

COMING OF AGE

SL - SENIORS
S. FITNESS
ALZHEIMER'S
TRAVEL

SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING INC.
301 - 508 25th Street East
Saskatoon, SK S7K 4A7

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

Good news about Alzheimer's

There's good news on the Alzheimer's front.

New research shows that the lifestyle that helps prevent heart attacks and strokes may also help prevent or delay the dementia, or brain failure, that hits many elderly people, says Dr. Earle DeCoteau, head of the Geriatric Section, University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine.

"Everything you hear about atherosclerosis and stroke and coronary heart disease I'm sure applies to the brain. It just hasn't been worked out yet. That's what we're working on, that's our big interest," says the geriatrician and researcher. His responsibilities include the well-known Geriatric Assessment Unit at City Hospital and other geriatric programs.

Dr. DeCoteau is convinced that Alzheimer's has become a catch-all diagnosis and many people so diagnosed actually have vascular disease of the brain leading to dementia, the result of hy-

By Jenni Mortin

pertension and silent strokes. That's why good health practices are vital – exercise, proper diet, not smoking, control of hypertension, keeping alert mentally, being connected.

Hypertension in mid-life damages the brain, he says. Obesity also plays a role, though it's not yet well understood. Abdominal fat – that paunch! – produces chemi-

cals that damage the vitally important endothelium, the lining of the blood vessels. Smoking, too, is toxic to the endothelium.

Dr. DeCoteau says the new thinking is that if people in their 80s become demented, it's "probably a mixture of vascular disease and wear-and-tear, which really means oxidative stress." Like all body cells and organs, the brain burns oxygen, but a little of that oxygen is converted to free radicals that damage body tissues. Most peo-

(Continued on page 2)

Recognizing Those Who Built Saskatchewan

By Jeanette Dean

Some years ago, University of Regina professor Dr. William Riddell had a wonderful idea. He saw many Saskatchewan men and women who were in their 90s and still enjoying life in all the ways they could, and he thought it would be great for them to form a club.

There would be no membership fees, just a commitment to do one's best to live life to the full and look forward positively to reaching the century mark. There would be social activities so members could get together, renew old friendships and form new ones.

Birthdays and other special occasions would be recognized and family members and different generations would be involved. Members who had already reached 100 would be known as Centurions.



With administrative and practical help from the Saskatchewan Seniors' Mechanism, the Saskatchewan Century Club was born.

(Continued on page 6)

Inside

President	2
Senior fitness	3
Queen Mary	4
Videos to try	5
New strategy	6
In motion	7
Gillgannon	8

President's Message

BY MURIEL BAXTER

PRESIDENT, SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING

With its annual meeting planned for April, the Council on Aging is reviewing the past year's activities and looking forward to an interesting new year. We would be pleased to see you at the Frances Morrison Library on April 28 to participate in that meeting. While an annual meeting is generally designed to review the past year's activities, it is also an opportunity to share your ideas for future Council activity and involvement.

The blood pressure clinic, drop-in program and computer lessons

are all popular ongoing programs. Like the production of *Coming of Age*, each involves committed volunteers. The board thanks all volunteers for the innumerable hours spent working to enhance the quality of life for seniors.

In the past year, the Council has become involved in forming a Saskatoon branch of the Century Club. It is for persons 90 years of age and over who are determined to live as active a life as possible while progressing toward the century mark. The first event, sponsored by the Lieutenant Governor, was very successful

and we look forward to other gatherings currently being planned.

Council's most recent initiative is to explore effective involvement in addressing abuse of the elderly. Many groups and organizations have experience, concerns and initiatives in various aspects of this problem. We are exploring the role we might play in co-ordinating a task force to address this multi-faceted critical issue by bringing together the expertise and resources to develop a unified approach.

Enjoy the signs of spring and have a good summer.

