



# COMING of AGE

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

*Each brings expertise*

## Council joins partners

Since the Saskatoon Council on Aging began in 1991, offering programs and services aimed at improving the quality of life and independence of seniors, it has worked with other groups and agencies when possible.

Today its many partnerships illustrate the links among those working here with older adults.

Such partnerships are the path of the future, says Monica Kohlhammer, Director of Rural Health and Development, Saskatoon District Health, which partners with the Council in the Isolation and Older Adults Project and by printing *Coming of Age* and *New Wrinkles*.

"We each bring some expertise. What we can't do individually, we can do collectively."

"The Saskatoon Council on Aging is now being recognized in the city as a very credible organization that has a great deal to offer older adults," says president Bill Bender.

Ms. Kohlhammer is discussing with the Council ways to

share its services with rural areas of Saskatoon District Health. Among the possibilities: opening the Resource Centre to the 13 rural seniors groups in the district; sending Council publications to the groups' presidents; a consultation in 1997 between the Council and the groups.

**More partnering opportunities will arise:**  
-- Bill Bender

The Council's 1994 symposium on senior isolation inspired the YMCA's current Youth Service Canada program, program co-ordinator Barb Omland says. It is designed to help seniors and the physically challenged, and give youth job skills.

"We feel the success of this YSC Project hinges on establishing partnerships with agencies like the Council on Aging," Ms. Omland wrote. It could be an invaluable source of published

information and contacts with groups, she said in an interview.

The Council is one of several partners of the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association in its proposed project for immigrant seniors who may be missed by other agencies.

Studies show that "Canadian society is not serving the needs of all older adults," the association's Evvy Akanni said in an interview. The project would offer activities without duplicating what is available.

'Young at Heart,' a program for downtown seniors that is part of the Isolation and Older Adults Project, began recently in space at McNaughton Place provided by the Saskatoon Housing Authority. (Similarly, the project's Travel-Eat-Meet-Talk -- TEMT - and Live Smart programs go on at Lutheran Sunset Home and Mayfair United Church.)

The Authority is working with the Council in finding vol-

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Champion volunteer

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Hockey, anyone?

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Allergy attacks

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## Risky mix: wheelchairs and cars on the road

*By Mary Helen Richards*

Picture this: you are driving along a busy city street, change lanes toward the curb and suddenly spot an electric wheelchair right alongside you in the road.

You ask yourself: What are wheelchairs doing in the road? What side of the road should they be on? Shouldn't they have a flag so they can be more easily seen? Do users get any instructions on operating them?

### **Dealers: Face traffic**

Retailers say buyers of motorized wheelchairs or electric scooters are shown how to operate them. The dealers suggest they stay on the sidewalk and, if they must go into the road, to ride facing the traffic and attach reflectors and a flag. But some users of motorized wheelchairs object to such flags, saying this identifies them as different. Flags should be a matter of choice, they say.

The Saskatchewan Abilities Council loans electric wheelchairs to those who are non-ambulant and unable to propel a conventional lightweight wheelchair. They have an information sheet about power chairs.

What does the law say? Not much. Persons using wheelchairs are considered pedestrians. If they venture onto a public road, they must ride facing the traffic. Aside from this, there seems to be no special legislation regarding electric wheelchairs and scooters.

Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation officials held discussions a few years ago with

representatives of municipal government and groups of wheelchair users. Their varying viewpoints were brought to the 1994 Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan annual meeting. No firm conclusion was reached.

For the most part, motorized wheelchairs and scooters stay off the road. But if they want to cross and there's no ramp at the corner, they might drive in the street for a block or so. For whatever reason, on a public road they present a hazard to themselves and to motorists.

Low-slung buggies carrying small children and towed by bicycles are also not easily seen. To be fair, a red flag on a pole should be required for any low-profile wheeled conveyance on the road.

