



# COMING of AGE

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

## Fighting telephone scams

By Teresa Harley

So many people, especially seniors, are complaining about the practices of some telemarketers that alarm bells are ringing all over the country, especially in North Bay, Ontario.

That's the home of Project Phonebusters, a national task force set up to combat telemarketing fraud -- such as being told you've won a prize or cash, but must pay taxes and/or shipping costs, or buy a product before you get it.

Local people are also concerned. Constable Neal Wylie of the Saskatoon Police Crime Prevention Unit says legitimate organizations do not ask for money before awarding a prize or



gift. "If it's a gift, it's a gift, and anyone I know who's won a prize bought a lottery ticket."

Staff of Saskatoon-Clark's Crossing MP Chris Axworthy have prepared a Telephone Security Tips card which warns BE ON GUARD!. The card will be mailed to his constituents and anyone else who wants a copy to keep beside the phone.

The RCMP want to show their video, *Telemarketing: Consumers' Choice*, and discuss it

with groups. The Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA) booklet, *Older Adults & The Law*, includes a section on frauds.

Some fraudulent telemarketers pretend to be conducting a survey, so the Canadian Survey Research Council has organized a toll-free number to call and check on suspicious surveys.

The unanimous advice is NEVER give a telemarketer your credit card number or information about your bank accounts. Hang up if you suspect a scam. "Every hangup costs them money," Constable Wylie points out. If you want to spend the time, find out all you can, then spread the word about the call, and tell Project Phonebusters.

The most wary can fall for a slick scamster, Constable Wylie warns. "Don't feel bad if you're duped; these people are smooth talkers. What they say isn't necessarily untrue, but it could be a limited truth."

If you are caught in a weak moment, contact Project Phone-

### After divorce

## *Do grandparents have rights?*

When we hear of couples divorcing, we often ask, "Are there any children?"

If so, we always hope the marriage breakdown is not too hard on them. We look at the immediate family and hope the

divorce will be a positive thing, with everyone -- Mom, Dad and kids -- getting along better without the marriage.

Generally one parent will have custody of the children

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# Grandparents often left out by divorce

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and the other will have access. How do Grandma and Grandpa fit into this "new family"?

Historically, grandparents have not been regarded as in any special position. Under common law, they lacked any right of custody or access to their grandchildren. Their right to custody or access was considered a moral, not a legal, right.

In the absence of legislation authorizing them to seek custody or access, grandparents are

## Telescams

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busters as soon as possible with as much detail as possible. You probably won't get your money back, but you will contribute to the Canada-wide pool of knowledge about telephone scams.

The best thing to do is freeze the scam artists out of Saskatchewan, make the province too cold for them.

### Handy Phone Numbers

\*\* OPP Project Phonebusters, Box 686, North Bay, Ontario P1B 8J8. Phone (705) 495-8501 Fax (705) 494-4008

\*\* Saskatoon Police Crime Prevention Unit: 975-8337.

\*\* Chris Axworthy, 505-23rd Street E., Saskatoon S7K 4K7. 975-6555

\*\* Canadian Survey Research Council: 1-800-554-9996

\*\* *Telemarketing: Consumers' Choice:* Cpl. Jerry Wilde, RCMP: 975-5477

\*\* PLEA: 653-1868, Fax 653-1869.

usually not considered during divorce proceedings and therefore not normally granted access to their grandchildren. Maintaining a relationship with the children will most often occur during the access parent's visitation time, it appears. That parent is expected to share visitation time with his or her parents.

### Child's Interests

While grandparents and other family members do not appear to stand on an even footing with parents in respect of access, they appear to be in a somewhat better position than individuals with no blood relationship. The reasoning behind this is not obvious, as the court is to be guided by "the best interests of the child" in determining access.

There may be an assumption that contact with grandparents is in the child's best interests. If they have played an active role in the child's development, it would seem that contact with grandparents would be in his/her best interests and a continued relationship should be encouraged.

The results are divided when grandparents have applied to the court for access to their grandchildren.

In one case, the court denied access to a paternal grandmother as her relationship with the child's mother was bitter and hostile, and the child and the grandparent did not have a particularly close relationship.

In another case, the court held that a paternal grandmother was a positive influence during the children's early years, and they were entitled to her love. The mother's contention that it would be disturbing for the children to have the grandmother reintroduced into their lives was rejected.

