



COMING of AGE

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

Publication Relies on Volunteers

This issue of *Coming of Age* was probably delivered by a dedicated Council on Aging volunteer. Three times a year, nine volunteers carry the publication to 90-odd sites in Saskatoon, ensuring you receive it promptly and conveniently.

The group gathered recently for this photo. In the back row, from left, are Rowena McLellan, Rita Ledingham (Publication Committee chair), Jean Nahachewsky and Dorothy Dryden. Seated are Eleanor Williams and Mildred MacGillivray. Missing are Bubs Coleman, Jean Carroll and Murray Scharf.

Over its 16-year life, about a dozen volunteers have delivered about 190,000 copies of *Coming of Age*. The Council and the Publication Committee thank each one of them for the good work.

We hope to recruit new volunteers to commit three to four hours three times a year to help with delivery. The job goes quickly and is more fun if done with a friend. A car is necessary for most routes. Contact June Gawdun at the Council, 652-2255, if you would like to help.



Seeing the Light through Age-related Macular Degeneration

Anne Blakeney first noticed a change in her vision six years ago. Street signs were harder to read when she was driving. An optometrist noticed little granules developing at the back of each eye – early signs of Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

AMD is a progressive disease that affects a small, specialized part of the eye known as the macula, which allows a person to see fine details in front of them, such as words in a book or people’s faces. When AMD strikes, the macula deteriorates, causing visual distortion, blank spots, trouble differentiating between light and dark, even seeing things that aren’t there – symptoms that can be scary.

Continued on Page 3



City Senior Fulfills Easter Island Dream
Story, page 4



President's Message

BY JEANETTE DEAN

PRESIDENT, SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING

The long "difficult to get around" winter is over and we can enjoy spring and bare sidewalks!

This is the time of the year when we apply for core funding so the Centre can continue operating, and it must be carefully budgeted. So we were very happy to receive \$1,000 from the Saskatoon Co-operative Association for our programming. It will help us provide more activities for our Century Club and Drop-In programs.

We are most grateful for this, and for federal help to expand our communication with Saskatoon people. Last year a task force was established, with input from many

agencies, to look at older adults' vulnerabilities to abuse. SCOA is committed to improving the quality of life for older adults so we plan to run regular informative articles in *The Sun*, which we hope will increase your security and independence.

Our Caregiver Committee has been working with other agencies to increase support for the many caregivers at home. The Caregivers Forum on May 23 will focus on nutrition. These forums are excellent days of learning and fun for anyone involved in caregiving. Computer lessons and our successful

blood donor clinic continue and the second cross-country skiing class was even more successful – the weather co-operated!

Please come to our annual meeting on Thursday, May 24 and bring your friends. Police Chief Weighill will show us how the reorganization of Saskatoon's police that begins in June should serve us better. We will have short entertaining reports, hopefully the company of some city councillors, and good refreshments. Let's fill the room and then have a safe, happy summer.

Jeanette

SPRING INTO *motion!*

By Janet Barnes

Spring is near, promising more time outdoors and more physical activity. As you prepare to be more active, be sure to remember to:

- ◆ Start slowly. Being inactive for any length of time causes a loss of flexibility and strength. It takes twice as long to regain your strength as it does to lose it.
- ◆ If you haven't been active for a while or have medical problems, you may want to talk to your doctor before starting to exercise again.
- ◆ Make sure you warm up and stretch your muscles before and after using them. Your body risks injury if you have been inactive.
- ◆ Set SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-limited: I will walk for 15 minutes each day for the next week.
- ◆ Try writing your goals down and putting them in a prominent place. Regularly evaluate how you are

doing and pat yourself on the back when you achieve them.

◆ Make being active part of your daily routine. Try to be active at the same time each day and develop the habit.

◆ Walking is one of the best ways to start being more active. Wear good shoes and use your cane or walker if you need to. Start with a short distance and progress to longer distances.

◆ Be creative and find ways that motivate you to be active. If you have difficulty motivating yourself,

don't be afraid to ask for help.

◆ Make exercise fun by finding an activity you enjoy. Dance your way through housework, garden, join an aqua fitness class or attend a Forever...*in motion* program.

Remember that one of the keys to good health is being active and *in motion*.

For more information, contact the *in motion* 655-Do-It line (655-3648) or www.in-motion.ca.

Janet Barnes is Senior Recreation Therapist, Older Adult Community, in motion

in motion

Physical Activity - do it for life!

