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Hospital classes, Computer,
Travel

COMING of AGE

SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING INC.
301 - 506 25th Street East
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How we can control cancer

Final proposals for a Canadian strategy for cancer control will be presented in June to Canada's deputy health ministers and the public, which faces a 70-percent increase in incidence of this killer disease by 2015.

BY EDITH SUMNER

My involvement with an advisory committee, on behalf of the Consumers' Association of Canada, has now ended.

I see promise in the vision produced by our work, and in the fact that often-competing organizations and researchers worked with vic-

tims, families and advocates to establish that vision and time lines for its achievement.

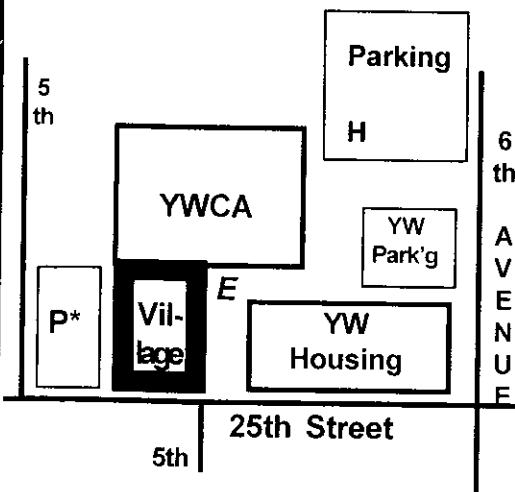
But I fear it could all come to nothing unless governments act to make our vision a reality – with the necessary funding. I write this while preparing to visit a dear friend in palliative care after a long, courageous struggle with cancer, which reinforces my eagerness to see action.

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The proposals climax two years of work by government, scientists, cancer organizations, patients and survivors to develop a strategy to prevent that frightening increase.

COUNCIL MOVES TO COMMUNITY SERVICE VILLAGE

P* = permit, not public, parking
H= Handicapped parking



The Saskatoon Council on Aging has moved into the new Saskatoon Community Service Village at 506-25th Street East, beside the YWCA.

Council is on the third floor at No. 301, near the elevator and the stairs. The main entrance (MAP: E) is at the junction of the YW and Village buildings. There is a ramp.

The Community Service Village is home to many non-profit agencies, including the United Way, Family Service Saskatoon, Catholic Family Services, Sexual Assault and Information Centre, Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service, HOPE, Folkfest and others.

The Council's new premises of-

fer lower rent, shared Internet access with the YWCA, a computer lab for the Council's computer classes and a boardroom shared with other agencies. Some office equipment may be shared in future.

The first blood pressure clinic will be held in the new Council office on June 5.

Parking is available in front of the YWCA (Patron Parking, free for two hours) and in the large lot to the north/ There are handicapped parking stalls very near the YW entrance. Buses No. 4, 7, 19 and 6A travel 25th Street.

Council thanks AMJ Campbell Van Lines, which handled the May 10 move free of charge.

Recommendations for cancer control, treatment, research

Continued from page 1

The vision for implementation approved by 263 people representing 125 organizations, plus many cancer survivors, is:

◆ **Immediately**, provide the necessary human resources, with attention to regional disparities in those resources.

◆ **Within five years**, reduce mortality rates by improved screening, diagnosis and treatment, and increase access to supportive and palliative care to improve quality of life.

◆ **Within 10 years**, develop national standards for care, services, research and prevention, and markedly lower incidence rates through preventive strategies.

What would this mean for you and me?

◆ Stressing prevention, we'll make not smoking, nutritious diet, exercise, sun protection for the skin and screening for common cancers a regular part of our wellness activities.

◆ Should we develop cancer, we'll be treated in our community near our family with help in navigating through the system when we are most vulnerable, confused and scared.

◆ If our cancer cannot be cured or held in remission, we won't endure unnecessary pain and will be close to family and friends.