If there should be a horrendous and highly-publicized accident involving a wheelchair and a car, we would all say, "There ought to be a law!" Now we should push for more education and training for users of motorized chairs and scooters, and an information pamphlet about safe operation to reinforce what they have been taught.

## *Council works with partners*

*Continued from Page 1*

unteers and participants for the program, and helped plan and develop it, said Jake Ens, Isolation Project co-chair. Heather Rathgeber is 'Young at Heart' co-ordinator.

Funding and other support for these programs has been provided by a variety of groups, Mr. Ens said. "The Council is interested in searching for future partners for these programs."

The Resource Centre housed Alzheimer Saskatchewan's information drop-in centre Saturday mornings in 1996. The Centre was chosen because of its downtown location and because the Council "has a real presence in the community and is highly respected," Patricia Marken of Alzheimer Saskatchewan said.

There was little traffic, and the drop-in centre is now at Oliver Lodge on weekdays. Alzheimer Saskatchewan is considering holding sessions on memory loss, hopefully involving the Council, Mrs. Marken added.

More partnering opportunities will arise, Mr. Bender suggests. "I can see that we will be looking for partners for the informal caregivers project that is in our long-range plan."

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# Mary Levers of the helping hands

By Teresa Harley

## CANADA VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Canada Volunteer Award was established by Health and Welfare Canada to recognize and encourage those Canadians who have made outstanding voluntary contributions towards improving the health and social well-being of their fellow citizens.

The Canada Volunteer Award is presented annually by the Minister on behalf of all Canadians. It is hoped the Award winners will be an inspiration to other Canadians.

Mary Levers is one of Canada's outstanding volunteers, with the medal to prove it, but her nomination for a Canada Volunteer Award surprised her into tears. "I've always been involved in a lot of things, but I enjoy what I do.

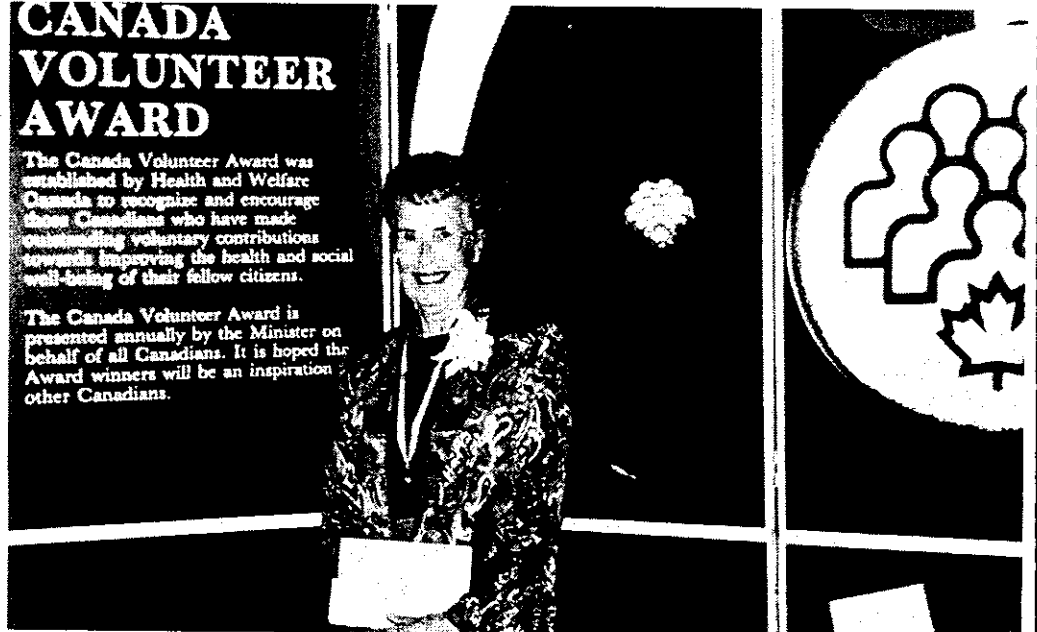
I never expected to get recognition from doing what I enjoy."

