



COMING of AGE

Q - Seniors
 \$ - Financial Tax, Exercise, Council on Aging
 Writing, Stroke, Grand parenting
 farming, depression
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Ontario sojourn proved that Saskatoon's the place for me

I'm back in Saskatoon, and I'm so glad. I'm not sorry I moved to Ontario in 2002 to be near my sister, for it fulfilled a long-time wish. But my year's adventure in Cobourg just confirmed that Saskatoon is my home. My roots here are deeper than I thought.

I did not act impulsively. That's not my nature. I thought about it for years and did a lot of research before I moved to the small city about a half-hour's drive from my sister, my only remaining sibling, and her husband. I visited first, staying in a motel and exploring Cobourg. It was interesting and vibrant, and seemed to be bustling and immersed in its history and its United Empire Loyalist past.

My sister and brother-in-law found me a nice apartment across from the public library, libraries being my favourite haunt. The rent and utilities were about \$400 more than I had paid in Saskatoon, but I expected that. Convinced that if I thought any longer, I wouldn't have time to do it -- I was 79 -- I decided to go.

The countryside was lovely and

By Doris Wilson

it was a good experience, so why did I leave before I had to renew my year's lease? There were several reasons.

My biggest disappointment was the lack of interesting programs for seniors. In Saskatoon, I attended university classes for seniors, took part in almost everything the public library offered and volunteered at the Council on Aging. The Cobourg library offered no adult programs and there were no discussion

groups or courses. Seniors favoured card games, alas.

I couldn't find a family doctor, for none of the Cobourg doctors would take new patients. I don't need a lot of medical care but I do have hypertension, and I had to go to walk-in clinics with very limited hours.

The climate was not for me. I found it damp living two blocks from Lake Ontario and suffered from the humidity and the smog. The winter was horrendous, though it was said to be unusual.

Cobourg's formerly bustling downtown was changed by big box stores that opened up near Highway 401. I had no car and the bus service was very unsatisfactory, unlike Saskatoon's.

I learned in my year away how much we Saskatoon seniors benefit from things that have grown up here over the years -- reasonably priced utilities, affordable shelter and commodities, a range of programs -- that we perhaps take for granted. I've concluded that people here don't realize how lucky we are.

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President's Message

BY ROWENA MCLELLAN

PRESIDENT, SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING

Happy New Year to everyone!

Please take note of Council's 2004 programs and our publications:

■ **Free Blood Pressure Clinic** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. first Tuesday of each month.

■ **General Meetings and Programs** at the Frances Morrison Library, Room 3, at 1:30 p.m.

Jan. 22 - *Uses of the Library*

Mar. 25 - *Alternative Therapies*

Apr. 22 - *Annual General Meeting*

■ **Drop in Program** from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month.

Jan. 21 - *Winter Blues*

Feb. 18 - *Library Services*

Mar. 17 - *Ukrainian Easter Egg Decorating*

Apr. 21 - *Balcony and Decks (potting/plants)*

May 19 - *Picnic at Kinsmen Park*

June 16 - *Manicures*

■ **Beginner Computer Lessons** for seniors for \$45.00 fee. Classes offered January, February, March and April. Register at Council's Resource Centre on the third floor at 301-506 25th Street East.

■ **Directory of Services for Older Adults and Directory of Activities for Older Adults** available at the Resource Centre at no cost.

■ **Living Simply Handbook** available for \$10.00

There are many ways for you to get involved with the Council, by volunteering with a particular program or serving on our board. More information at 652-2255.

WITH THIS COUPON. RECEIVE 5% OFF ANY SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING COMPUTER COURSES Expires May 2004

Healthy New Year's Resolution!



By Nancy Lackie

In the long run, regular physical activity plays a key role in preventing heart disease, osteoporosis, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It's important to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, it helps reduce stress, increases energy, improves your balance and your sleep.

Tricks and Tips to Get You "in motion"!

Schedule physical activity into your day. Treat it like an important appointment you can't miss. After all, what's more important than your health?!

Make active choices throughout the day. Small efforts, such

as taking the stairs, walking farther from the parking lot and walking part way to a destination, all contribute to good health. It almost makes the idea of vacuuming sound better!

