



COMING of AGE

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

Council supports drop-in program for seniors in Saskatoon core

By Jenni Mortin

Every Tuesday from 11 to 2, Inner City “seniors” are lunching, exercising and generally having fun at the Rainbow Community Centre at St. Thomas Wesley United Church on 20th Street, in a new project of the Saskatoon Council on Aging.

“Seniors” is in quotation marks because Let’s Do Lunch, its current name, welcomes those 50 and better, and isn’t even too strict about that age requirement.

“The goal is to get people out of their house to a nice safe place to meet on Tuesdays,” says Sarah Nixon-Jackle. She and Wilma Mollard are members of Council’s long-range planning committee and represent it on the Rainbow Seniors Committee that plans the weekly sessions.

“We hope the folks that come will turn it into what they want it to be.”

The sessions began last spring with an eight-week pilot project that attracted eight to 10 regular participants, and started again in September with the hope of building on that core group.

“It was good to laugh and eat together and try different soups.”

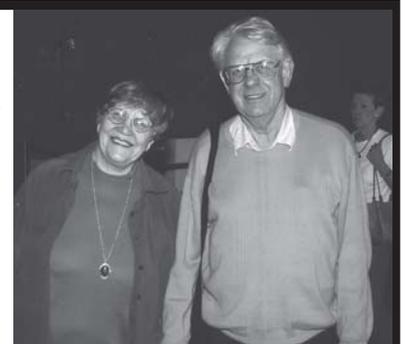
Lunch costs participants just \$1. Organizations such as church women’s groups may provide the lunch, or a local person will cater if there is enough money, Nixon-Jackle says.

The project grew out of

studies of the needs of marginalized seniors in the inner city, says Bonnie Reid of the Rainbow Community Centre board. The Centre resulted from a three-year community development and consultation process initiated by St. Thomas Wesley Church with the goal of developing a long-term vision and plan for core neighbourhoods.

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So you’re going on a trip



Jeanette and Chris Dean waiting to get on the ship for a Panama Canal cruise

By Jeanette Dean

You’ve been saving forever, it seems, for the holiday of a lifetime. Now it’s all booked and you’re getting ready to go. Whether it’s a bus tour, a cruise or an independent holiday, how can you make it the perfect experience? You can do a lot by careful planning beforehand.

Learn about where you’re going. Use the library; you can learn from other travellers’ experiences and borrow guidebooks to take along.

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President's Message

BY MURIEL BAXTER

PRESIDENT, SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING

As we begin Saskatchewan's centennial year, we have many reasons to celebrate. In the past 100 years change has been so extensive that our daily living bears little resemblance to life as described in 1905. Most change would be considered progress but not without frustration for those of us who did not grow up in the computer age. We crave the sound of a human voice on the other end of the telephone and the opportunity to use our name rather than a password or number in communications. Our need for personal interaction and community has not changed.

The Saskatoon Council on

Aging is aware of the challenges for senior adults in a changing environment. We encourage computer literacy for those interested by providing one-on-one sessions in our Resource Centre. When you call us at 652-2255, a real person answers and will address your needs with information or appropriate referral. We encourage socialization and community through a drop-in program, lobbying for better transportation, initiating day programs and providing coffee and cookies at the monthly blood pressure clinic.

While proud of our existing programs and past initiatives, we recognize that much more can be

done to improve the quality of life of senior adults in our community. Our Long-Range Planning Committee explores community needs while seeking ways the Council can be involved in solutions through partnerships, research or services. Such projects are contingent on funding. Efforts continue to obtain adequate financial support from all levels of government and numerous foundations. While we celebrate the past we will not lose our focus on current needs.

In light of all this, we are grateful that Federated Co-operatives has donated two computers to our office.

Coping with Incontinence

BY ELIZABETH MEGGS, RN, NCA

In a society that worships youth, many issues around aging are considered taboo. None is more misunderstood than incontinence, which many believe is a normal consequence of aging. Nothing could be further from the truth. Incontinence is not normal at any age.

Incontinence is defined as involuntary and uncontrolled loss of urine or stool. The myths around it result in isolation and depression for those who suffer. Embarrassment and fear of accidents often curtail social outings, which only increases isolation. The silence that surrounds this issue means many people do not get the help they need.

Studies estimate that 57 percent of women 45 to 65 suffer from incontinence, as well as

increasing numbers of men. It is thought that half of nursing home patients are incontinent, with this being one of the deciding factors for their admission to a long-term care facility.

Incontinence has financial implications to the individual and society. Costs are estimated at more than \$1 million, with 11 percent for incontinence products.

