's no life for a dog in an apartment," she believes. The daily walks would be a problem and the old dog was used to a garden to play in.

Would anyone else be interested in taking Nahanni into their lives? "I tried every avenue to find her a home, but people would back off when they realized her condition." She was deaf as well as old.

Miss Tupper decided that the kindest thing would be to have Nahanni put to sleep. Since visits to the veterinarian's office were always stressful for the little dog, she found a doctor who came to the house, provided tranquilizers, and returned two hours later when Nahanni was still conscious, but quiet and relaxed, to give the final shot.

She thinks she'll bury the ashes at her Emma Lake cottage. "Nahanni loved to be there. She was kind of bumptious, always friendly and looking for petting. She liked at-



tention. When I think of all the joy she brought, especially to Mother, I know how lonely Mother would have been without her."

Miss Tupper has been an independent woman all her life. She worked for CN for 34 years and never married. Her life now is filled with activities from bowling to choir, but she still feels lonely without her dog's companionship.

She knows Nahanni's death was peaceful and free of stress, and that she did all she could for her beloved pet, but the pain remains, a year later.

"I miss her terribly. I'll never get over her. I'll never have another animal, it's too hard to say goodbye."

The new Saskatoon Pet Loss Support Group understands the problems losing a pet can pose and has set up a telephone counselling service to help.

Patricia Bell, an organizer, says, "Elderly women often have the most difficulty coping with the death of a pet because they are traditionally nurturers." She suggests channelling mourning into writing a story, making a scrapbook or planting a tree. The group has reading lists of helpful books.

The support group's number is 244-9906. Leave a message; a volunteer counsellor will call.

Rx for Healthier Lives for the Elderly

By Dr. Louis Horlick

There is a lingering belief in our society that the decline in physical and mental powers of the elderly and the high incidence of heart attack and stroke are the inevitable results of aging.

There is now good scientific evidence that should put this unfortunate belief to rest.

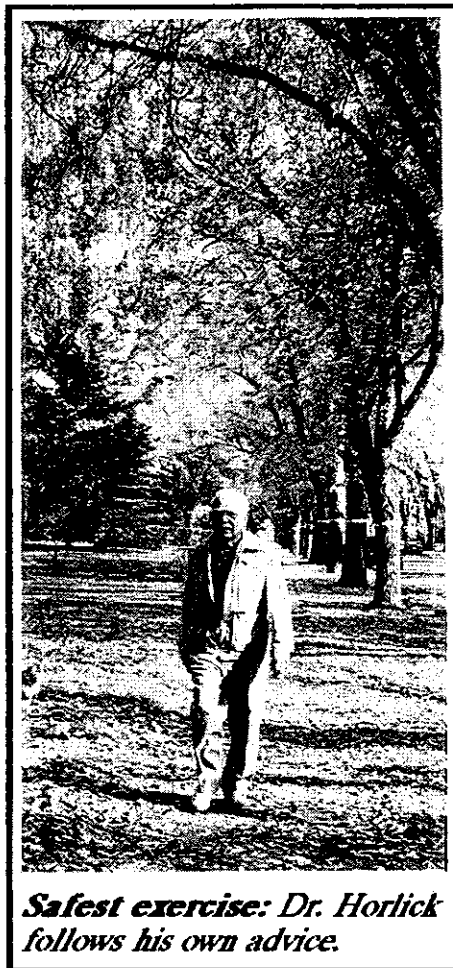
Many elderly individuals -- and the number is steadily increasing -- can look forward to active and healthy lives after 60. Current evidence demonstrates that the elimination or amelioration of risk factors such as faulty dietary habits, high blood fats, high blood pressure, smoking and inactivity can yield virtually the same beneficial effects as in younger individuals.

The way to a healthy and vigorous old age is no different from the way to a healthy and vigorous youth and middle age.

Obesity a Risk

Obesity is a significant risk factor in the elderly, mainly through its effect in promoting high blood fats, high blood pressure and diabetes. Therefore the maintenance of ideal weight is essential for good health in the elderly.