These decisions reflect the courts' determination of the best interests of the child. However, they leave one wondering why children should lose contact with their extended family simply because it is inconvenient to the parent with whom they live.

### Two Hurdles

Grandparents who apply for access to their grandchildren have two hurdles to overcome. They must convince the court (1) that they have a right to make an access application, and (2) that access between grandparent and grandchild is in the child's best interests.

*Marilyn Penner is a lawyer with Burrows & Company.*

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Publications Chairman ..... Jean Nahachewsky  
Committee ..... Dot Dryden, Margaret Mack, Mary Helen Richards  
Editorial Consultant ..... Jenni Mortin  
Photography ..... Mary Helen Richards

# Making Saskatoon Home

*By Teresa Harley*

When Gladys Wright's son and daughter-in-law considered moving to Canada in 1981, they worried about leaving her in England. "I'm coming with you," she told them. But when they later moved from Saskatoon to Ontario, she stayed in the city she had grown to love.

Before coming here permanently, she had visited Calgary several times, including in winter, to be with her daughter and family who had immigrated in 1973. But her son thought she would like Saskatoon "because it's like Peterborough," where she lived in England.

"We took it in turns to be homesick" while adjusting to Canadian ways, Mrs. Wright remembers, but she brought her lifelong interests with her. She and her husband Norman, who died in 1972 after 32 years of marriage, had shared a deep commitment to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, to community work and to music.

Soon after arriving in Saskatoon, Mrs. Wright says, "I couldn't sit and do nothing, so I volunteered at City Hospital." That's something she still does. She also organizes the Interest Groups and Activities committee for Saskatoon Community Contacts for the Widowed. She volunteers with the Saskatoon Music Festival, sings in the Saskatoon Choral Society and her church choir, and organizes group visits to plays and symphony concerts.

"I love it all," she says, "but the Widows' Group has been my lifeline; it's a godsend." She organizes trips all over North America for the group, one long and one short trip each year since 1987.



*Gladys Wright in her sunny Saskatoon kitchen*

"For years I took Guides and Rangers camping in England and on the continent, but I never thought I'd come to Canada and be taking widows around." One bus driver told her, "I've never seen a group like it. When you tell them to be on the bus by 8 a.m., they're on the bus!"

Mrs. Wright's influence stretches back to England. After visiting Saskatoon, her sister-in-law organized a Widows' Group of her own, work which resulted in a local citizen's award.

Mrs. Wright's daughter and family are temporarily in Australia, so she spent several weeks with them this winter. "It was wonderful," she says, but her daughter misses Calgary "because you can get tired of the sun," and she herself prefers Canadians to Australians.

"They're gentler. Australians are like English people; they're more brusque than Canadians."

She has visited England twice since emigrating, but is not planning more trips there. "I could hardly wait to get back to Saskatoon."

Mrs. Wright came to Canada because she liked what she had seen of it, and to be near her children and their families. She has stayed in Saskatoon because she has made a good life for herself here.

"I love Saskatoon, I really do."

# Looking Toward Retirement

By Jean Nahachewsky



As the date I set for my retirement draws closer, I realize that I am doing a lot of thinking about what life will be like for me after July 1st, 1996. My reflections seemed at first to be totally random, but gradually I realized they fell into three categories: concerns, anticipations and preparations.

At first I thought the concerns list was the only one, or at least the longest. I wondered: Would the reduced income be a big problem, with both my husband Gus and I retired? Would we like to be snowbirds? Could we afford to be?

How would I structure my time? I've known myself a long time -- almost 60 years -- and I know that I like to be busy and frequently take on too much, then feel that I don't do things as well as I'd like to. Faced with so many choices of what to do, would I become incapable of making a decision? Would I feel cut off from the work and the people I've been associated with for so long? Lots to worry about!

When Gus and I discussed these concerns, we decided that a few lifestyle changes might be necessary to accommodate the reduced income. Perhaps we would have just one vehicle? We agreed that we would enjoy a winter month in warmer climates, but with almost all our family and many good friends here, we wouldn't leave Saskatoon for long periods. We'll see what evolves.