In an effort to contain some of these costs and address the problems of incontinence, the

nurse continence advisor was established in England in the 1970s and in the 1990s in Ontario. Canada now has more than 100 NCAs.

The year-long training course focuses on conservative, non-invasive management techniques that enable the individual to gain control and independence. Through a medical history and *thorough assessment*, the nurse can uncover the likely cause of

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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

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Houseplants that are handsome *and* tough

By
Erl
Svendsen

As I sit here, looking out at leafless trees and snow, I am not the least surprised that houseplants have been popular since before the 1800s. And it doesn't take snow on the ground for people to want to bring a little natural colour into their homes.



cast-iron plant

So why are house plants so difficult to take care of? No plant ever developed naturally or was bred specifically to survive in your home. Houses are dark, dry, occasionally drafty (hot and cold), and rarely does it rain in your house unless the bathtub upstairs overflows. Potted plants rely on YOU to supply all essential care and nutrients. Luckily, for many of the plants that can be grown in your home, there are a few broad guidelines.

Water: Wait until the top inch of the soil is dry to the touch; water until it comes out at the bottom of the pot; never allow your pot to sit in water: always empty the saucer or, better yet, water plants in the sink and allow them to drain there.



snake plant

Fertilize: Unless you are growing under lights or in a south window, fertilize once or twice a month at half-strength according to the label instructions. Apply fertilizer solution as if you were watering. If, like me, you put off fertilizing forever, use a slow-release type specifically made for houseplants and apply once a year according to label directions.

Temperature: Keep plants away from furnace vents: not only is forced air too hot in winter (and cold in summer if you have air-conditioning), it is very drying. In winter, keep plants out of the way of cold drafts from open doors and windows.

Light: Keep your houseplants out of direct south exposure (a few feet away is OK). West

and east exposure is fine year-round; you must place plants within inches of the glass for them to get enough light in a north window. In winter, do not trap your plant between the window and the curtain. Containers for plants that are to be in direct sun should never be made of a dark material; the roots will literally cook to death.

Truly tough plants

The appropriately named **cast-iron plant** (*Aspidistra elatior*) was the epitome of Victorian plants, able to survive under the low light conditions in parlors and with little water. Leaves are leathery and dark green, with two variegated varieties. This plant must be kept on the dry side and prefers to be pot-bound. Never use leaf-shine on it.

The mother-in-law-tongue or snake plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*) has thick, long, narrow, dark green leaves that come to an abrupt point. Dwarf or variegated varieties exist. It can survive neglect but should be given adequate light (within 2-3 feet of an east or west window; within 4-6 feet of a south window). Keep out of cold drafts and do not over-water. Prefers to be pot-bound.

The Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema sp.*) in many ways resembles the cast-iron plant and may even be as tough. The leaves are usually a paler green with a silvery pattern and closely attached to one another on a short stem. Numerous varieties exist, differing mainly in leaf pattern. Another plant that you must not over-water.

The amaryllis (*Hippeastrum sp.*) does not usually make the list of tough plants; however, if you have a south expo-