A heart-healthy diet which contains no more than 30 per



Safest exercise: Dr. Horlick follows his own advice.

cent of calories from fat, and in which the fat content has equal proportions of poly-unsaturated, mono-unsaturated and saturated fat, is essential. It should be low in cholesterol -- less than 300 milligrams per day. A Mediterranean-type diet, low in fat, meat and simple sugars and with lots of complex carbohydrate such as pasta, is probably the healthiest and most palatable for older persons.

Smoking cessation has been shown to be beneficial in the elderly and should always be advocated. It is never too late to stop.

Treatment of high systolic and/or diastolic blood pressure reduces heart and stroke morbidity and mortality in the elderly. Non-drug therapies such as weight reduction, restriction of salt and alcohol and increased physical activity should always be tried first.

Walking

Finally, I strongly advocate regular physical exercise for older persons. Walking is by far the safest and most effective way of increasing physical fitness. Walking in a mall or other covered-in facility is the solution during our long and cold winters. Research has shown that older individuals benefit just as much from regular exercise as do the young. It produces increased physical and psychological well-being and wards off disease.

Dr. Louis Horlick, MD, FRCP(C), Professor of Medicine Emeritus of the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine, holds the Saskatchewan Order of Merit and is an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Update

Over the years, *Coming of Age* has presented profiles of and stories about many interesting seniors. This issue revisits some of them.

Saskatchewan people everywhere were saddened by the sudden death September 4 of Saskatoon sculptor **Bill Epp**, just 65. He and his sculpted world were profiled in our Winter 1995 issue, when he said that leaving a legacy was "a real motivating factor" for him. His legacy of sculpture is spread around Saskatoon and far beyond: his Winnie-the-Pooh moved into Regent's Park Zoo in London, England this summer. The original Winnie is in Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park, and Emerson, Manitoba became home this summer to a bronze equestrian statue done for the RCMP Veterans Association.



A story last winter on senior runners featured **James and Veronica McIlwham**. While visiting their daughter and her family in Saskatoon this fall, they ran in the 60-plus category of the StarPhoenix Marathon. Mr. McIlwham came third among men in his age group for the full marathon (42.2 kilometres). Mrs. McIlwham was first in the women's for the half marathon (21.1 kilometres). The next day they walked about the zoo with granddaughter Terri, 3, for three hours!

Poet **Anne Szumigalski**, profiled in our Spring 1994 issue, did reading tours this fall in British Columbia and Wales, and in Winnipeg, where she read with noted Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. She has two new books out: her play *Z*, first performed in 1994 at Twenty-Fifth Street Theatre, and *Voice*, a collaboration with painter Marie-Elyse St. George. They don't illustrate each other's work, but there are connections.

The Fall 1994 issue told of the **kokkums** in the Older Women's Native Health Project of the Saskatoon Community Clinic. Their book, *Stories from Kokkum*, was published in September by the Community Clinic and READ Saskatoon, partly funded by a grant from the national literacy secretariat of Human Resources Development Canada. Unfortunately, funding for the Older Women's Native Health Project ran out September 30. Organizers seek other funding.

Review

Helping Yourself Help Others

A Book for Caregivers

By Rosalynn Carter & Susan K. Golant
[Public Library 649.8CAR]

Most seniors will to some degree be caregivers and eventually receivers of care. In Saskatchewan, institutional care is discouraged and home care supported, giving family and friends increased responsibilities. We should learn early what is entailed.

Caregiving can be lonely, stressful and frustrating and may affect health and independence, writes Rosalynn Carter, wife of former US president Jimmy Carter and director of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Human Development. She has done extensive research on informal caregiving and cared for parents and grandparents; she knows what she's talking about.

The institute found that 80 per cent of informal caregivers are women, and they provide most of the care without help. They may experience burnout, with headaches, insomnia and emotional stresses of anger and depression.

This book describes how caregivers should care for themselves. It discusses self-help groups and using community resources for support and respite. It describes how those who receive care feel as they become dependent, their worries about abandonment, losing control and living with their illness.

Caregivers should set up strategies to deal with the problems that arise. They must be active members of the health care team and knowledgeable about the loved one's disability. They need recognition and community support: increased services, provision of supplies, tax credits for their unpaid labor.

With its accounts of real people in real situations and practical solutions to problems that likely will affect us all sooner or later, this book is highly recommended.

Mary Helen Richards