Gradually, anticipations mixed with the concerns. I'd have lots more time to spend with Gus and our eight grandchildren in Saskatoon, and the rest of our family. I could enjoy gardening in the morning instead of planting tulips in the dark as I did one year. Our visits to the cabin could be extended beyond a weekend.

I'd have time to visit friends who have been close over the years, but are seldom seen now. Time for tennis and bike riding and maybe I could join the Natural History Society and ... that list kept growing.

I realize, too, that almost unconsciously I have been preparing for this new stage. I have been watching friends and acquaintances retire, and asking lots of questions. Often when I ask what they are doing now, the answer is, "I'm so busy I don't know how I had time to work!"

This is not too reassuring to someone like myself who can say 'yes' too easily. So I rephrase my question. "What are you enjoying most now that you are retired?" That brings out the travel stories, the volunteer work or the other things they find satisfying.

Mostly, I have been thinking about myself -- what I like to do, what I think I do well. These are the things I hope to expand upon. I'm sure that when July 1st comes, I'll be ready for this next step in my life.

*Jean Nahachewsky, resource centre co-ordinator for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, retires July 1.*

After 41 years of parish ministry, I looked forward to retirement in 1993. My wife Thelma retired from nursing six months ahead of me, and my mandatory retirement at 65 was welcome. While I believed in and enjoyed my profession, the sameness of it all had created a weariness I was content to leave behind, harboring a suspicion of flagging energies and capabilities.

The thought of no more meetings was especially inviting.

I had retirement projects to pursue. I wanted to join the Saskatoon Men's Chorus and the Golden Eagles seniors' bird-watching group, and I am enjoying both. Thelma often joins me bird-watching.

I have begun my concerted attack on the 150 books that waited in our basement to be read. I'm into the second volume of Churchill's memoirs. But new books keep appearing and there is never enough time.

In two goals I have failed. I have not learned to play the mouth organ, nor have I written my personal story, which I intend to be a light-hearted recollection entitled 'Fun Along the Way.' I have begun twice and stopped when it got too autobiographical. Maybe some day.

But I'm continuing many long-time pleasures. An obsessed stamp collector, I especially enjoy sending my duplicates to about 10 fellow collectors around the world. I watch the

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*By Wendell Stevens*

mail for what they send to me.

My other passions are games -- as much tennis as possible in summer's early mornings, weekly badminton and curling in winter. I keep hoping to find three fellows who want to play bridge once a week.

In informal ways, we retain our relationship with the church where I spent my final 11 years. Thelma is heavily involved in the UCW, we sing in the choir as always, and we attend the Adult Club and social bridge. I go to the Men's Club and we take our share of Meals on Wheels. But no meetings!

However, when I found myself getting remote from the life of the church, I agreed to become Secretary of Presbytery;

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it keeps me in touch. I don't enjoy fund-raising for my college but it provides a small sense of useful contribution.

I don't think Thelma and I get in each other's way. The first one in the kitchen always started the meals and that still works. I'm inclined to be a short-order cook; she does any baking. We have always respected the other's time and involvements, leaving us free to indulge our individual pursuits. We enjoy music, TV, theatre, museums and places of historic interest together.

The final dimension of life is our two children and five grandchildren. We try to involve ourselves as well as we can in their activities and are glad to be free to do so -- whether it's an archeological dig with a grandson or going to band or Christmas concerts.

With other family, we have enjoyed fine winter breaks, and by sharing "time share" privileges find we can travel cheaply with good accommodation. The last two years we enjoyed a week at Elderhostel and recommend it.

All in all, we find life good. I've had a triple bypass and Thelma a hip replacement, but we consider ourselves to be well. Our pensions are modest and there are years on our mortgage, but we get by and can enjoy some pleasures. Retirement has given us no occasion for regret.

*Rev. Wendell Stevens retired from Grace-Westminster United Church in 1993.*

By Sarah Nixon-Jackle

# Protect skin from premature aging

Age spots, wrinkles, moles, sun damage and dry itchy skin are common concerns about skin and aging. Consumers spend millions each year on products to keep skin looking young. Skin aging can't be prevented, but skin can be protected from premature aging and damage from sun, wind and cold.

Healthy skin is the body's first line of defence. It keeps unwanted particles, objects, bacteria and viruses from entering the body, regulates body temperature by using sweat glands, and the inner layer provides support, strength and elasticity.