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, Michael Gillgannon, Mercedes Montgomery, Kamal Parmar, Eleanor Williams.

Editor: Jenni Mortin

Scanning: Michael Gillgannon

Visit the Council on line at www.scoa.ca

3 CNIB offers life skills for those living with Age-related Macular Degeneration

BY TRENT WARNER

Today AMD is the most prevalent cause of poor sight in people over 60.

It comes in wet and dry forms, with the wet progressing faster. People never completely lose their vision – AMD affects central vision, leaving peripheral vision unchanged.

Treatment from eye specialists can include laser therapy (photodynamic therapy) and vitamin supplementation. But few patients understand what it's like to live with the disease and often have trouble coming to grips with the changing realities of their vision.

For Anne Blakeney, an initial diagnosis of dry AMD was followed a few years later by a progression to the faster-acting wet form. Visual distortion was more severe; she had trouble reading contrast and developed blank spots in her sight; street signs were even harder to read and driving became dangerous.

"If there was a tree very close to the road, up ahead on a hill, I couldn't tell if it was a tree or a car," she says. "Things like that made me uncomfortable and I stopped driving."

She didn't know how to deal with what was happening to her sight. When she was referred for a low vision assessment at CNIB in Saskatoon, she discovered a

source of practical information for the general life skills people need to live with AMD.

"I thought CNIB simply dealt with blind people and had no services to offer me," she says. "But I was wrong. They are primarily a service for people with low vision."

At its information sessions for people with macular degeneration, she found the peer interaction she'd been craving.



Anne Blakeney
...found help with low vision

"From the beginning, I've felt a need to compare notes with other people with AMD to see where I stand," she explains. "Can I learn from you? Am I worse off than you? What's the whole picture? Context is what I need."

"While optometrists and ophthalmologists provide the medical side of treatment, it's

CNIB that provides the humane services that help people live with the disease."

CNIB low vision specialist Joel Hyndman says information sessions help participants learn more about the disease changing their lives and give them an opportunity to talk with, and relate to, those in similar circumstances. He hopes they come away armed with the confidence to return for a one-on-one assessment before their sight is seriously impaired.

"We encourage early referrals. It's a lot easier to learn how to live with low vision when your vision is still good."

Individual services include instruction on how to make the most of your good peripheral vision, aids that can be used within and outside the house, and lifestyle changes that may be necessary – like when to stop driving.

Learning to live with AMD, Anne Blakeney has made adaptations and compromises – she now takes the bus. She carries flashlights and binoculars when she goes out and has equipped her home with aids to ensure her low sight doesn't interfere with things she's always done, like read and prepare food.

Trent Warner is a volunteer with CNIB in Saskatoon.

Mysterious moai haunt Easter Island



The statues remain but the civilization that created them is gone

I've travelled widely but I will always remember the thrill of my first glimpse of Easter Island, a tiny dot in the Pacific Ocean that's filled with intrigue and mystery. I had long wanted to see the island whose people had been so fascinated with building statues to honour their ancestors.

So I joined a four-day tour that included seven seniors. Let me immediately assure others interested in the world's most remote inhabited island – five and a half hours by air from Santiago, Chile – that the tour had no activities that I couldn't handle and I am 78. Only two places were a little difficult, and it was those with health problems, not necessarily the oldest, who stayed behind,

The Tahitian name for this Chilean island is Rapa Nui but Dutch explorer Jacobo Roggeveen



gave it its modern name after "discovering" it on Easter Sunday in 1772. He and his crew were probably as amazed as we were at the 887 human-like figures – moai – dotted around the rolling countryside, with the standing ones

facing inland to watch over the people.

Most moai were built between 1000 and 1650 A.D. Reconstruction of a few sites proves that enterprising, well-planned villages were built near these huge statues, which stand on massive sacred stone platforms called 'ahus' where important clan members were buried.

Sadly, the statues remain but the

civilization that created them no longer exists. We have to wonder why.

Our tour had four days to try to find some answers, helped by a terrific guide, Elena Delgado Araya, a University of Chile graduate married to a Rapa Nui, who spoke Rapa Nui, Spanish and perfect English. (Rapa Nui refers to island, people and language.)

We went first to the Anthropological Museum to learn about the history and culture of the Rapa Nui. Thereafter mornings and afternoons were dedicated to bus tours to the restored sites and some places where the moai and platforms are still in ruins. There were inland and coastal caves to visit, and the quarry where most moai were made.