In her life, she says, "one thing just led to another." Volunteer work led to paid employment which led back into volunteer work after she retired. Some volunteering has never stopped, however.

She canvasses for diabetes and multiple sclerosis research funds because her late husband suffered from those conditions. He lived for 12 years in Sherbrooke Community Centre and she takes her gentle dog, Jessie, there for the Pet Therapy Group. She hosts an annual barbecue at her cottage for people from Sherbrooke.

When she retired after five years as a research nurse in Royal University Hospital's Division of Medical Genetics, she developed and maintained a library of genetics information for use by patients and their families because "people are so traumatized by genetics problems."

Two years as a registered nurse at Lutheran Sunset Home taught her to appreciate working with senior citizens. Travelling Saskatchewan for the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council, liaising



*Mary Levers at the Volunteer Award ceremony*

between government and people, confirmed it.

She was a founder of the Saskatoon Council on Aging and served on its board "as long as I could." She instigated and raised funds for its successful monthly blood pressure clinics, and she still organizes them. She and Jessie take part in Live Smart programs and she has helped with Wellness Information Services for the Elderly.

Amidst all this, Mrs. Levers is devoted to her family, especially her six grandchildren.

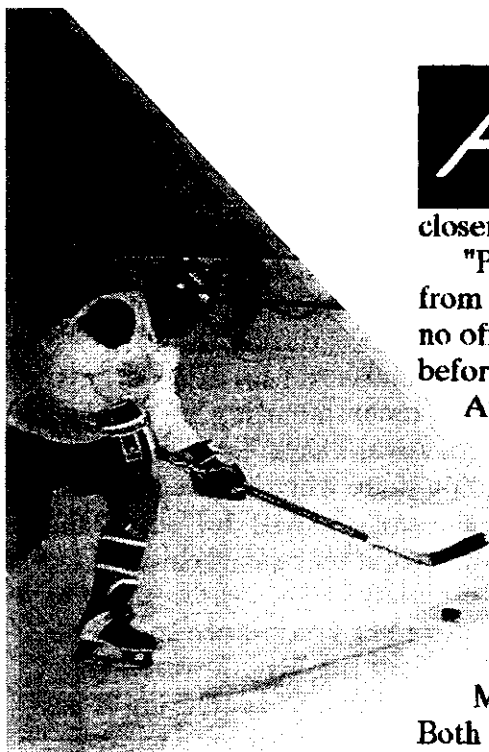
Whatever she has done, it has been with enthusiasm. "I had such a good time driving officials around Saskatoon during the 1971 Canada Games, I volunteered for other events."

One testimonial recommending her for the Canada Volunteer Award says "[she] can be counted upon to be there when needed and will always do what she says she will do," surely the greatest accolade a volunteer can receive.

The award ceremony in Ottawa in June was fantastic, she said. In her acceptance speech she said she represented all the "wonderful volunteers." As for herself, "Volunteering is part of my life. It's part of what makes me happy."



Owen Mann, left, and Fred Dawes are back in the hockey groove



**A**t rinkside, I watched with anticipation as players and puck came closer so I could snap a picture of Saskatoon's 60-Plus League in action.

"Pass the puck!" yelled a player who was open in the slot. The players from the home box chanted, "Go go go!" and a shot was taken. Although no official scores are kept, the puck made its way into the net a few times before the buzzer went to end the game at Gemini 4 Arenas.

Afterwards, teammates gathered upstairs for "a pop or two."

Laughter filled the room as even more players sat around the table. I had the pleasure of sitting with the league's oldest player, Fred Dawes, 80, along with Owen Mann, 73.

Mr. Dawes used to play hockey with the Wesleys in his younger years, and went back to the sport when he retired at 68. "The exercise is very beneficial," he said, smiling. "I enjoy playing because the rink is indoors and games are during the day," Mr.

Mann added.

Both men vividly remember when hockey was played outdoors in the cold.