Encouraging news about Alzheimer's

(from page 1)

ple have a good innate defence system against free radicals – thank you, genes – but eating powerful anti-oxidants like small berries and broccoli sprouts bolsters it.

Progress has also been made in developing drugs that work with the neural transmitters that are crucial to the brain's proper functioning. Each works differently and when something goes awry, doctors can't always pinpoint the culprit. Dr. DeCoteau, who likes car analogies, says that doctors now must handle patients like a mechanic who does the same thing to every disordered car he sees, changing the spark plugs, say. "Every so often you're right."

"I think the day will come when a person will be on three or four

drugs and hopefully we'll be able to fine-tune things better."

Three popular drugs slow the breakdown of the important neural transmitter acetylcholine. A new drug is designed to decrease the supply of glutamate, for scientists think the aging brain may overstimulate cells by producing too much. Such excitotoxicity, he says, is like flooring the gas pedal while a car is idling. One of many studies he and his co-workers are involved in is a trial of a new drug

that affects another neural transmitter, dopamine.

There are many hopeful and exciting advances in the field of Alzheimer's and dementia, Dr. DeCoteau says, but he feels lifestyle offers the biggest hope. "Try to avoid vascular damage with exercise, diet and control of your hypertension when you're young, and I think that will help a lot of people's dementia."

Jenni Mortin is the editor of *Coming of Age*.

Coming of Age

Published three times a year by the Saskatoon Council on Aging, 301 - 506 25th St. East, Saskatoon S7K 4A7 (652-2255) with a grant from Saskatchewan Lotteries and assistance from the Saskatoon Health Region. Opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council.

Publication Committee: Rita Ledingham, chair; Jeanette Dean, June Gawdun, Michael Gillgannon.
Editor: Jenni Mortin
Scanning: Michael Gillgannon

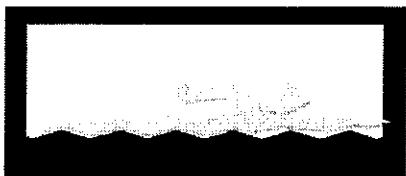
55+ GAMES ENCOURAGE FITNESS IN BODY AND MIND

"You can't just sit around."

That's Harold Tatler talking, and he should know. At 87, he has won a collection of medals swimming at biennial provincial and national 55+ Games, through his involvement with the Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association (SSFA).

He learned to swim at the old Riversdale Pool, which "in those years was just a walkway into the river," he says. "The big boys picked you up and threw you in."

Through a career with Canadian National, interrupted by "an all-expenses paid tour of Europe" as an RCAF fighter pilot in World War II, he has remained active. At 68, he became a volunteer fitness instructor at the YMCA.



There may not always be a lot of competitors in his age group at the 55+ Games, he says, but they're still fun. Not everyone races; some predict their time and try to complete the distance in that time.

Rita Verma became a competitive swimmer through the 55+ Games, and at 64, she has collected 15 local, provincial and national gold medals.

Though she learned to swim as a child in Germany and was an instructor and lifeguard at the Saskatoon YMCA for half-a-dozen years, her successful



racquet career began when she entered her first 55+ Games. "Now I'm organizing the local swimming mini-games."

The summer mini-games are a biennial event of SSFA, which was formed in 1984 to provide activity programs for people over 55, says Saskatoon Zone 6 president Sheldon Kraus. It promotes the total well-being of Saskatchewan seniors through participation in regular physical, cultural, social and intellectual activities.

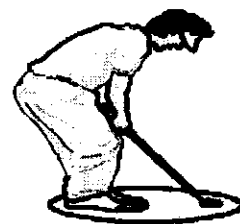
Winners at the local games – details about the 2005 event will be available in the spring, Sheldon says – can go on to qualify for the biennial provincial games, slated for Moose Jaw in 2006. From there it's the National 55+ Games, which attract around 650 participants every second year. Portage la Prairie, Manitoba will host in 2006.