◆ We will live without fear that our health care system will turn us away when we need it most.

Key issues range from **timeli-**

ness of treatment, **accountability** and **performance measures to prevention** and the need to integrate other chronic diseases in funded prevention strategies. **Education**, and **advocacy** by volunteers, patients and survivors against limitations on access to the system and service fragmentation are also vital.

Inter-organizational competitiveness must end. The system must learn to trust the first-hand experience of those affected by cancer and their family and friends, which gives them unique strength, passion and commitment.

We who have been involved with the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control effort have taken the first

step. Now it's time for action and funding by governments, and agreement by cancer organizations to work together under an umbrella group, in every community.

I see cause for hope because these groups are proving they can work together. We need to encourage them and push governments to put serious money and attention into cancer control, treatment and prevention – so we can make fear of cancer a thing of the past.

The Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control, a Health Canada advisory group, involved cancer agencies, researchers, volunteers, support groups. Representing the Consumers' Association of Canada, Mrs. Sumner sat on the Integration Group that reviewed recommendations for realism and effectiveness..

HOPE RETREAT SET FOR JUNE 1-3

A HOPE retreat for women facing cancer (survivors or those undergoing treatment) will be held June 1-3 at Queen's House of Retreats, Saskatoon.

Sharing experiences can enhance the healing process, says HOPE. Emphasis will be on finding peace and harmony within, through exploration of mind/body connections through meditation, imaging and stress reduction, the role of sup-

port and communication in healing and making healthy choices.

The weekend, for 18 participants only, costs \$150. Some scholarships are available for those in financial need.

HOPE office: 955-HOPE (4673)
Fax 955-4678; E-mail
hopesaskatoon@sk.sympatico.ca
Website: www3.sk.sympatico.ca/
hopecent

Coming of Age

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Publications Committee: Rita Ledingham, chair; Jeanette Dean, June Gawdun, Bob Phillips, Wendell Stevens
Editor: Jenni Mortin
Scanning: Pat Smith

Microwave oven is good for more than warming food

By Jenni Martin

My friend Carolyn was the first person I knew who owned a microwave oven. Her husband ate no green vegetables, so she used it to cook small quantities for herself.

She was right in tune then with Madame Jehane Benoit, who wrote in *Vegetables and Their Sauces* (part of her *Encyclopedia of Microwave Cooking*) that microwaving was "the super short-order way to cook vegetables to perfection whether I want them crisp or tender, with perfect colour or flavour."

Years have passed and Carolyn – like many of us – uses her microwave mainly to warm leftovers and re-heat coffee. It's a waste of a kitchen tool that can cook and defrost, toast nuts or

coconut, blanch almonds, warm ice cream toppers, plump dried fruit, soften or melt butter or margarine, soften cream cheese, peel tomatoes or peaches, make croutons or crisp snacks, bake an apple for dessert.

It's ideal for cooking small quantities perfect for seniors on their own or in couples. It's great for fish and chicken; Madame Benoit's encyclopedia includes *Fish and Their Sauces* and *Poultry, Stuffing and Sauces*. For years I've been using a now-yellow clipping with a recipe for Chicken Dijon, with chicken legs, thighs or breasts.

Like Madame Benoit, Better Homes and Gardens' *Microwave Cooking for One or Two* urges microwave users to find out what their oven's settings mean. It suggests

you put one cup of cold tap water and eight ice cubes in a bowl and stir for one minute. Put one cup of the water in a 1-cup measure and micro-cook it uncovered at your highest setting till it reaches full boil. Time it carefully but wait a few minutes before removing it. Discard the water, let the container return to room temperature and repeat with fresh water and ice cubes to test your other settings. If the water takes about twice as long to boil at your second setting, that's 50 percent power. Knowing that will help your cooking.

It also gives advice on containers for the microwave, and how to test yours for safety.