# Still shooting, scoring in the 60-Plus League

*Story and photos  
by  
June Gawdun*



"That was back in the days when horses made pucks," Mr. Dawes laughed.

Some players in the 60-Plus League played pee wee hockey, while others had pro and semi-pro experience. Jack McLeod, one of the latter, was pretty modest but his comrades boasted that in 1961, he played with Canada's world champion Trail Smoke Eaters.

Reg Morrison and Stan Halliwell organized the recreational league in 1993 and have watched it grow from 23 to 66 players, from two to six teams. "Since retiring 10 years ago, I have met more people through playing hockey than when I was working," Mr. Morrison said. "The players play for the exercise, fun and camaraderie."

Teams are drawn up equally according to skill. "It's sort of like when you were a kid and the team captain chooses the players," Mr. Dawes said. "Teams consist of retired policemen,

professors, railroad employees, ministers . . . a real united nations," added Mr. Morrison.

The 60-Plus League plays twice weekly for 75 minutes at a fee of \$5 per game; it recently moved to the new Schroh Arena on Lorne Avenue south. The season is divided into three; the current session began December 2 and runs to January 21, the next begins January 27. Players can join any or all sessions.

People interested in joining the 60-Plus League must have been born in 1937 or earlier and know how to skate. They can contact president Pat Surbey, 242-5143; vice-president Stan Halliwell, 933-4980; secretary Abe Kroeger, 373-5626; or treasurer Reg Morrison, 242-8574.

For those who haven't skated in a while, Mr. Morrison says refereeing a few games is an ideal way to get back into condition.

*"A proper business"*

# Services for Seniors renews itself

**T**hree Ps -- partnerships, people and planning -- pump business sense into Saskatoon Services for Seniors.

"When I talk to the seniors, I say we're no longer a nice little neighborhood organization doing good things," says president Gwen McDonald. "We've grown into a proper business."

Services for Seniors provides indoor and outdoor help to seniors and people with physical disabilities so they can remain independent in their own homes (house or apartment).

Ms. McDonald describes its partnership with the Saskatoon Housing Authority (SHA) as key to its transformation. SHA is supplying office space in Clinkskill Manor and management support until March 31, 1997, says acting general manager Shelly Scheibe.

SHA general manager Jim Wasilenko lists three reasons for offering help -- interest in ensuring seniors enjoy optimum in-

dependence; affordable services for SHA's senior citizen renters; and potential employment for some tenants.

Saskatoon District Health and Saskatchewan Social Services recommended a partnership as Services for Seniors struggled to get back on its feet after almost closing in 1994, recalls Ken Rauch, former acting executive director. He approached several organizations before the Housing Authority agreed.

Recently, Services for Seniors became partners with the YMCA's Youth Service Canada project for snow removal and with the Saskatoon Council on Aging for the Riverside Rotary 50-Plus trade show.

The new business-like approach is complemented by a board reorganization in June. "The new board members brought skills and expertise in various business areas including health, finance and law," says Ms. Scheibe.

"We needed new blood, new ideas," adds veteran president Ms. McDonald. "We needed to change and we needed better business people. Do-gooders like myself are great at searching out needs and searching out solutions but you must have business people to run a business."

*By  
Heather  
Macdonald*

The new board has embarked on a strategic planning process to examine the agency's financially-troubled past and make plans to ensure greater stability in future. U of S Masters of Business Administration students did a financial analysis to help the planning.

Ms. Scheibe expects these efforts to come together in a business plan which also covers marketing and fund-raising. Cost-cutting has already improved efficiency, she says.

*Heather Macdonald is on the Services for Seniors board.*

## **LIFE AFTER FIFTY-FIVE**

Due to a certain authority in your voice, your view is taken seriously on subjects you know nothing about.

By now you can BS your way out of almost anything; the more serious the better.

A momentary wish to be 25 or 30 is quickly cancelled when you realize what you would have to go through all over again.

Fortunately you recognize that the temptation to quit your job and become a Las Vegas showgirl has immediate obstacles in its path.