At all levels, the emphasis is participation and enjoyment rather than competition, Sheldon says, in activities from bowling to golf, kaiser, poetry/short story, track and field and Scrabble, so even those less physically able can participate.



The Saskatoon committee also arranges some year-round activities, he says, and if people are interested in a program that is not included, they will be directed to an organization that offers it.

The committee will support any new sport or activity that interests members. Walking programs are a priority, and there is interest in starting a chess program. Track and field and slo-pitch are growing. A Centennial project is being planned, possibly a walk along the Meewasin Trail.



SSFA also sponsors workshops on topics such as types of walking shoes, stretching or nutrition. For two years, members have participated in a Seniors' Day walk that concludes with lunch at the Council on Aging. Fund-raising events help toward costs incurred in attending provincial and national 55+ Games.

Membership in SSFA is \$7 a year, which includes participation in as many programs as you want, plus a newsletter.

For more information, call Sheldon at 242-9452 or visit www.skseiniormechanism.ca and click on Fifteen Member Organizations.



Three Saskatoon sisters and their friend shared in the excitement of crossing the Atlantic on the Queen Mary 2's maiden voyage west to east. Photographed just before the ship departed from New York are, from left, Ethel Mongovius, Pat Morris, Edith Squires and Jan Hitchings.

Joyous Trip on Dazzling New Ship

How would it come about that four retired women from Saskatoon – Ethel Mongovius, Pat Morris, Edith Squires and I – would sail on the maiden voyage of the brand-new luxury liner *Queen Mary 2*?

It all started when one of us said, "If I win the lottery, I'm going to take a world cruise on the *Queen Elizabeth 2*." Several weeks later we saw an ad for tickets on the QE2. It wasn't a world cruise, but it fit our budgets and we decided to take it. We flew to London and sailed from Southampton to New York in 2001.

It was a tribute voyage to the *Queen Mary*, and we were promised a booking for the first sailing of the new *Queen Mary 2*. We really wanted the maiden voyage from Southampton but it was booked by the time we went to the travel agent. The first sailing west to east, April 26 to May 4, 2004, was our next choice.

We flew to New York, where we were met by the Cunard representative and driven to the Sheraton, with rooms on the 114th floor. The Cunard people were there to answer any questions and give us

information on what to expect.

The next day we were given a tour of New York City and taken to the ship, which sailed at dusk, escorted by small boats as well as police planes, helicopters and boats. The band was playing and the waterfront was lined with police cars with their lights flashing. We met the *Queen Elizabeth 2* by the Statue of Liberty and sailed out in tandem. The fireworks were wonderful, and a couple nearby unfurled a huge Union Jack that waved in the stiff breeze. Despite the chill, none of us wanted to leave the deck.

Our first shipboard dinner was a choice of Dover sole, beef tenderloin steak or roast veal, and quite typical; desserts were great. We had excellent table companions. The waiters were good but very conscious about not making mistakes. I think after a few voyages they would relax.

We wandered all over the ship but it was just too big to see everything. What grandeur! All the lounges, lobbies and public spaces were beautifully decorated and the library was wonderful. High tea each afternoon was a super social event,

By
Jan
Hitchings

Queen Mary trip, from page 4

with a harp playing softly in the background.

There was piano music in the Grand Lobby, nightly dances in the ballroom, music in the lounges and many new friends to meet. There were many activities, with the Royal Ascot Derby one of the highlights. We made fancy hats and competed for a prize; of more than 100 entries, Pat and Ethel came fifth and sixth.

The QE2 sailed beside us all the way to Southampton, sometimes quite close. It was her

last time on that crossing as she was being re-assigned to other routes.

We docked in Southampton early in the morning and disembarked about 10 a.m. We had booked a van to drive us into London and our driver was fun, with a running commentary as we drove to our hotel.

We left the *Queen Mary 2* with wonderful memories and a firm resolve that when the *Queen Victoria* is launched next year, we will be on her maiden voyage, too.