As we age, we may notice thinning of skin, wrinkles, rough patches, dryness, itching and decreased perspiration, more brown spots, paleness, bruising and easy sunburning. Saskatchewan's dry air contributes to one of the most common concerns, dry skin.

## Hints that work:

- bathe in warm water, not hot
- use mild, non-perfumed soaps, avoid products containing alcohol
- towel dry well, apply lotion to slightly moist skin
- wear rubber gloves to do dishes

- drink 8-10 glasses of fluid daily
- humidify the air at home
- wear loose-fitting clothes of natural fibre, which "breathe" and are less irritating to the skin
- apply lotion to heels, feet and hands at bedtime

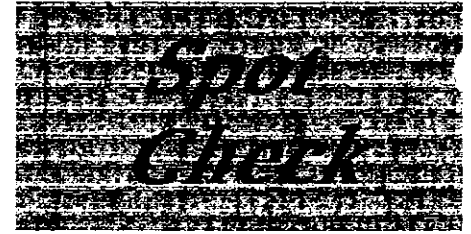
To protect skin against sun, the primary cause of wrinkles, pigment changes, dry skin and skin cancer, minimize exposure, especially between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Apply a sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more with UVA and UVB sunblock 30 minutes before going out. Re-apply every two hours. Remember, clouds do not filter ultraviolet rays.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants made of closely-woven fabrics for the best protection. Hold garments up to the sun or light bulb. Material that blocks the light will block ultraviolet rays.

Shade your face, tips of ears, nose, eyes and lips. Wide-brimmed hats can stop up to 75 per cent of UVB rays from reaching your eyes. Consider UV protection sunglasses

Caution: Snow, sand and concrete can reflect 85 per cent of the sun's damaging rays.



Examine your skin monthly for changes in moles, freckles or skin discolorations. See your doctor immediately if you notice changes in appearance, oozing, scaliness and bleeding.

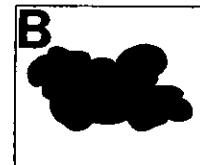
Rash, redness or swelling can be side effects of various medications to the sun. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if the medications you are taking can cause this reaction.

Healthy skin reflects your general health. Premature age changes in the skin can be prevented by healthy eating and active living balanced with relaxation, stress reduction and living smoke-free.

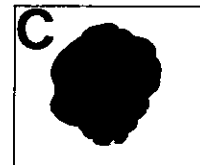


Consult your doctor at once if a mole or pigmented spot shows:

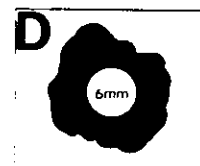
A. Asymmetry



B. Border irregularity, i.e. scalloped



C: Color varied from one area to another



D. Diameter larger than 6mm as a rule (size of pencil eraser)

*Sarah Nixon-Jackle is a public health nurse with the Older Adult Wellness Program.*

# Grieving . . . and helping those who grieve

**W**e will all experience grief, the natural response to losing someone important to us. The death of a loved one is our greatest loss, and bereavement is the emotional state that results. Mourning is the outward expression of grief and bereavement; grief gone public.

I am convinced that grief is work and grieving the hardest work we can ever do.

When someone you love dies, you must mourn in order to renew your capacity for love. Mourning brings healing, but requires the support and understanding of others as you embrace the pain. Reach out for their help. Sharing your pain won't make it disappear but will over time make it more bearable.

Practical suggestions:

- Talk about the person and encourage others to do so.
- Find and attend a support group of those who have experienced a similar loss.
- Select reading materials that offer understanding and comfort; it may be therapeutic to write down your thoughts, feelings and experiences.
- Plan an activity each day.
- Retain your long-time friends, but be open to new friends who will see you as a person independent of the deceased.
- Be easy on yourself. Take ex-



By Darlene Andrews

tra rest and watch your diet. Have a physical check-up within three months.

- Postpone major decisions for at least one year.
- If you need help to work through your grief, ask your clergy, doctor or funeral director for suggestions.

**Y**ou can help a grieving person by listening supportively and letting the person reminisce. Touching is a comforting way of communication; touch a hand or give a hug.

Help with practical matters like answering the telephone, greeting callers and preparing meals.

Continue to call and visit; remember holidays, birthdays and anniversaries.