I borrowed *Microwave Cooking for One or Two* from the public library (641.5882 B565mc). It was the only small-quantity microwave book I found, but Margo Oliver's *Good Food for One: Easy Recipes for Today's Busy Singles* (641.561 O48) has a few microwave recipes and general rules for chicken and fish.

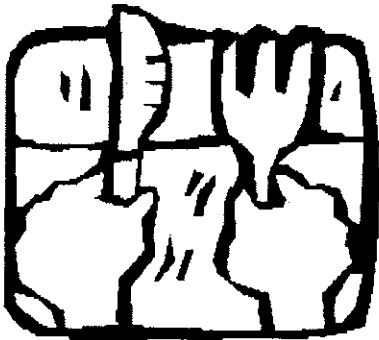
Several other books feature cooking for one (641.561) but have few microwave references; useful information on shopping and storage, though.

Cookbooks referred to:

Benoit, Jehane. *Vegetables and their sauces*. (1986) *Fish and their sauces*. (1985) *Poultry, Stuffing and Sauces*. Saint-Lambert, Que.: Les Editions Heritage Inc.

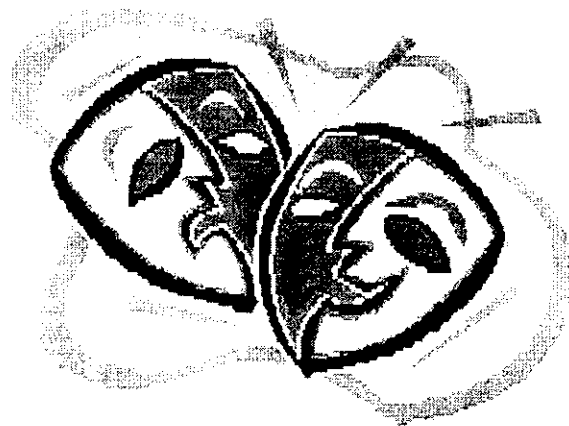
Better Homes and Gardens' *Microwave Cooking for One or Two*. Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Corporation, 1983.

Margo Oliver's *Good Food for One: Easy Recipes for Today's Busy Singles*. International Self-Counsel Press Ltd., 1990.



Get in the Act!

By Dawn Bevan



Did you know that Saskatchewan Community Theatre Inc. (SCTI) has more than 80 active theatre groups in the province? Even more interesting is that many people over 55 are involved in these groups; a 1999 survey found 746 women and 476 men on the sunset side of 55 treading the boards.

These statistics compiled by SCTI reflect only the number of 55-pluses in member groups. We can only guesstimate how many seniors are involved in community, church and service groups that take to the stage.

What about you? Have you ever been on stage? What's holding you back? Familiar excuses – "I wouldn't be able to remember the lines," "I'd be so nervous," "They'd never choose me in an audition" are, strangely, the same excuses given by would-be thespians who don't receive the pension.

The chances of getting the lead in a play on your first try are probably much like the chances of winning the 6-49, but both sometimes happen. Someone wrote that there aren't any small parts, only small actors. Perhaps you have expertise in sewing, designing costumes or sets, carpentry or painting. I can assure you that once you get involved in any capacity, you'll get more sense of accomplishment than you could ever have imagined.

It's true that there are often difficult times on stage and backstage prior to performance. The amazing and wonderful thing is that when the curtain goes up – if you have a curtain – problems seem to dissipate. The audience's approval at the end makes it all worthwhile.

Perhaps you would like to start a theatre group in your town or with your church. Existing groups, schools in your area and SCTI are great sources of information.

The late Kay Nouch began Ageless Players in Saskatoon after realizing that many seniors were intimidated by having to learn lines and lines of dialogue. She started "book in hand" plays and insisted that the actors refer to the script – but often just holding it was all the security blanket they needed and lines were in fact memorized. Kay wrote and acted in her plays even when she had to pull her oxygen tank along with her.