Videos we recommend

By Jeanette Dean, Michael Gillgannon and Rita Ledingham of the Publication Committee

American Movie

This is a hilarious, sometimes sad documentary about American filmmaker Mike Borchart, a marginally talented guy totally fixated on making movies, specifically his particular brand of horror movies. Getting in the way is the fact that he's broke and is being chased by creditors and an ex-wife seeking child-support payments. He has day jobs – a paper route and a cleaning gig at a mausoleum. Maybe that's why it's taken him two years (and counting) to put together his latest gem, *Coven*, which he insists on mispronouncing COVE-in. ("I don't want it to rhyme with 'oven'!") In a strange way, *American Movie* is inspiring, because as Borchart's girl-friend observes, if he accomplishes one-quarter of what he wants to do, "that'll be more than most people do."

Finding Neverland

Johnny Depp

If you love *Peter Pan*, this exploration of the relationship between author J.M. Barrie and a widow and her four children is a must-see. He is an unhappy man in his personal and professional life, but through their friendship he finds Neverland and the inspiration for *Peter Pan*. We see its amazing success, and the personal sadness that follows. Johnny Depp plays Barrie with great sensitivity, showing his amazing versatility as an actor.

Man on the Train

Jean Rochefort, Johnny Hallyday (French, subtitles)

Standing out among the dross that clutters rental emporiums, this film offers an unusually witty, if somewhat slow-paced, story of two men meeting in a tiny French town. One is a retired poetry professor, the other a bank robber. The professor (veteran actor Jean Rochefort) invites the thief (rock star Johnny Hallyday) to stay at his house. Over time, each man considers the reality of the other and begins to emulate him. (The grass is greener syndrome.) Their moments together are

priceless, but the day finally arrives when one is to have heart surgery and the other has a new bank to rob. Their fate and the follow-up show the connectedness of us all.

Master and Commander: The far side of the world

Russel Crowe, Paul Bettany

Master and Commander is set during the Napoleonic Wars when a British warship, HMS Surprise, and a much more powerful French ship pursue each other off the coast of South America. Surprise Captain Jack Aubrey is a very intense man who commands respect from his men; the ship is a small world unto itself with bonds forming amongst the crew. We see Captain Jack after the first defeat risk all to retaliate. The naval battles are amazingly real.

Seabiscuit

Jeff Bridges, Chris Cooper, Toby Maguire

A great horse-racing film, this is the true story of wealthy automobile entrepreneur Charles Howard who, while struggling with personal tragedy, hires horse trainer Tom Smith to find him a horse and a jockey. Smith finds Red Pollard, an angry young jockey with a history of bad luck. Together the three work to turn an undersized runt of a horse called Seabiscuit into a winner. The film's depiction of the races takes us on to the back of the horse as it pounds down the track. It's set during the depression when many Americans needed something to cheer about.

The Notebook

Rachel Gosling, James Garner

This is, in these days, an unusual movie with no bad language, no violence and no explicit sex. It is a tender love story showing two periods in the lives of a couple. The young lovers are very genuine and the background will remind you of when we were young. As old people, we see the strength of their devotion, and the scenes between them are poignant without being maudlin.

SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING INC.

301 - 506 25th Street East

Saskatoon, SK S7K 4A7

6 Strategy Proposed to Improve Lives Of Those with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias

A strategy for improving the well-being and quality of life of the 18,000 Saskatchewan people living with Alzheimer disease and related dementias (ADRD) was presented to the provincial government earlier this year.

Prepared by the Provincial Advisory Committee of Older Persons and the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan at the request of John Nilson, Minister responsible for Seniors, the report makes 60 recommendations in seven areas:

- public awareness and education
- guidelines for diagnosis and treatment
- support for people with ADRD and their caregivers
- supportive environments that allow people to live as independently as possible throughout the disease process
- programs and services available across the continuum of care
- education and training
- support for a range of research.

