

IN MY OPINION

My 96-year-old father will never cross a Saskatoon street. He would be yards from the centre when the light changed and traffic moved. He's hardly typical, but I often see seniors hastening the last few feet against a red light.

Lights at most intersections are set to give pedestrians five seconds of Walk, 15 seconds of flashing Don't Walk, three seconds of amber and two seconds when all lights are red, explains Joseph Lynn, Manager of the city's Traffic Signal Section.

He is reviewing the major downtown intersections, which have a little less time. He anticipates the lights may be slightly lengthened, likely to the 25 seconds of other corners. Since the Saskatoon Community Service Village opened, pedestrians get 28 seconds at Fifth and 25th, where seniors often cross.

But typically lights are not altered to better

accommodate seniors. "We have to provide service to the larger community," Mr. Lynn says. His department uses a national guide and Saskatoon's traffic light time is in line with other cities.

Seniors who can't walk three feet per second may need an electric cart, or someone's arm, he suggests. He is sure Saskatoon drivers will not run down a person stranded a few feet from the sidewalk.

That reassurance won't encourage senior independence. We slow down as we age but that doesn't mean we should be confined by fear of traffic. Particularly not downtown, where so much senior housing is located and the city wants residents.

Any solution must consider pedestrian and driver. What's the answer? A button that lengthens the light when needed, maybe? Benches on meridians?

Jenni Mortin

Let's get in motion

By Don Ratcliffe-Smith

Physical activity is one of the most important things we can do to maintain health and quality of life as we get older. However, despite all we know about its benefits, we remain a very inactive society. A recent survey in Saskatoon and district found:

♦ Only 33% of residents are active enough to realize any health benefits

♦ Only 22% of residents over 55 report involvement in regular physical activity.

To help people become more active, Saskatoon District Health has created *in motion*, an exciting initiative that encourages and supports groups to become physically active on a daily basis.

It's never too late to become physically active. *In motion* encourages older adults to do so because physical activity as we age offers many benefits. It

Physical

Sleep better

More energy

Healthy weight

Better posture, balance

Stronger muscles, bones

Move with fewer aches and pains

Benefits of Exercise

Other

Meet new people

Improved self-esteem

Relaxation

Reduced stress

Have more fun

Reduced Risk Of
Heart disease, stroke
Falls and injuries
Overweight, obesity
High blood pressure
Adult-onset diabetes
Colon cancer
Depression
Premature death
Osteoporosis

makes us stronger, allows us to be active longer without getting as tired and helps us become more flexible. There are many other benefits, too.

Ultimately, physical activity helps prolong independence and improves quality of life. Daily living becomes easier, and you find that the more you move, the better you feel.

It is our goal to share these benefits as widely as possible, and encourage people to make physical

activity part of their lives. *In motion* plans to provide important information about why and how older adults should be physically active. We will address any fears you may have about "the danger" of being physically active, and we hope to be a valuable source of ideas on how you can get involved.

Contact *in motion* for more information: 655 - DO IT (4658).

Don Ratcliffe-Smith is in motion consultant with Saskatoon District Health

Coming of Age

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Enthusiasm drives this bathtub

By *Ginnie Hartley*

At 85, Jerry Kernen is the oldest competitor in the Nanaimo Bathtub Race by about 30 years, but his enthusiasm is timeless.

He is building his latest design in the hobby room of the apartment building where he lives with his wife Rita. He's made sure there is at least a half-inch to spare so he can get it through the doorway once it's finished.

He cuts his own planks, customizes his propeller and even sews up his finger after cutting it on the saw. "A visit to the doctor would have wasted precious time!"

He showed me pictures of "tubs" he has raced in the past. They're not really bathtubs, though that was the idea behind the original race. Specifications and dimensions are strict — a minimum weight of 350 lb.

(including Jerry), a maximum 8 hp motor. A cockpit the size of a bathtub sits atop an aerodynamically designed frame.

Entries come from all over the world. Jerry's is the only unsponsored boat and his enthusiasm shines. He crawled around on his apartment

floor to set the VCR going so I could watch him in last year's race. His boat bucks and crashes as it hits the waves — he's having the time of his life. "You have to look out for the submerged logs," he warns.