Those involved in drama will be familiar with the Woods of Melfort and the late Margaret Woodward of Regina – seniors, but definitely actors, directors and organizers. Paul Hack of Saskatoon won the best actor award at the provincial drama festival in 1995, at 69. He's still going strong and did a show for Saskatoon Gateway Players this season that had about 800 lines – and no book in hand.

The lawyer in Mary Chase's award-winning play Harvey (you may remember the movie starring Jimmy Stewart and his friend, Harvey the invisible rabbit) had a line, "I may be old, but I don't miss much." That's my motto. Make it yours! Give theatre a go.

Imagine, people might pay to see you perform. Wouldn't that make your grandchildren sit up and take notice!

Dawn Bevan, a senior, has been involved in dinner theatre in the Dodsland area and acted and directed with Saskatoon Gateway Players. She directed their recent play, Something's Afoot.

Hospital clowns bring laughter to healing

By Jenni Mortin

Doreen Braithwaite doesn't always feel like being funny when she goes to Royal University Hospital (RUH) on a Thursday afternoon. But by the time her purple-haired "Benny Burple" clown finishes performing for patients, her mood has changed.

"Usually you feel better when you leave," Mrs. Braithwaite says happily, as she describes the three-year-old caring clown program that operates from the hospital's Volunteer Office. Clearly its philosophy of humour in healing works two ways.

Gaily painted and costumed and working in pairs, the volunteer clowns – almost half of them seniors – visit wards (they are particularly welcome at pediatrics), waiting rooms, day surgery and units into which nurses invite them. They also minister to families and occasionally go to City Hospital.

"Not too many people start clowning over the age of 70," says Mrs. Braithwaite of herself. "We have a licence to be silly. It is a privilege to laugh, you know....We help them laugh at us and then we begin to laugh together."

The long-time RUH volunteer was convenor of its Humour and Music Room when she heard about a Calgary clowning convention and persuaded some volunteers to go with her. She was elated at mention of the caring clown. The group has since attended conferences on that theme, where they learned clowning techniques and costume ideas.

Supported by Donna Boyce, then the hospital's Co-ordinator of Volunteer Services, Mrs. Braithwaite

began the RUH clown program. People made their costumes and props; SaskTel Pioneers donated \$1,000 for costs and training.

The first short shows in the hospital's mall "didn't go over well and we knew it," Mrs. Braithwaite says. Then the clowns would wait in the Humour and Music Room for visitors. Some patients came, but they became rarer as pre- and post-operation time in hospital was shortened.



Caring clowns from left: Mugsy, Poppy, Tilly Turtle, Suzie, Chester, Benny Burple, Sparkles, Oll-ee, Just D

"We couldn't get people. They were too sick. So we decided to take it out and go to the rooms." It wasn't easy at first because the hospital didn't know quite what to do with them. Donna Boyce helped them work out rules for the program, and they co-ordinate themselves. The clowns stay in character as they walk through the hospital; the largest group attends on the first and third Thursday afternoons each month.

All have different faces and styles, never overdone. "We want to be funny, not outlandish or scary," says Mrs. Braithwaite. They tell jokes, make funny remarks and bounce humour off each other. If there are uneven numbers, "Benny Burples" works with "George," their soft sculpture who travels in a wheelchair.

They aren't the first clowns in Saskatoon hospitals. "Sunbeam" visited the RUH pediatric unit before this program began, Mrs. Braithwaite says, and now goes to St. Paul's. She gave classes in clowning to the volunteer group.

But they are the only regular clowns in a Saskatoon hospital, says Shelley Lofstrom, now RUH Co-ordinator of Volunteer Services. "They get people smiling and laughing and it creates a different impression."

Outlook seniors are computer happy



*Bruce Davison, 83,
 communicates by e-mail with
 family and friends in Canada
 and the United States*

Ruth Sinden has a "little nest" – a book-lined office with wood-panelled walls, comfortable chair – and desktop computer.