Mr. Nilson said the government will work with the two groups "to determine the priority recommendations and how we can work

together to improve the quality of life for people with Alzheimer disease."

Among the themes that emerged through the two years of consultations were: a stigma is attached to ADRD; there is a general lack of understanding of the disease and the resources required to provide needed care; the care system is driven by crisis.

Aging is the highest risk factor for developing ADRD, and almost 20% of Saskatchewan's population is expected to be over 65 by 2021. By 2031, with baby-boomers entering the age of highest risk, the numbers of Canadians affected are expected to reach 750,000.

"The economic costs of ADRD are startling," the report says. "An estimated \$5.5 billion a year is spent on persons with ADRD in Canada," and costs will escalate to more than \$12 billion by 2031.

The Alzheimer strategy report is available from two websites: www.health.gov.sk.ca and www.alzheimer.sk.ca or the Alzheimer Society's Regina office at 1-800-263-3367.

Century Club Looking for Life-loving Elders

(from page 1)

It continues, as an SSM project, under the leadership of Ken Mitchell, the well-known Saskatchewan writer. In each issue of *Gray Matters*, the SSM publication, he profiles a member, and there is news of activities.

Last summer the Saskatoon Council on Aging undertook to form a Saskatoon and area branch of the Saskatchewan Century Club. More than 150 people joined and Lieutenant-Governor Lynda Haverstock hosted a tea for them at the Western Development Museum last fall.

Activities are being planned to commemorate the province's Centennial, beginning with a spring tea in April. Members who turn 100 this year will be specially recognized.

If you are over 90 and would like to become a member (you should!), phone the Council office at 652-2255 for more information.

Jeanette Dean is a member of the Publication Committee.

Successful Aging, by John W. Rowe, M.D. and Robert L. Kahn, Ph.D. Pantheon Books, New York, 1998

Book reveals secrets of growing old well

This is not a new book but it offers so much sage advice about how to age well that it's worth revisiting.

It starts from the MacArthur Foundation Study, research projects that tried to "pinpoint the many factors that conspire to put one octogenarian on cross-country skis and another in a wheelchair." The conclusion: there is "very strong evidence that we are, in large part, responsible for our own old age."

The researchers found that how we live determines how we age. It's a conclusion that encourages all those healthy living things so many seniors do: exercise (I recently saw two people likely in their 70s working on weight machines), sensible diet, wise use of the health care system, and maintaining contact with family, friends and the world in general.

And mentally? Rowe and Kahn identify three key features that predict strong mental function in old age: regular physical activity, a strong social support system and belief in your ability to handle what life has to offer. No wonder Saskatchewan has so many very old people; they have certainly handled what life has thrown on their plate, they've been physically active and they have that small-town support system.

I can't rewrite this terrific book, so let me end with its definition of successful aging: the ability to maintain low risk of disease and disease-related disability, high mental and physical function, and active engagement with life.

The public library has three copies at 613.0438ROW.

Jenni Martin

Self-efficacy as a tool for motivating yourself and others



By Brenda Temple

Recent research has highlighted how seniors can benefit from preventive programs just as much as other populations, and dashed the myth that "it's not worth it for older people to participate in physical activities."

It's great news since physical activity can lower the risks of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and obesity; and improve sleep, mood and ability to deal with stress. However, many studies reveal that 60-70 percent of older adults are physically inactive. Unless you accumulate 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days, you are not active enough to achieve a health benefit.

What makes some people so keen and others less motivated to participate in physical activities? The idea of self-efficacy may provide a key. Efficacy means the ability to produce a desired result, and self-efficacy is described as one of the "most powerful determinants of behavioral change." People are more likely to start activities they feel capable of and avoid those they believe to be beyond their ability, depending on their level of self-efficacy.

Strategies that involve education, use positive reinforcement and harness the energy of peers have been recommended to improve self-efficacy. It is important during these educational sessions to find

out the consequences of not being physically active, as well as the benefits of being active. Positive reinforcement from hearing positive comments about your abilities will improve your level of self-efficacy and decrease your negative feelings about physical activity. It's also important to see people like yourself doing or leading a physical activity.