He jumped up to get a photo of his 1993 entry — a boat with a wing at the back that was, he says, not a good idea. The wing was torn off when he hit a wave and he was dunked.

This isn't the first boat he's built indoors. Rita said

he built his first boat in their big farm kitchen when they were first married, 62 years ago. He started racing boats in 1948; the Boat Club used to hold a regatta on the river in Saskatoon on Labour Day.

Jerry's enthusiasm isn't limited to boats. He skis at Sunshine Village regularly — "probably 48 days last year." He got out the map of the ski runs to show me the double black diamond run called Delirium Dive that is posted for "extreme skiers only." He skied it last year, wearing, as usual, his cowboy hat with earmuffs underneath. He's well known to the regulars at Sunshine as "Trapper Jerry" and has his picture up in a local hostel, where he regales tourists with possibly slightly embellished tales of the trapline.

He loves to play tennis, but his regular partner (29 years younger) gave up recently, saying he was getting too old.

He used to ride motor bikes, but sold his Kawasaki Z1R four years ago as it was getting too heavy. He still has a dirt bike out on the farm that was a going concern for 45 years. He maintained all his own machinery and could fix or build anything. He loves to pull things apart to see how they work — "Then it's easy to see what's not working the way it should and fix it."

I asked Rita and Jerry how they managed to stay so full of life. Jerry attributes his good health to Rita's cooking. "You only get one shot at life," he said. "You've got to get it right the first time." Rita reckons that Jerry didn't get enough time to play when he was a kid so he's making up for it now. They're a busy couple, in love with life and with each other.



Jerry Kernen in his 2001 entry in the Nanaimo bathtub race.

'Keeping up would be no problem'

By Ruth Horlick

My biggest concern before I signed up for the Athabasca Sand Dunes tour was whether, at 75, I could keep up. I didn't want to be a drag on others.

The tour was sponsored by the University of Saskatchewan Extension Division and led by Prof. Emeritus Stan Rowe and Peter Jonker. Peter assured me that keeping up would not be a problem; I could opt out of a daily hike if I wanted and do something on my own. He was also reassuring about my concern that I often had to get up at night.

A newspaper article about a previous trip described the sanitary arrangements as a shocker. My son, who had been a geologist up north, told me they dealt with the toilet situation by digging latrines at every campsite. I bought a useful book called *How to Shit in the Bush: An Environmentally Sound Approach to a Lost Art*. However, when we got to the campsite that would be home for eight days, lo and behold, there was a two-seater outhouse.

We each brought a tent. When she saw the Boy Scout tent I planned to use, a kind neighbour loaned me her state-of-the-art Sierra design tent and a self-inflating mattress. The tent was built along the lines of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome, with the frame on the outside and an entryway something like an igloo's. This proved a godsend when it rained.

To practice, I put the tent up four times in the backyard. When we got to the campsite, people rallied round to help the old lady. However, I had some confidence in my ability to put it up, which helped.

We were given a list of things to take and my son loaned me his leftover geology trip equipment, including a rocket to fire if I got lost! I didn't take it. Experienced campers would have thought to include a small washbasin, a clothesline and a roll of duct tape — which proved enormously useful for many participants. I did not include any of those things with the emergency toilet paper, biodegradable soap,



Bare-footed, Ruth Horlick enjoys the incredible sand dunes in this photo by Peter Jonker.

flashlight, camera, etc.

We were allowed only 60-70 pounds of luggage on the flight but some people included campstools or chairs. This personal seating was often welcome, because sitting on a log for an hour can get tiresome, and there were few benches.

I was lucky in the clothes I took, and some nights I had most of them on — with the next day's clothes in the bottom of the sleeping bag so they would be warm to put on. If it is true that we lose most of our body heat through our heads, I wore a mohair tam to bed. And, of course, socks. It was mid-August, and the coolness of the nights counterbalanced the advantage of no mosquitoes.