Still rebellious, you'd rather be the grandma in blue jeans than the one in the blue hair and shawl.

Your children are old enough to recognize that

you were right about a few things after all.

No matter how long you stand on a street corner waiting for a friend, it's doubtful you'll be mistaken for a hooker.

Many incidents can be excused by Mid-Life Crises.

It's possible to eat an entire plate of spaghetti without wearing the sauce.

You'd rather risk looking like a nerd under a beach umbrella.

An earnest book on tips for teens provides hours of amusement.

The positive side of prune juice is discovered.

Having teenagers has made you bilingual.

# *Allergies may hit adults, usually due to overdoses*

By  
Dr. J.W. Gerrard

"Do allergies start in the elderly?" I was asked. They often do, but are not always recognized.

There are two kinds of allergy. True allergies, as defined by doctors, are associated with positive skin tests. The person allergic to cats, for example, has a positive skin test to cats. A true allergy usually develops in childhood or adolescence and often becomes less troublesome with age.

Headaches caused by red wine or coffee are not associated with positive skin tests, and are not considered true allergies, though most patients upset by these drinks will say they are allergic to them. This sort of allergy commonly develops in the adult or elderly. Here are three examples.

## *Sugar Diabetes*

Mr. AB developed sugar diabetes in his 50s and was put on a diet. This controlled his diabetes for some years but he later had to be given insulin. About this time he developed severe pain in his back -- lumbago -- and had to forgo his daily three-mile walk: he was reduced to hobbling with a cane.

After a year on insulin, it lost its charm and no longer controlled his blood sugar. In hospital, he was taken off his beef insulin -- so-called because it is derived from cattle. Because he had developed allergies to it, he was placed on pork insulin, more like human insulin, which was not then available.

His lumbago disappeared, but it returned with a vengeance when he went home. His wife suggested that he was allergic not only to beef insulin but to beef in general. He was very fond of beef and had it daily. When he avoided it, his lumbago went. But he insisted on a steak on his birthday -- a back came his lumbago! Patients or doctors often

have to be detectives to sort out food allergies.

## *Itchy Rash*

Mr. CD was in his early 50s when he developed a widespread itchy rash on his trunk, limbs and especially his feet, which became so swollen that he could not put his shoes on and had to stop going to work.

When I took his history, I discovered that he was very fond of milk and had it with most meals. He also had ice cream, cheese and butter daily. He used butter so generously that he ordered it each week from a farm in the country.

Foods that a patient loves and has frequently often cause allergies. When CD stopped all dairy products, his eczema cleared. So did his asthma, which another doctor was treating, and his chest pains!

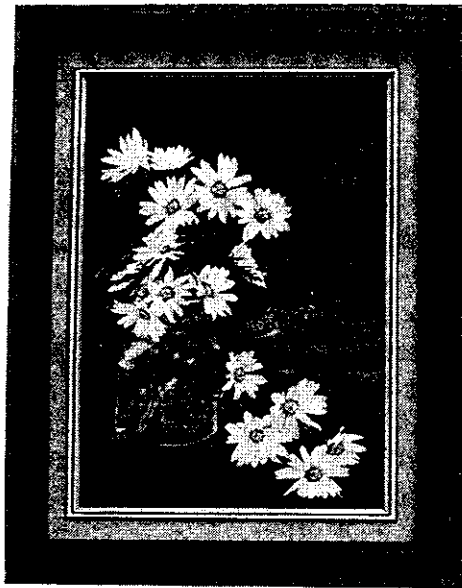
## *Migraines*

Mrs. EF had intractable migraines and had to spend a fortune -- \$15 a day -- on Imitrex, the only drug prescribed by her neurologist that brought relief. She was a great coffee drinker; it gave her the zip she needed to keep abreast of her work.

When she stopped drinking coffee, she had a severe withdrawal headache but this gradually cleared. As long as she completely avoids coffee she is headache-free, and no longer has to squander her money on prescription drugs.