A simple "I'm sorry" is the best thing to say after a death. Avoid clichés like "It was God's will," "Time heals" or, worst of all, "I know just how you feel."

No one knows how someone feels unless they have experienced the same type of loss.

**C**hildren may suffer a lot at times of loss, especially of a close family member. They need a simple, honest explanation that answers their fears and questions. It is a mistake to try to protect them from death's painful reality by saying the dead person is away, or by shutting off your own feelings so as not to upset them further.

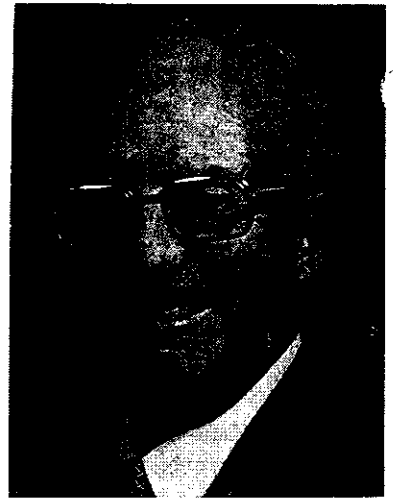
Children may not show grief the way adults do. They may seem unaffected, yet the mystery of death and the sense of desertion may be terrifying problems they cannot share unless simple, open communication is the rule. When they are comforted and loved, allowed to share family knowledge and grief and express their questions and feelings, there is a good chance that the wound will heal satisfactorily.

Grief will diminish with time. This does not mean you forget, but day by day, you begin to feel better. As one survivor said, "I have learned one important thing in my life, and that is how to begin again."

*Darlene Andrews is a funeral director and co-ordinator of bereavement care at Saskatoon Funeral Home.*

# *For tennis or study over five decades, self-discipline required*

*By Wes Robbins*



**A** recent StarPhoenix article on 'Education for Seniors' said I had taken University credit and audit classes since retiring in 1982. It also noted that I had played 47 sets of tennis in January and February, though I was approaching 80 -- an age I have been approaching since my birth on August 14, 1916.

I believe that a person should be active mentally and physically, irrespective of age. Self-discipline is preferable, since activity is not a disciplinary measure imposed by another.

I very much desired a university education, but economic circumstances made it impractical. I took classes while teaching in rural schools and working for the Saskatchewan Co-operative Wholesale Society in Saskatoon, classes in economics, political science, history, French, English, geology, geography, anthropology and agricultural economics. The last was in 1994.

Taking classes from 1939 to 1994 might well classify me as a permanent student; a critic might conclude I was a slow learner. But I have ended up with an advanced Arts and Sciences degree and several classes in Agriculture.

Misfortune can sharpen desire to overcome difficulties. When I was 12, my right knee was shattered and a 28-pound hip-to-toe cast was my companion for 11 months. In response to my father's questions, the attending doctor contended the time was necessary. The result was an emaciated right leg. A bone specialist has since confirmed that the knee was incorrectly set. A self-disciplinary method was required to diminish the debilitating result.

My first teaching assignment was six miles from our farm and I walked the thirteen miles daily. School opened in late August, 1938, and I received my first cheque at the end of May 1939 - \$25. I had walked over 2,200 miles.

I taught that school for three years, walking and running every day to strengthen my right leg. I achieved some favorable results, but was still rejected by the RCAF and the Army. My thirteen-miles-a-day walk had no bearing on the situation.

Eventually I played hockey, baseball and fastball and participated in track and field. I took up tennis at 30 and am approaching 50 years in that sport. I would be foolish to contend that my tennis is as effective as it was a decade ago. I am less mobile on the court. So I am reduced, if that is the correct word, to mainly doubles; having to cover only half the court has advantages.

In 1992 and 1994 my doubles partner and I won provincial gold medals in the applicable age categories in senior tennis. I had different partners in the two tournaments, so I could contend that I was the glue in the mix -- though they might dispute that.

My 1994 partner and I will compete this year in Swift Current. My partner has a crippled left arm and I have an inferior right leg. Self-discipline may prevail -- at least we will give it a good try. If we win, our opponents may conclude they lost to a one-armed bandit and a pegleg pirate. If we lose, our consolation will be that we are getting excellent exercise while participating in an exciting sport.