Get the support of friends and family. Better yet, have them join you. Everyone's health will benefit.

No time, no problem. Consider "snacking" on activity. Be active in 10-minute bouts throughout your day to accumulate 30 minutes.

Emphasize the positives! Remind yourself of all the benefits of

physical activity. Great things come to those who stick with it! Keep it fun, affordable and convenient. And don't feel that you have to do the same thing day in and day out. Vary your activities and enjoy the opportunities that each season brings. Slowly and surely! Gradually increase the time and intensity of your activity. Eventually strive to be active on most days of the week.

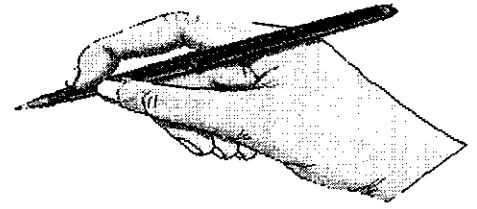
For more information on how you can be "in motion", visit www.in-motion.ca

Coming of Age

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Writing our memories



By Shirley Lomheim

While Harry Smith fought with the British Army in Burma during World War II, Neva Bayliss was a telephone operator with the RCAF Women's Division. Jean Frydenlund was teaching in a country school and Beth McNab worked in a munitions factory in Ajax, Ontario during the summers between teaching.

I was a high school student who laboriously knitted a scarf for the armed forces, with help from boys in the class who stretched it to the desired length.

These varied experiences came out during discussions at the Saskatoon Memory Writers' Club of how we lived in different ways through the 20th century. That's one of the reasons we have a Memory Writers' Club, even though the 'old days' have been extensively chronicled.

Many seniors are the children of newcomers to Canada who were raised on farms or in small communities. Often, when we reflect on our lives, we want to record our reminiscences for our grandchildren and future generations. The Memory Writers' Club helps us put on paper our unique stories of the past as we lived it.

Through monthly meetings, our small group is motivated to continue writing our life stories. Sometimes we share excerpts we've recently finished, and the sharing can be uplifting. One person's recollections often elicit memories from others so there's an incentive to add important details to ongoing autobiographies.

Meetings regularly expand into spirited discussions. Topics have included memories of teeth

pulled by country doctors wielding pliers, rather than call on scarce dentists, or the value of the Internet in researching family histories. At a recent meeting, Jean Frydenlund praised historian Bill Waiser's new book, *All Hell Can't Stop Us*, about the Regina Riot of 1935. It was noted that he does not appear to use the word 'hobo', which was well-known during the Depression. That led to reflections on our evolving language and the way certain once-common words are now obsolete, have a different meaning, or are considered politically incorrect. People compiling their memoirs must therefore explain currently obscure terms like 'shivaree,' 'Bennett buggy,' 'ration coupons' and 'butter churn,' or readers may not appreciate their significance in the life and times of the seniors.

For those with no writing experience and perhaps hesitant to begin, the Memory Writers suggest you start as if you're telling the story to a grandchild, perhaps on themes such as your first memory, early life at home, first days at school, first job or so on. It may be easier to continue, adding more stories.

While we believe it is important to strive for proper language, grammar, spelling and punctuation, we tend to focus more on content and clarity. Errors in writing style can always be corrected later, but it is of prime importance that the unique life histories should be compiled and preserved now. As one put it, "It is not so much **how** you write that counts, it is **what** you write."

The Saskatoon Memory Writers' Club has proven a most productive and stimulating opportunity for us to recall and share our past while creating a worthwhile legacy for future generations to better understand and appreciate how their forebears lived. We welcome new members.

Shirley Lomheim can be reached at 652-3245.





Sharing the Saskatchewan way

By Jenni Mortin

At 76, Walter Podiluk is happily engaged in the latest of many careers that ranged from education to government service to health to agricultural medicine. He now heads a Saskatoon-based group that is helping the residents of a former collective farm in Ukraine become masters of their own destiny, as a farming co-operative.