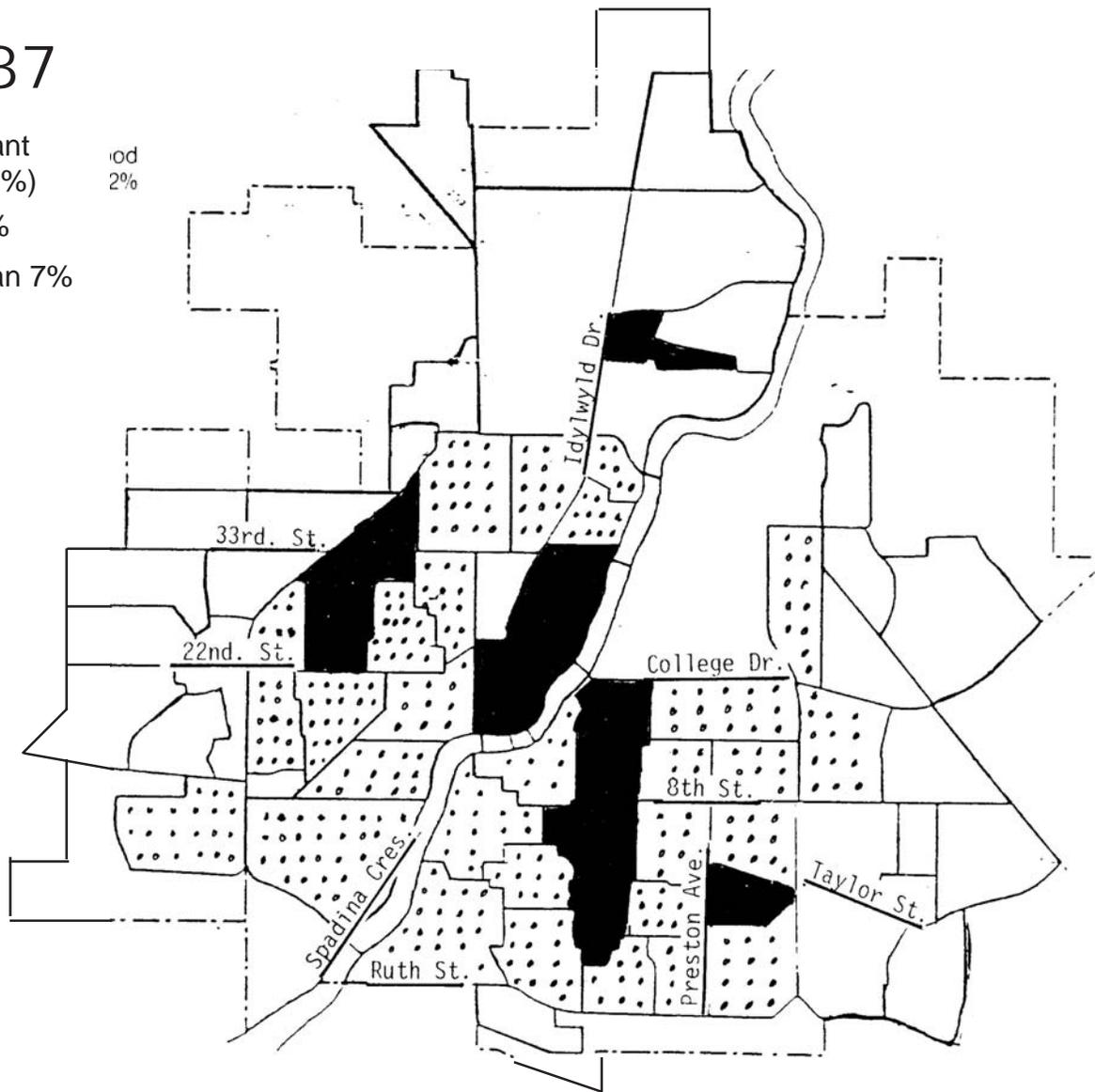
Chinese evergreen

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Where do seniors live in Saskatoon?

1987

- Significant (over 17%)
- 7 to 17%
- Less than 7%



Tough plants, *continued*

sure and don't care if it flowers on cue, this is a very tolerant plant. Long, narrow, light green leaves arise from a bulb. They last 6-8 months; remove them with a gentle tug as they yellow. If you're not trying to force it to flower for Christmas, it will flower in the fall and again in the spring. Offsets (new bulbs) are formed at the base of the mother bulb and it is time to repot your amaryllis