"I thought this would open a whole new world to me," said the Outlook senior about her year-old computer. "It certainly has." Using her world map program, "I went to the Vatican and walked in the rooms and looked at the paintings." Next she may visit the pyramids and the Great Wall of China.

"I'm interested in learning," Mrs. Sinden said of her new affinity with computers. "I love to hear about something new." She has become familiar with many functions and programs. "I can golf. I can play pool. I play Hearts. When I get desperate I've got a good Japanese game on here." Last year she designed her Christmas cards with a Hallmark program.

It wasn't always this easy. Like many seniors, she was uneasy with new technology, even scared. "You panic. You panic so much you've got a pain in your stomach. As a senior you haven't as much confidence because it's new technology. But you've got to take hold of yourself and say 'I can do it as well as anyone else.'

"Being a senior, I didn't want to be completely left out. Learning does not stop with age." This positive

attitude helped her overcome her fear. "You realize it's just a machine. If you break it, so what!"

Mrs. Sinden learned at Outlook's Prairie West Regional College where the computers are programmed so that "whatever you do to them, you won't do any irrevocable damage," says program co-ordinator Ruth Ballek. This reassures first-time users.

On the first Monday each month, the college offers an informal class for elderly computer beginners and enthusiasts called Seniors Club 1. Ms. Ballek said the most common requests are for e-mail and the Internet. Many seniors get computers from their children so they can communicate by e-mail.

But those who did not grow up in the computer age are often apprehensive. "As we grow older, our movements are slower, our thinking is slower," explained Mrs. Sinden. "They're afraid they won't be able to retain what they've learned," echoed Ms. Ballek.

People can return to the Seniors Club after the month to refresh what they learned. The question-and-answer format means the group decides what topics should be covered.

Searching on the Internet: Try specific with a search engine, then try fuzzy

How do you search the Internet for a particular piece of information? The customary way is to use a *search engine* – a website devoted to performing searches for users.

There are many different search engines on the Internet; a handy page with links to many of them is at <http://www.sfn.saskatoon.sk.ca/search.html>.

One of the best-known is Yahoo – the better known address for Yahoo is <http://www.yahoo.com>, but <http://www.yahoo.ca> (the Canadian site) can limit your search to Canadian sites only, which can be handy.

So, what are the secrets of using search engines? Start searching based on what you know; first make your search specific, then make it more 'fuzzy' if you don't find useful information.

For instance, if you are curious about a piece of china you own - its pattern, value, etc. - start with a search on the company name (it's probably on the bottom of the plate). Let's say it's Wood & Sons.

By Nathan Elke

On any search engine, there are two ways to combine words in a search. One is using a plus (+) sign. For instance, searching for wood+sons will give you all websites the engine can find where the words 'wood' and 'sons' are on the webpage. The other way is to enclose the words in double quotes, i.e. "Wood & Sons". This will give you all websites where the two words are on the same line.

You search for "Wood & Sons" and come up with 450 matches. Next, try adding to the search. Most search engines have 'advanced' searches, where you can specify that ALL words being searched have to be in the resulting pages. You can also specify OR, in that only one of the words needs to match. In the advanced search, look for "Wood & Sons" + china. Now you'd get a smaller amount of data, because you've tightened up your search criteria.

This trial and error process is how you'd use almost all search engines; they have some differences, but the basic operation is the same.

Nathan Elke, a computer programmer, is one of the founders of the Saskatoon Free-Net and head of Information Providers Committee

Computer brings world to Outlook

Continued from page 6

Bruce Davison, 83, got hooked on computers in these classes. "I just got curious," he said about signing up for his first course at Prairie West. "They didn't call it class for dummies, but they might just as well." He joked that it was lucky there were kids beside him to show him how to turn the machine on.

Now, with more than half-a-dozen classes under his belt, Mr.