The experience was all I expected, and more. A certain amount of self-selection occurs on such a trip, and our group of 18 was very congenial: the two experts, Stan and Peter, and 16 campers: eight men, eight women. The sociological mix and varied professional expertise provided the base for many discussions around the fire at night — which unfortunately I often missed because I was too tired to sit up and wanted to be able to go the next day.

We were not nomads. Our campsite was fixed, with three people in charge of the kitchen — a cooktent with a generator that powered a freezer, a propane stove, a worktable for food preparation and a large square table with benches for meals. We breakfasted at 7.30 and an hour later, after making sandwich lunches and getting a briefing from Stan and Peter, we took off.

We stopped for lunch around noon after walking on the most glorious sand, firm enough to walk on in your bare feet. We usually got back to camp around 4.30 or 5 and had dinner at 6. There was ample food, not gourmet but quite adequate, except that we never had any fish or blueberries, which were abundant then.

Continued on page 5

Golden Eagles see many Saskatchewan sights/sites

By Wendell Stevens

The Golden Eagles meet Thursday mornings from April through to the end of October, gathering at the Churchill Shopping Centre parking lot at 7 or 8 a.m. as the season or outing requires.

We travel in convoy, keeping in touch via CB radio, which also enables us to point out birds spotted along the way, e.g. "There's a red-tailed hawk on a power pole to the left."

Members take turns planning the weekly outings to areas where birds are most likely to be seen in season. There are frequent stops at bluffs, lakes or sloughs where birds can be seen or heard, and where shore birds and wildfowl can be observed through binoculars or telescope. A count is kept for the morning and a 10-cent lottery awarded at noon to the person whose guess was closest to the actual number of sightings.

The beauty of belonging to the Golden Eagles is not just being out of doors and enjoying the seasons and the fellowship.

Of equal benefit is the opportunity to become familiar with many areas of Saskatchewan and with some local history, because outings are often planned to

visit sites of interest, such as a straw house, the malt plant at Biggar, regional and provincial parks.

Two expeditions of two or three days take place each year to special places such as the Big Muddy, the Cypress Hills, Christopher Lake, the Moose Jaw Spa. Attending outings is entirely optional.

From November to March, the Eagles arrange morning outings to places of interest such as the Queen Elizabeth Power Station, the city's waste disposal or water treatment plant, Flexicoil and Hitachi manufacturing plants and the Western Development Museum tutorial centre. Each concludes with lunch at a local restaurant.

No special qualifications are required to be a Golden Eagle. There are highly qualified birders who know the details of species and can identify bird calls. Others come to enjoy the outdoors and the glimpses of nature at its best. Add in a high level of fellowship with new and old friends, for newcomers are always welcome.

We have no officers or finances, and the only requirement is membership in the Saskatoon Nature Society.

Belonging is as easy as showing up at the Churchill Centre parking lot any Thursday this month at 8 a.m.

Wendell Stevens is on the Publications Committee



Golden Eagle: This regal portrait was taken by Glen and Rebecca Grambo of Warman, nature photographers/writers

Dunes...

(continued from page 4)

You could get out of the trip as much as you put in. Some people carried notebooks and made copious notes. Stan and Peter taught at every opportunity and shared their knowledge willingly, welcoming questions.

I made no notes, but I "experienced" Lake Athabasca, which is the reason I went.

Ruth Horlick is an active and energetic Saskatoon senior.

The camp at Lake Athabasca is the oldest program of Club SEE tours and camps, part of the University of Saskatchewan's Extension Division. SEE stands for science, education and ethics, the core objectives for each camp and tour. The next Lake Athabasca trip is scheduled for June 13-20. More information can be obtained from Peter Jonker, Director, Environment, Science and Technology Programs at the Extension Division (966-5552), or on its web site at www.extension.usask.ca/go.clubsee.

Containers of flowers will brighten summer

By Erl Svendsen



A well-planted container is a miniature garden on balcony, deck or patio. Erl Svendsen photo

When you no longer have a garden plot, you can still garden in containers.

When you're deciding whether your space is suitable for container gardening, the amount, quality and duration of light should be considered, for these factors will determine what you can grow.