Four times in the last two years a Prairie Grassroots Vision International team has visited the village of Puklyaki, in western Ukraine, with tremendous impact, Walter says. After a visit by Peter and Marie Prebushewski on another project, this co-operative idea grew like wildfire, and has stirred up interest in other villages.

When the collective farming system died with Ukraine's Communist regime, no alternative was offered to farm families, Walter says. Each farmer at Puklyaki was allotted five of the former farm's 2,200 acres, and grew vegetables, though not in marketable quantities. Poverty was increasing, while half the former farm was unused.

Canadian visitors and a report by the Canadian International Development Agency suggested that

Ukraine's farming system had to be restructured at the grassroots level. Prairie Grassroots Vision International took that idea and ran with it.

They envisioned a co-operative on the entire acreage at Puklyaki, a co-operative formed, operated and managed by the residents. "This was a foreign idea," Walter says, for from the days of the Austro-Hungarian empire through Communist Ukraine, "they had been workers told what to do."

The co-op had to be run by an elected board of directors accountable to the people, a foreign notion of governance that has been difficult for the Puklyaki people to grasp. They had never elected a board responsible to the electors, or employed a CEO responsible to that board. They had not debated and passed motions which were then acted on, or received reports on that action.

So the Saskatoon team has had to work on political education as well as financial management and modern farming methods. The only way to do so was on site, in two-month stretches. At first the locals wondered why these foreigners had come but eventually made them part of the community, Walter says. "The degree of trust evident is fantastic." From 'why are you here?', the response has become 'when will you be back?'

Even after a pro tem board was elected in the fall of 2002, the local people wanted the Canadians to be involved. Marie Prebushewski is the on-site leader, quite a change for Ukraine where, Walter



Walter Podiluk

Photos from Puklyaki by Marie Prebushewski: Top, some of the villagers who are learning with Canadian help to farm co-operatively; right, the village sign in Cyrillic lettering; page 5, some local farming methods are still rooted in the past.



says, "there is still a tendency for men to be bosses and tell women what to do."

To date, Prairie Grassroots Vision International has been largely funded through donations from Saskatchewan's Ukrainian community, but it has applied for funding from Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. Team members get expenses, but no salaries. Any extra money will be available to the Puklyaki farmers for equipment and farming costs. Walter hopes to establish a Canada-Ukraine Agricultural Foundation.

The Saskatoon team maintains ongoing contact with Puklyaki by telephone, e-mail and, soon, an Internet chat room. It has asked the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association to partner in teaching co-operative principles.

"My hope is it will leave a legacy," Walter says, "that things will be changed that would not have changed if not for our presence there."

Walter Podiluk was formerly Director of Education for Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Celebrating Our Eldest

The oldest among us have much to teach the rest of us.

One of the ways they can do that is by joining the Saskatchewan Century Club, an association of seniors who have reached 90 and are determined to continue living as fully and actively as possible as they approach 100. That's active in every aspect -- physical, mental, social, spiritual and creative.

Those who join will become part of a network of nonagenarians who want to start new friendships and provide mutual support, according to a brochure about the club from the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism.

Members hope to demonstrate, through example, the value of living for a century or more. They will have a chance to do that by having their life stories captured in words and pictures, to mark Saskatchewan's Centennial in 2005. The hope is that a collection of these stories will be recorded and told by Saskatchewan author Ken Mitchell.

Those interested can learn more by writing:

The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
112 - 2001 Cornwall St.,
Regina, Sask. S4P 3X9.

Adopt-A-Grandchild program needs to be adopted

In the two years that the Council on Aging's Adopt-A-Grandchild program has been running, 11 grandmothers have been matched with children between five and 12 years old. And, often, lost their hearts, says co-ordinator Toni Chasmar.

"This young boy is attached to my heart," one grandmother reported. Another was delighted to have a youngster in her life, since her other grandchildren were grown up.

Most of the children who have been matched -- nine matches are still going on -- have no grandparents or elders in their lives other than parents. Regular contact with a caring grandmother has proved valuable to them, and may have kept them off the street, Toni says.

"We want to see these successes continue and grow," she says. In November, when the program's provincial funding expired, three grandmothers were preparing to be matched and 11 children were waiting.