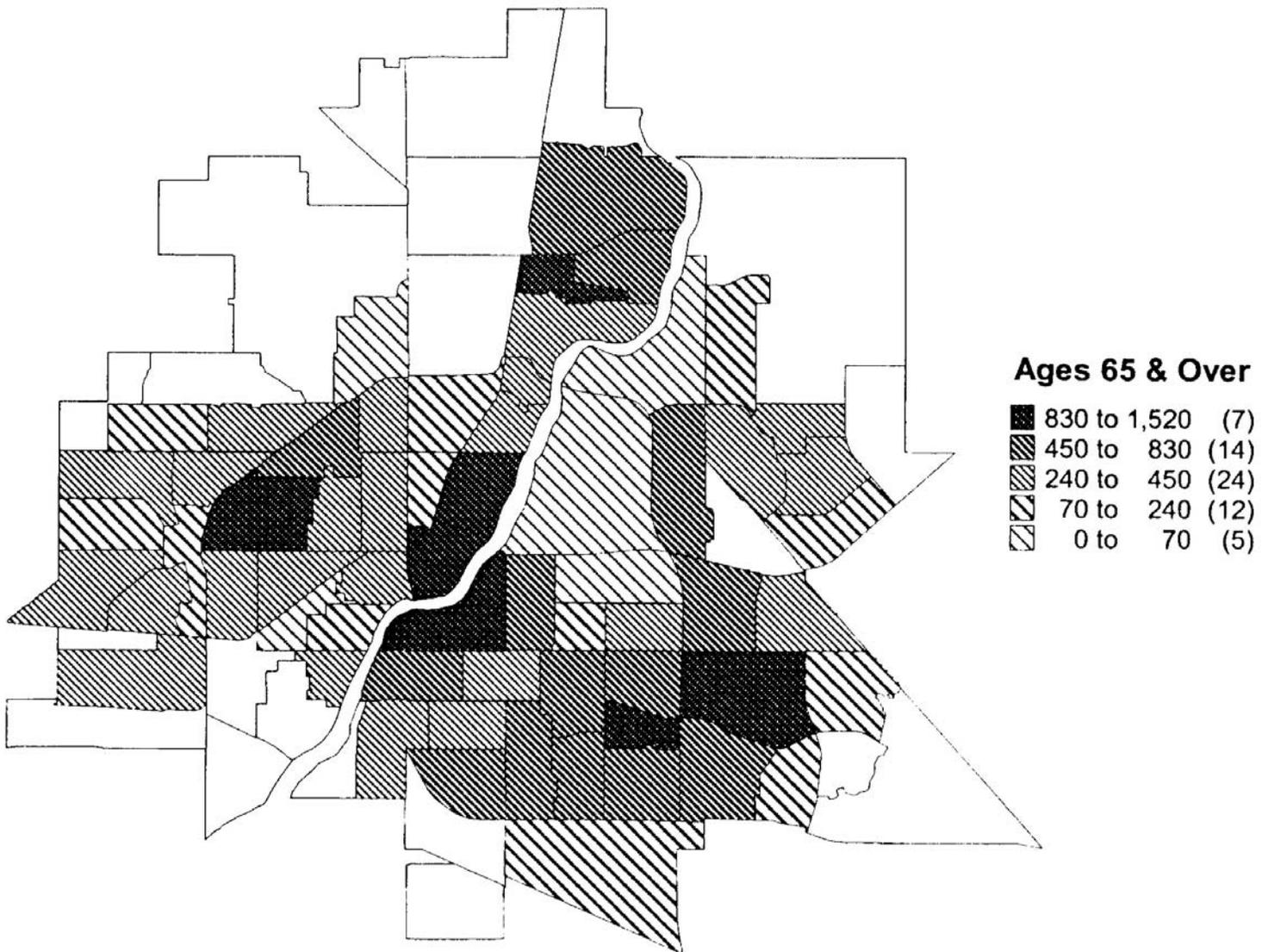
when it breaks its pot. Keep on the dry side and warm.

A final word: Gift plants like poinsettias, chrysanthemums, azaleas, hydrangeas and Reiger begonias should be enjoyed while they are flowering. Do not feel guilty about throwing them out when they stop. Very specific light and temperature regimens (not found in the typical

home) are required to bring them back into flower; in the meantime, you are spending time and effort keeping alive a marginally attractive plant that is detracting from your otherwise stylish home.

Erl Svendsen is an avid gardener who turns to houseplants to provide 'green relief' during long Saskatchewan winters.

Comparing 1987 and 2003, Seniors 65+



Drop-In Program

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Already Rainbow is home to a Resource Centre, Kids First program, Well-baby clinic, the Saskatoon Native Ministry, Riverbend Presbytery Inner City Ministry, the Child Hunger and Education Program good food box depot, various 12-step programs and other services, operated in partnership with various agencies.

For the drop-in program, Rainbow partners with the Council on Aging and the Saskatoon Health Region, which is represented by Nixon-Jackle, of the Older Adult Wellness Program, and Joyce Tremmel of *In Motion*, who leads the exercises that

start off every session. St. Thomas Wesley provides space free.

After exercises and a lunch of soup, bannock and fruit, the first fall session was devoted to storytelling about school days, and good communication went on among the small group.

"I've found the people here very congenial," one participant said as a reason for attending. "I like the atmosphere and the idea that there's something for people over 50," said another. One woman who had returned to Saskatoon from another city said it was the closest she had found to a support group. "It's the most comfortable niche I've been able to find."

6 Plan carefully, pack wisely, enjoy

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Look at videos, magazines and travel programs on TV. Consult the Internet. Pore over maps and dream of the new things you'll be seeing.

Get in shape; walk farther. An advertised easy tour in Europe is often a five-kilometre hike on cobbled streets, and you can get very tired in museums and galleries. Before you go, climb as many stairs as you can – some buses seem as high as Mt. Everest and you don't want to miss the view from the top of Notre Dame. Cruise boats often cannot anchor right in port which means clambering into a tender to go ashore.