Weight must also be considered. Can your balcony or deck support the weight of plants, pots, soil and water in addition to furniture, barbecue, you and your friends? Choose the lightest possible pots and potting media to avoid potential problems.

The last consideration is safety to passersby. Window boxes must be sturdy and well anchored to the wall; hooks for hanging baskets must be strong and secure; containers on railings should be attached so that a strong wind or elbow won't knock them over.

Potting up: Choose the largest and healthiest plants you can afford when you're creating your garden. Fill the bottom 2-3 inches of your container with crumpled-up empty six-pack plant containers: this will reduce the amount of media you'll have to add. Optional: rip the absorbent

lining out of a disposable diaper and mix it in with your potting soil; this will reduce the number of times you'll have to water. Garden soil is too heavy and does not drain enough in a container; use a peat-based, soil-less media.

Plant your annuals nearly shoulder-to-shoulder and leave 3-4 inches between larger plants like geraniums and draceana (spikes). Start planting from the outside and work towards the centre.

Care and Maintenance: WATER, WATER, WATER and more WATER. Never let your pots dry out, even for an instant. Even if they're not wilting, drought-stressed plants stop growing, drop their flowers, are susceptible to disease and insects and may yellow. However, do not let your pots get water-logged; this can lead to the same problems.

Fertilize **weekly** with a balanced liquid fertilizer like 20-20-20 plus micro-nutrients. Or, instead, use a controlled release fertilizer **once** at the beginning of the season. Remove all spent flowers, damaged leaves, leggy plants and diseased or dead plants. Trim back rampant growth. Watch for insect damage. Avoid using anything more potent than

insecticidal soap: you, your pets, visitors, etc. have to live with your plants, too. Apply at the earliest signs of infestation and rinse off plants half an hour later.

If your plants are not maintained, they are not just unsightly but they detract from their surroundings. Better to have nothing than to have pool containers.

Plants: A container is, in effect, a miniature garden so choose dwarf or miniature plants if available. You can mix and match for lots of colour and texture, or plant an entire container with the same thing for maximum visual interest. Get ideas from the containers at the garden centre where you shop. There are also books and magazine that feature container gardening.

For shade: coleus, impatiens, browallia, creeping variegated ivy, mint or Charley, lobelia, begonia, vinca vine.

For sun: geranium, marigold, snapdragon, sweet potato vine, coleus, lobelia, dusty miller, draceana, petunia (Fantasy (mini), Wave (trailing), etc.)

Erl Svendsen is a technical assistant/graduate student in the Department of Plant Sciences, University of Saskatchewan

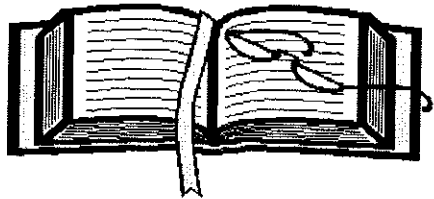
Through the years of teaching, I often yearned to work with books

By Jeanette Dean

Have you ever wondered if you chose the wrong career and then had the chance to “go back” (or “on”) and choose again in retirement?

Don't get me wrong! I loved my many years teaching hearing-impaired children but, at times, when I was tired of problems, I wished I had become a librarian or worked in a bookstore. Books had always been important in my life, bringing me information (our children were raised on Dr. Spock), encouragement (what teacher has not been inspired by the story of Helen Keller?), peace and joy.

I was so lucky. A month after I retired, a friend who owned a bookstore downtown needed a part-time assistant and encouraged me to come and try the job. Thus began one of the happiest years of my life. I no longer had to make hard teacher or administrative decisions that could affect people's lives. I could spend hours each day surrounded by books, things that did not question, demand or need my help but were a source of pleasure.



There were practical advantages, too. I didn't have to fight over a parking space; I took the bus. When the store closed, I was finished. I had no work to bring home, only a book or magazine I couldn't resist. At the end of the week, I was paid in real money, more satisfying than a monthly deposit into a bank account.