Saskatoon City Council has proclaimed the week of January 11-17 Adopt-A-Grandchild Week. Watch for information about special events planned for that week.

The Adopt-A-Grandchild program is seeking both financial and practical support. Toni asks that anyone who could contribute or knows of an agency that would support the project to contact her at the Council office, phone 652-7525, fax 652-7525 or email : aag@scoa.ca.

APHASIA PROGRAM OFFERS HELP, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TO STROKE VICTIMS AND FAMILIES

By Ginnie Hartley

I met Bill and Vi in 1997, shortly after they returned from their annual vacation in Arizona. An active couple, they enjoyed their retirement winters down south. Bill golfed and fished, and he walked every day. He ate a balanced diet and had the occasional social drink; he didn't smoke.

But the winter of 1997 wasn't the normal carefree time in the sun. One day, Bill played golf as usual. When Vi woke up the next day, she knew something was terribly wrong. Bill could not get out of bed and he couldn't speak. He had suffered a stroke during the night. In an instant, their retirement years changed course.

Bill returned to Saskatchewan by air ambulance and spent months in rehabilitation, where I worked with him as a speech-language pathologist. He was in a wheelchair and had almost no speech.

He has made a slow recovery. He can now walk, with a cane, and he understands what is going on around him, but can still speak only a few words.

Recently, I met Bill and Vi again at Aphasia Community Connections, a community program that helps adults with communication difficulties "get back their voice". (Aphasia is the inability to understand speech and/or communicate effectively through speech, reading or writing.)

Speech-language pathologist Janet McLean is the driving force behind this initiative. She saw the need for a program that would

provide opportunities for communication, as well as support for stroke victims and their caregivers. With assistance from local service groups, Aphasia Community Connections got underway in March last year.

Participants may come for the full two hours or just drop in. They have the option of working on their speech, reading and/or writing, and there is an area where they can socialize while having coffee and goodies. Activities include:

- family support groups
- conversation groups
- skill building groups (reading, writing, speech exercises, word finding)

Bill and Vi have been attending since the program began, and enjoy their time there. Bill reads the paper and joins in the games and songs. He has made friends and Vi has connected with other spouses who understand her situation. She says Bill has started to use some of the strategies he has learned at the group to communicate better with her at home. He uses gestures and facial expressions and the occasional word to get his message across.

They credit the group's success to Janet's enthusiasm and obvious love for her work.

Aphasia Community Connec-



Janet McLean teaches methods of communication to Aphasia group.

- choir
- leisure activities (card and board games, crafts)
- exercise
- creative communication (learning to use alternative ways to get a message across, including gesturing, facial expression, drawing)
- library activities.

tions meets Tuesday mornings from 10 to noon in the Auditorium across from the Rusty MacDonald Library in Lawson Heights Civic Centre. For more information, contact Janet McLean at 655-8183.

Ginnie Hartley is a speech-language pathologist and a writer with an interest in seniors.

Don't let depression get you down this winter

By Lana Shaw-Ethier

Alice knew it was mid-morning before she opened her eyes. Lately she was having difficulty getting up, and was sleepy in the afternoon, too. She opened her eyes. Sure enough, it was 10 a.m., definitely time to get up. She pushed her walker to the kitchen for coffee and toast. She couldn't seem to get enough breads, caffeinated beverages and salty foods to 'kick start' her day.

As she sat down to eat and read her mail, the headline of a newsletter caught her eye – "Don't be SAD, Living With (out) Seasonal Affective Disorder." Alice read that SAD can affect anyone of any age and that she had many of the symptoms – the desire to sleep more, increased appetite for starchy foods (besides toast, she just HAD to have peanut butter and crackers every night). She reflected that she had put on six pounds this fall and it was only the middle of October.

'Come to think of it,' she thought, 'my friends have been calling less, and I am really irritable.' She thought her friends called less because they didn't know what to say or do since Tom died. That was over a year ago and she had been declining invitations because she felt like staying in this fall.

Alice read on.

SAD affects 2-3 percent of Canadians, and between 5 percent and 20 percent will suffer from some form of depression at some point in their lives. Wow, she

thought, I'm not alone. But what can I do?