Allergies can grow on adults, and nearly always come from overdoses.

*Dr. Gerrard, DM (Oxford), FRCP, professor emeritus of the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine, is former head of the Department of Pediatrics. He moved inadvertently into allergies, and does weekly rounds at Royal University Hospital.*

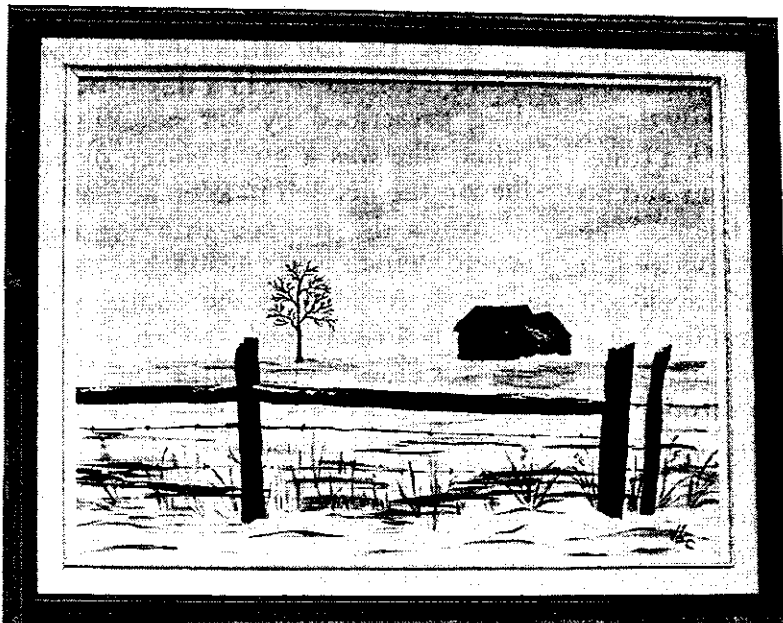
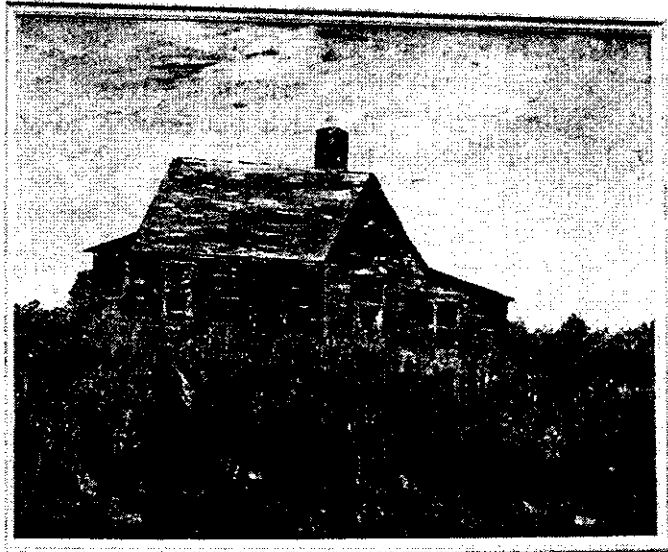


## Seniors' Art on Display

Visitors to the Saskatoon Council on Aging's Resource Centre at 109 Third Avenue North are commenting on the fine display of seniors' paintings on its walls. The ongoing show results from a staff suggestion approved by the board.

At present, 13 works by seven artists are on display, and more would be welcomed. Senior artists are invited to call Angela Adairs, Resource Centre assistant, 652-2255, for details.

Paintings may be rotated by the Centre at regular intervals.



This is a sampling of the paintings currently on display at the Council's Resource Centre. Starting from the left and going clockwise, they are:

- Winter Isolation, by Joan Cosgrove
- Homestead, by Mary Daktycz
- Daisies for the Homestead, by Dot Almas
- Rockabye Gladys, by Veronica McIlwham