Easter Island, we learned, was settled around 400 A.D. by natives from the Marquesa Islands led by King Hotu Matua. It was well forested and the rich soil and bountiful ocean provided abundant food. The early settlers were fascinated with making moai, which range in height from one meter to over 10 meters and average 14 tonnes.

They represent venerated ancestors linked closely to the gods. It was believed that the ancestor's spirit entered the statue when the eyes were carved, giving it magical "mana" (power). If a moai fell in transport, it lost its mana and was abandoned. The statues also claimed ancestral territory; each clan had an equal portion of the island for food production.

For some reason, the islanders began making bigger and bigger moai and cutting down trees to move them, until the last tree was felled. Food became scarce, the clans fought and the society crashed. Peruvian slave traders took

Story and
photos by
Doreen
Kerby

Before Throwing It Out, Consider Sask. Archives

BY KEN DAHL

You're moving out of your long-time home and wondering what to do with everything. Why not consider whether Saskatchewan Archives might want some of it? Much unique and valuable material is discarded because people think no one would care.

We are interested in documents dealing with the history of Saskatchewan individuals, families, organizations, businesses and communities.

■ From families or individuals: diaries, photographs, correspondence, film, audio or video recordings and certain financial records.

■ From businesses or organizations: photographs, correspondence, meeting minute books, agendas, annual reports and financial records.

These are some of the more obvious or usual types of records that we would acquire, but many other documents offer information or glimpses into people's lives which cannot be found through the usual sources. People often call, saying they (or a relative) have a certain amount of "stuff," and do we want it? If there appears to be some material of value, it is sometimes best if an archivist physically appraises it and decides what is worth keeping.

We do not acquire artifacts such as flags, buttons, medals, furniture, etc.

If you think you have "stuff" to donate to Saskatchewan Archives, call our reference archivist (933-5832 in Saskatoon, 787-4068 in Regina) and describe it.

Someone from our Acquisition and Appraisal section will respond and decide how best to appraise the material.

Once we accept material, ownership is transferred to Saskatchewan Archives, through a donor agreement that identifies any special considerations. For example, material that could be considered sensitive or may infringe on an individual's privacy is identified and access may be restricted, so researchers need permission to view it. All such decisions are made in consultation with the donor. Usually these restrictions are for a definite period.

*Ken Dahl is Archivist, Reference and Collections, in the Saskatoon Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
<http://www.saskarchives.com>*



Former Saskatoon high school teacher Doreen Kerby is a freelance travel writer.

hundreds of people and smallpox did the rest, so the population had fallen from 5,000 to 111 by 1877.

Learning all this was fascinating, but we had free time to enjoy the displays of local handicrafts at Mercado – moai carved in wood, stone and lapis lazuli, beautifully carved bowls, jewelry and ornaments. Sunday morning mass was crowded with tourists eager to hear the vibrant, melodious hymns sung in Rapa Nui. We enjoyed wandering around Hanga Roa, the only town. Everyone was relaxed and friendly.

Our rooms in the Hotel Otai were basic – no air conditioning, TV or phone – but clean and surrounded by flowers (in November). The Rapa Nui staff were friendly but spoke no English. There are only 300 beds available for the 200,000 tourists who arrive each year.

I remember feeling overwhelming sorrow at Rano Raraku when I looked down into the valley and saw hundreds of abandoned moai – some finished, some still embedded in rock. How I wished they could tell us what they had witnessed.

Though volumes have been written about Easter Island, we may never know what really happened there. It is a fascinating blend of archaeological wonders and mystery, quite accessible to seniors with even minimal mobility.

Details of photos

Page 1: taken at Tahai National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Page 4, top, Ahu Tongariki in Tahai National Park

Page 4, bottom, at the quarry Rano Raraku, where moai were carved from the crater walls

This page, writer Doreen Kerby with a moai at the Hotel Otai in the village of Hanga Roa

Sister Carmen Lived a Different But Very Rewarding Life

Last year, Sr. Carmen Marquis, an enthusiastic and treasured volunteer at the Test Centre at St. Paul's Hospital, celebrated her 80th birthday and 60 years as a Sister of the Western Province of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns), Saskatoon. In the French accent of her New Brunswick childhood, she recalled during an interview two highlights of her religious life.