The article urged people to see their family doctor who would confirm the diagnosis of depression/SAD, and discuss the kinds of treatment available. These may include such things as seasonal affective disorder and bipolar medication, dietary changes, exercise and light therapy.

Alice took the article with her to her doctor. They discussed the various types of depression, including major depression disorder. Looking back, Alice admitted that her depressive symptoms had been occurring off and on for several years. Her doctor diagnosed her with Unipolar depression (major depression) and prescribed a low dose of an antidepressant and a trial of light therapy.

Three weeks later, Alice returned for a follow-up. Her step felt lighter, she was no longer ravenous and was feeling more social. Lana, from the Light Therapy Program, had contacted her to set up a trial of light therapy using a lightbox (that sounded exciting). Things were looking brighter already.

For more information about Depression/Seasonal Affective Disorder, contact your family doctor or your local Mental Health Services.

Lana Shaw-Ethier is a nurse therapist with the Saskatoon Health Region.

Simple Lifestyle Changes Can Help Prevent Depression



Alice needed medications for her depression for a short time, but for most people, some simple lifestyle changes are all that are needed. These might include:

- ✓ **Getting up and going to bed at the same time every day**
- ✓ **Following a diet that is high in complex carbohydrates (rice millet, potatoes, whole grain breads, vegetables and those in the cabbage family) and low in fats.**
- ✓ **Getting as much natural light as possible**
- ✓ **Exercising regularly**
- ✓ **Spending time with supportive people/friends**
- ✓ **Learning relaxation techniques.**

Bite the apple while you still can would be consultant's wise advice

T.S. Eliot believed April to be the cruellest month, but that's because no one tried to sell him RRSPs in February. That's why I like March; its lovely monosyllable brings respite to our acronym-addled souls. It gives us time (31 days' worth) to carve another notch on our ATM cards for surviving the blitz.

At least we can be thankful that February is the shortest month. Three additional days of being browbeaten by the media and by the banks' nefarious brainwave disruptor generators broadcasting from top-secret death star satellites right into our craniums, telling us to save more for our golden years, might cause one to do something immature, like have a hissy fit.

Frankly, I like to think that my golden years are already here, so why not enjoy them by spending as much money as possible as quickly as possible? Because if we wait too long, all that lovely cash will end up being spent on vitamin pills and replacement-hip lubricant. I say, take a bite out of the apple now, not sometime in the future when the odds of leaving your teeth behind are three to one.

I am happy to have shared my belief with you. All that's left to do is expand this germ of an idea into 10,000 words of seminar material, jam it into a snazzy

fake-leather binder and become a consultant.

Of course there are those naysayers who hiss: "Not another consultant!" and lurch into the shadows, away from their open windows. Fair enough. Who among us has never walked away from a seminar emboldened by new ideas, only to wake up in the morning, after the sorcery has worn off, besotted with good, safe, old ideas?

But wait! Consultants deserve a place in society. They are not half as bothersome as the interrogators at Turkish prisons, nor as ubiquitous as raffle ticket sellers. They dress well, tend to be polite and cheery and are loved by big business because of the paper they generate. That is how managers are judged, you know – by paper tonnage.

Why create a report yourself when you can engage a consultant? If it turns out to be the greatest idea since the universal remote control, you can quietly take credit. If it turns out to be a waste of paper and ink, no one will know because no one reads these reports anyway.

Either way, you've got yourself a nice new binder.



**Michael
Gillgannon**

Pension sharing as part of your tax planning

You and your spouse or common-law partner can share your CPP retirement pensions for possible tax savings. Pension sharing would result in the two of you receiving an equal amount of the retirement pension or pensions you both earned during your years together. To qualify, CPP contributors and their spouses or common-law partners need:

- to both be at least 60 years old;
- to apply for or already be in receipt of CPP retirement pension(s); and
- to apply in writing for pension sharing.

To find out more about the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security programs, visit our Web site at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp or call free of charge

1 800 277-9914 English
1 800 277-9915 French
TDD/TTY: 1 800 255-4786

For faster telephone service, please call Tuesday to Friday during the middle weeks of the month. Please have your social insurance number (SIN) ready.