Davison gets around easily on his computer. "I'm not that good at it yet," he said modestly, "but I can do what I want to do." He connects with family and friends and gets information and sports from around the world on Internet news sites. He plays games.

Under his computer screen, in his sunny bedroom, are photos e-mailed by his son in Switzerland and his brother in British Columbia. "Nobody writes letters any more. But once you have a computer, you're hooked up with everybody."

His e-mail address book contains at least 25 names and addresses. "These are just the

ones I use the most," he said as he scrolled down the list – including six veterans he served with in the Armed Forces. Friends and family members are scattered throughout Canada and the U.S., but keep in touch regularly with e-mail.

Mr. Davison thinks he's the only resident of Outlook's Luther Place for seniors with his own Internet access. He suspects others may be afraid of computers like he once was. He owned the Outlook drugstore but gave it up in 1968 when computers came in "because I didn't think I'd be able to work one."

"If I'd known it wasn't so complicated, I would probably have stayed on."

Anita Grace was a reporter in Outlook when she wrote this story.

The Saskatoon Council on Aging holds regular computer classes for seniors.

Never too old to travel

BY JEANETTE DEAN

Canoeing down the Amazon, riding the train to Machu Pichu, a double-decker bus in London or a camel in Alice Springs – these often seem only dreams.

With reasonable health and carefully budgeting, we seniors can have such adventures, as my husband Chris and I have done. Seniors have the freedom and time to travel, and time to plan our trips thoroughly, and we get all kinds of discounts and concessions.

Good planning – almost as much fun as the holiday – is the key to great senior travel.

First, know yourself and your travelling companion. Is the ideal holiday lazing on the beach, driving long distances, exploring big cities, learning something new, vacationing with the grandchildren? Do we like being part of a group of strangers? How much can we do physically? (It's best to underestimate walking and climbing ability.) Do we dislike foreign languages or strange foods?

Such an assessment – written is best – helps us decide where to go. Next comes "How?"

Travelling independently, we set the pace, choose the accommodation, see and spend what we wish. In North America, we can make the arrangements ourselves, using any discounts or points we have. The public library, the Canadian Automobile Association if we belong, tourist bureaus and the Internet are invaluable sources of information.

I've learned to call airlines, Aeroplan and Air Miles in the evening when representatives have time to discuss options, and to use toll-free numbers if possible to arrange rental cars and accommodations. We should always ask for the senior discount, and specify a late arrival if that's likely. On a driving holiday, averaging 500 kilometres a day is probably enough.

A travel agent is happy to help us plan, but must be on our wavelength and get what we want.

Group travel is the best bargain for travelling abroad; some trips are geared specifically to seniors. A good travel agent is essential, but we should still check ourselves what each company offers. How many meals and side trips are included, will there be huge gratuities, are the daily distances reasonable, are the city hotels downtown, are seniors given special consideration? Carefully read the fine print about pre-existing conditions before deciding to take travel insurance.

Coach tours and cruises are supposed to be relaxing, with luggage and accommodation looked after, but we must get on and off the bus many times a day and boats have several levels. It's worth doing some strenuous stair climbing for a few weeks beforehand!

It's wise to get passports and visas well ahead.

Those entitled to a Euro passport as well as a Canadian one may find it a good investment, **s o m e t i m e s** eliminating the need for a visa and giving cheaper admission to museums and galleries.

I now arrive in a country with some of its currency. In most places, automated tellers will provide the rest.

Ideas about essential packing vary – but medications, spare glasses, films, adaptors for different voltages, washcloth and soap are vital when travelling abroad.

When I finally set off, I'm determined to do something new every day and not get overtired, eat too much or buy so much I need another suitcase. My goal is to come home richer in spirit and ready to travel again.

Jeanette Dean, a member of the Publications Committee, makes travel presentations, with slides, to seniors groups.



Jeanette and Chris Dean rode rode Ozark for an hour at Alice Springs on their Australian trip.