One involved the Vatican's Swiss Guards. "It was after my audience with the Pope for 50 years of religious life.... He gave me a rosary in a case. When we came out, the doors opened and those Swiss Guard, there were two, they salute me! Not everyone gets to meet the Pope and have the Swiss Guard salute you."

The second highlight was her celebration last fall of 60 years of religious life.

"People married for 60 years, well, they celebrate with their children, and I thought for me, with 60 years of religious life and 60 years of looking after the sick – we need a celebration! There were lots of people at the mass and reception and I was very touched by all the people at the dinner. I thought that God was really present among all those people and He wanted to show me: 'Those 60 years you give to me ... I want to show you what you

did to these people here tonight.'"

She has been part of St. Paul's for one-quarter of its 100 years of service to Saskatoon, but came west early in her religious life. After she took her final vows at 20, she was assigned to a residential school on an Alberta reserve.

"They asked if I wanted to go west, and I said yes, so I was learning English. I was a young religious and there were 50 children in kindergarten and Grade One that didn't speak English. I had to teach them their prayers in English, Cree and Chipewyan. The priest that came to teach them their catechism could speak those languages. I tried to learn but it was hard; Cree is different, but Chipewyan comes from the throat."

Sister Carmen soon decided against teaching. "I thought I would do better with sick people and decided to do nurse training at St. Boniface. If I didn't like that, maybe I could do something else, like social work, but not teaching."

She worked as a surgical nurse at Edmonton General Hospital and sometimes cared for dying patients when she was off-duty. But as a Grey Nun, she expected to be sent wherever she could fill a need. Her first time at St. Paul's, in the



Sister Carmen Marquis

1960s, she was put in charge of centralizing the housekeeping service. She returned in the 1980s because they needed a musician for their music ministry and to play the chapel's pipe organ. She also started a choir at St. Mary's Church.

During our interview, Sister Carmen was wearing a white lab coat over a pleated skirt, a turtleneck, comfortable shoes, a photo identification tag and a cross, but from 1946 until Vatican II in 1965, she wore the traditional habit.

"When I said my vows, it was July and August in Montreal and we had to get up at 6 a.m. and dress to go to mass. It was so hot that almost every morning I fainted in the chapel. So when (I was) asked to go west, I said, yes, the climate is good there. Vatican II said we should be more modern, we should be washable. We had a veil for a while, and we could wash all that. Then another directive said if we want to take off our veil we can, but if we don't, that's okay too.

"One day I was going to church and I said to myself, I don't have to wear that, so I was the first one to take the veil off. When I came in they were all looking at me. 'You have no veil.' I said, 'So?'

By
Mercedes
Montgomery

“I feel I am doing the work of my foundress...”

Then I had to do my hair – but there was a hairdresser in the hospital. It’s not the habit that makes you a nun – it’s what’s inside.”

Often patients see her cross and ask if she is a nun. “And I say, yes, there are not many of us left but I am a Grey Nun, so they are comfortable with me and say they remember the nuns here from before. Some say, But I’m not Catholic, and I say, It doesn’t matter to me. I will still look after you and when we are gone we will all go to the same place; it’s just here that we are divided.”

There aren’t many young Grey Nuns today. “Our young ones have a hard time accepting authority and it takes them longer to decide... Our generation was different – we had to decide. I was about 10 years old when I began to feel the call.”

Sister Carmen began volunteering in the Test Centre soon

after it opened in 1985. She meets new people at the door, people who may be nervous or scared.

“And now the population is aging, children are busy with their work and they drop the parents off. I asked them once why they didn’t stay and they said their doctor told them that Sister is here and will look after them. I feel I am doing the work of my foundress (Saint Marguerite d’Youville).” If they want, she accompanies patients to surgery and prays with them.

Sister Carmen is fit and alert and attributes that to a full life, healthy living and yoga, which she has done twice a day for most of her life.

“You must keep going, have a purpose. Just to retire and enjoy, for me that would not be enough. If they are healthy, elderly people should exercise and keep busy or they will get depressed.”

She has no fear of death. “I tell them in Emergency, if I go,

don’t you dare work on me. I want to go in peace! I am happy with my life. I have looked after everything God put in front of me and that is why I’m not afraid to die. When God is ready, I am ready. I have done all I can to help other people.”