What I really loved was taking in boxes of new books at the back door, the feel and smell of the volumes as they were unpacked, and arranging them

with others on the shelves. There was the thrill of new fiction best-sellers, exotic travel books, tantalizing cookbooks and all the self-help books I could wish for, while the British newspapers and glossy magazines were a real temptation at lunchtime.

The customers were fun to help — the early morning regulars in and out with a newspaper, those with specific requests and, perhaps best of all, those browsing or looking for gift suggestions. Occasionally, at readings and book signings, I was intrigued to find that the authors rarely looked as wild or as clever as their books.



Alas, for me a monster lurked at the front of the store. That cash register defeated me every time. My heart sank when there was no one but me to ring up a sale. Without fail, too, the credit card machine stuck and the customers had to scabble around for ready cash or leave without the book they wanted while I became a blabbering idiot. My old brain didn't learn modern technology easily, so I accepted a different teaching job at the end of the year.

Yet on my fridge, this recalls for me every day of that happy time:

***We lose our youth, we lose our looks,
But never what we read in books.***

*Jeanette Dean is a member of the
Publications Committee.*

THE ADRENALIN R-U-S-H OF JUST REWARDS

By
**Michael
Gillgannon**

Shortchanged by genes and fate in matters athletic, some of us are forced to find adrenalin rushes in more capitalistic ways. We shouldn't be ashamed of this. While our ancestors were practically awash in that particular brain chemical, what with killing sabretoothed tigers in the morning and fending off paleolithic versions of the Hatfields and McCoys in the afternoon, we, being so terribly civilized, have to find our jollies elsewhere.

Take the HBC/Club Z rewards catalogue, for example.

It's an interesting concept, being awarded with stuff for buying other stuff. But make no mistake about it, it's a jungle out there in shopper land, and we deserve everything we can get for surviving another white sale or for sitting pretty in the middle of the mall while someone does our portrait in pine cones and railroad spikes.

You can imagine my excitement when for once I actually took note of the cash register receipt proffered by a not-exactly-smiling department store clerk. There were more numbers on that thing than there are on the average tax return, but the one that stood out was '91,625.' That, with this latest purchase of four pair of socks, was my total net worth in Club Z points.

91,625. That seemed like a lot. It would be a lot of dollars, even Canadian ones. It would be a lot of relatives, a lot of hours spent driving, a lot of gin fizzes. It would be four lifetimes' worth of days.



Visions of sugarplums danced in my head. Clearly it was time to cash in this bounty of hard-won shopping points and revel in the glories of capitalism. So I approached the counter in the back where shopping points are toted up and hardened shoppers made rich beyond their wildest dreams. "What," I asked the woman in charge, "can I get for 91,625 points?"

She looked apologetic, yet amused. "You might want to take a look at this catalogue," she said.

I did, opening it to page 69, to a semi-nice five-piece dinette set, in maple veneer. In layman's terms that means "not real maple."

Remember what I was saying about 91,625 being a lot? Well, it turns out that shopping reward points are something like molecules. 91,625 molecules of water would not get a gnat wet, and 91,625 shopping points will not get you a five-piece dinette set, maple veneer or otherwise. For that you will need 4,400,000 points. Nor will it get you a single wooden chair (229,000 points), nor even a shower curtain (159,000). A halogen desk lamp? No, sorry. A manicure set? Surely you jest.

What I could get is a Barbie tote bag. And with the 1,625 points left over, it's only a matter of time before that leather sofa is mine.

Michael Gillgannon is on the Publications Committee

Want to learn to use a computer? Classes are offered regularly at the Saskatoon Council on Aging. They are fully booked until May, stop for summer and resume in September. If you want to begin sooner, you can learn through the Community Access Program offered at Saskatoon school labs. Any adult can attend and be taught to use a computer and the internet, at no charge. The YWCA also has a community access site; call Teri at 244-7034, ext. 136. Call the Council for more information, 652-2255, or access its web site at www3.sk.sympatico.ca/scaging and follow the link available there.

Problem Gambling Help Line. If you're looking for assistance with a gambling problem, help is on the line at 1-800-306-6789.

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