By understanding these ideas, you can try to positively influence your own self-efficacy, or others'. However, we still need to move to enjoy the many health benefits of physical activities. Begin by participating in light or moderate activities that have no drastic physical negative type of reaction, such as joint pain that lasts longer than two hours. Choose a group or partner with a similar level of fitness and avoid group exercises where you are the least fit. By maintaining contact with other people you will not only improve your self-efficacy for exercise, but also your health.

For more information on this subject, to get a physical activity program started or to be a part of *Forever...in motion* by leading a group for older adults, please contact the *in motion* info line at 655-DO IT (3648).

Brenda Temple is a recreation therapist with the Saskatoon Health Region's Older Adult Program.

**Saskatoon Council on Aging
Drop-in Program**

**Special Centennial Celebration for Seniors
Wednesday, June 15**

**Bus tour
to Champetre Country
a heritage farm at St. Denis**

**Cost: About \$25 per person, including
entrance fee and lunch in restaurant.**

Approximate time: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**For more information:
Lorraine 373-0154
Jeanette 653-4928
Council office 652-2255**

Michael Gillgannon defines the 'Saskatchewan Way'

The blissed-out people in the TV commercials remind us daily that this is Saskatchewan's centennial year. Did you know "Saskatchewan" is an Indian medical term meaning, "I don't know what it is, but I'm glad you have it and not me"?

There are a lot of things that can be said about Saskatchewan and I'm going to try to list a few of them right now, in quiz form. You might say that the answers define the "Saskatchewan Way."

1. You don't complain about the wind until:
 - a) Your hair gets mussed
 - b) There is a calm day and you feel "funny" somehow
 - c) Wheat starts growing in your piano.
2. You go to the Co-op to:
 - a) Pick up a quart of milk
 - b) Buy a lottery ticket
 - c) Sit in the cafeteria all morning and shoot the breeze with your pals.
3. Your view of gun control is best summarized by which of these statements:
 - a) Guns don't kill people, people do
 - b) I didn't think it was loaded
 - c) Gun registration is just another tax grab.
4. A busker is playing for spare change outside a liquor store. You:
 - a) Look the other way
 - b) Toss in a quarter
 - c) Take him home, feed him perogies and put him on your Christmas card list.

5. The fact that the Tampa Bay Lightning won the 2004 Stanley Cup is a sign of:

- a) Summer;
- b) Competitive equilibrium in the league;
- c) the end of the world.

6. Your view of the metric system is best summarized by which of these statements:

- a) It's the most logical system there is
- b) It makes gasoline seem cheaper than it really is
- c) Trudeau liked it, therefore it is evil.

The correct answer to each of the above questions is (c), but don't fret: There are no losers in Saskatchewan, only winners.

Now let's consider some centennial year slogans. Go ahead, take any of them and use them as your own. We are a giving people and need no recompense.

- ◆ The Province Between Manitoba And Alberta
- ◆ Home Of The Farm Crisis
- ◆ That's Not Fog, It's Forest Fire Smoke
- ◆ Hey! We're Almost A Rectangle!
- ◆ Lots Of Towns Named After Body Parts
- ◆ Gordie Howe Lived Here
- ◆ It Seldom Snows Here In August
- ◆ A Rhyming Nightmare
- ◆ It's Not The Cold, It's The Humidity
- ◆ Big Fly Country
- ◆ It's Easy To Abbreviate
- ◆ Please Don't Shoot The Cows
- ◆ Honk If You Like Wheat

Regular columnist Michael Gillgannon is a member of the Publication Committee.

Rainbow 55+

Let's Do Lunch

Every Tuesday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Lunch, *in motion* exercises, program

Rainbow Community Centre
St. Thomas Wesley United Church
808 - 20th Street West