But she is glad to be here as St. Paul’s celebrates its 100th anniversary. It admitted its first patient on March 19, 1907 but its story began the year before when a typhoid epidemic hit Saskatoon. Two Grey Nuns from Manitoba, travelling west to collect money for an orphanage, stopped at St. Paul’s rectory and found it overflowing with typhoid patients. They stayed to help, and afterwards, the city urged the order to establish a hospital here. Six months later, a spacious house on the present site was purchased for this purpose. On March 19, St. Paul’s launched its anniversary celebrations.

Mercedes Montgomery is a member of the Publication Committee.

HAVE A MUSEUM SUMMER

By Jeanette Dean

Saskatchewan has over 200 museums, most of them in villages or small towns, and often started because of one person’s passion for collecting historical artefacts. Gradually the community has become involved, a building been found and a group of volunteers established. Now there’s a museum to visit if you leave the highway.

Begin close to home – spend an afternoon at Hague’s Saskatchewan River Valley Museum, a low, purpose-built structure with old machinery on

its grounds. Inside you will discover the life of the early Mennonite settlers, early household furniture in rooms of the past, Indian artefacts and a wonderful collection of fossils and minerals. Everything is meticulously arranged and attractively displayed.

You can wander on your own but the volunteer guide will bring the museum to life for you, leaving Saskatoon’s hustle and bustle a world away. Hague’s museum is open from May to October, Wednesday to Saturday

1-5 p.m., 2-5 p.m. on Sundays and long weekends.

If you enjoy this outing, why not visit more museums nearby whose names begin with H? **Harris** has a themed display each year, the pictorial life of a country doctor and the story of the Ruby Rock, plus a fascinating water tower, while **Hepburn** has a Museum of Wheat in its elevator. How about **Humboldt**, **Herschel** or **Hudson Bay**? Saskatchewan Tourism has brochures on the province’s museums or find all kinds of information at the Saskatchewan Museums Association website www.saskmuseums.org/museum.

CENSUS QUESTIONS WE MIGHT LIKE TO ANSWER

Questions Statistics Canada never asks in the census (but there's always next time):

■ The No. 1 obligation of a Canadian citizen is to:

a) pay taxes; b) pay user fees; c) vote; d) try to find The National during hockey playoffs.

■ Estimated number of times the telephone has rung in the past year and the caller was someone you actually wanted to talk to:

a) more than once; b) less than once; c) even less than that.

■ Politicians who do not keep their promises should be:

a) drawn and quartered; b) pilloried in newspaper editorials; c) forced to read Hansard; d) re-elected.

■ If Canada were to adopt a new national symbol, it should be:

a) the uranium atom; b) the polar bear; c) the pothole; d) the lottery kiosk.

■ If Canada were to adopt a new national motto, which of the following best expresses the essence of the country?

a) Three Downs In Football Are As Good As Four, Maybe Better!; b) Next Stop, Greenland; c) Short On Ionosphere, Long On Referenda;

d) Give Us Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses, And We'll Help Them Fill Out A Tax Return.

■ The No. 1 problem facing Canadians today is:

a) too many RVs on the TransCanada; b) long waits for hip replacements; c) what if they print the wrong winning lottery number in the paper and you throw away your \$10 million ticket?

■ The No. 2 problem facing Canadians today is:

a) global warming; b) figuring out if Diana Krall is a jazz singer or a lounge singer; c) not enough sports on TV; d) a sense of sorrow that Lloyd Robertson will never let Tom Clark have his job.

■ Assuming the results of a new scientific study were released today, what do you intend to do about it?

a) wait and see; b) change diet for fifth time this week; c) cancel newspaper subscription.

■ The main reason Canada (for the time being) is safe from U.S. annexation is because:

a) they don't have time to fill out all the necessary forms; b) they would go crazy trying to explain Newfoundland time; c) not enough pro basketball prospects; d) they're still wondering if Alaska was such a great idea.

Michael Gillgannon

Michael Gillgannon is a member of the Publication Committee.

Council Thanks Its Many Funders

The Saskatoon Council on Aging requires financial assistance and in-kind support so it can offer programs that promote the dignity, health and independence of older adults in the community. The board wishes to thank the following agencies for major support received during the year April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007:

- ◆ Help the Aged/Human Resource Development Canada
- ◆ Health Canada Population Grant
- ◆ CanSask
- ◆ Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism - Saskatchewan Lottery
- ◆ Saskatchewan Health
- ◆ City of Saskatoon Saskatchewan Lottery Grant
- ◆ City of Saskatoon Community Cash Grant
- ◆ Saskatoon Health Region