You'll need lots of cash. If you're going abroad, take a little of the local currency with you to get started. If, however, your bank charges you a lot to get this, take US dollars – they are always acceptable. We used to take traveller's cheques but now, like most travellers, we rely on the bank machine and the credit card. We've used them successfully in a village on the Amazon, at Santa's village in Northern Finland, and in the most southerly town in the world.

If you're travelling by air, check at least once with your travel agent or the airlines you've booked with that you have at least two hours between connections. Airports are not the place

By
**Jeanette
Dean**



Jeanette and Chris Dean on an Alaska cruise last summer

for a hundred-yard dash! If you need help getting around the airport or onto the plane, don't hesitate to ask for wheelchair assistance. It comes with a smile and a kind word.

I have travelled with a wheelchair on a cruise and a car trip, and both worked out fine. Airlines are helpful about carrying your wheelchair or walker, and wheelchairs can go in the tender when you're going ashore from a cruise ship.

Saskatoon is not a great city to fly out of and you'll likely have to get a very early plane if you must travel a distance to where your holiday begins. This means you start off weary and then probably have to cope with jet lag. For years we did this, and had journeys of 20 hours or more. Now if we have to go through Toronto or Vancouver, we try to fly there the afternoon the day before and stay overnight. It makes all the difference and can be fun. Avoid Toronto and Heathrow if possible. They can be nightmares at busy times.

When the paperwork is done and departure day is very near,

it's time to pack. Suitcases with wheels are a godsend. Take as little as you can if you have to cope with the luggage yourself, but on a bus trip or cruise where it miraculously appears in your room, take as much as you're allowed. Think in layers and don't take new shoes! Try, though, to have only one suitcase and a carry-on bag which should contain your documents, money, medications, camera, toiletries, emergency clothing in case you're delayed or your luggage gets lost, and if you are flying on a Canadian plane – food!

Flying to a warm country and leaving and returning to a Saskatchewan winter can be a problem. Try to have someone take you to the airport and carry your heavy coat home. Then pack your scarf, hat and gloves in an outside compartment of your case. We find one of the best parts of a winter holiday is to see our daughter at the airport on our return, waving and smiling and clutching our winter jackets.

Have a wonderful holiday!

*Jeanette Dean is a member
of the Publication Committee*

LEAVE THE LEGACY OF HEALTH TO YOUR GRANDCHILDREN



By Brenda Temple

In motion worked with Public Health Services, Older Adult Wellness Program, in developing a display to assist grandparents to help their grandchildren have a healthier lifestyle. The information is available at three Saskatoon three Public Health Centres:

North Health Centre, 100-222 Primrose Dr.
South-East Health Centre, 3006 Taylor St. E.
West Health Center, 3118 Laurier Dr.

The three areas highlighted in the display are:

Fitness-Friendly Gifts

- ✂ Give sports equipment, such as a basketball, a soccer ball or a skipping rope.
- ✂ Parents are often over budget paying for activities for their children. Grandparents can help out by paying for lessons or contributing to your grandchild's membership on a team.
- ✂ Purchase a Leisure Pass or drop-in tickets to one of the City of Saskatoon, YWCA or YMCA recreation facilities.
- ✂ Teach them some dance steps you know, like the polka, two-step, waltz, jive or schottische.
- ✂ In the spring give them part of your garden. You can then plan their garden with them through the year.
- ✂ Introduce them to games such as Duck, Duck, Goose, Four Square, Red Rover or Red Light/Green Light.

- ✂ Teach some of the skipping rhymes that you learned in school. If you can't remember them, here are a couple of websites to help you:

www.gameskidsplay.net

www.todayparent.com/carfactivities/indoors/article.jsp?content=355

Grandparenting Books

- ✂ A variety of fictional and non-fictional books that can assist grandparents to develop a relationship with their grandchildren is highlighted in the display. All books are available at the Saskatoon Public Library or from local bookstores.

Cooking with grandchildren

- ✂ Wholesome foods made from scratch have too often become a thing of the past! Some recipes featured in the display are:

Date Squares
Borscht
Apple Bread Pudding

Remember, though, it is also important for grandparents to keep healthy! For information on getting a physical activity program started or being a part of *Forever...in motion* by becoming a leader for older adults programs, please contact the *in motion* information line at 655-DO IT (3648).

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

Incontinence

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the incontinence and design a treatment program specifically for the patient. The assessment can also determine if a referral to a specialist is needed.

Management techniques include lifestyle changes such as diet modification and exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor. Irritants in the diet, such as caffeine and spicy foods, can account for problems with bladder or bowel; control can often be regained by removing these irritants. Diet changes and simple exercises, known as Kegels,

that strengthen the pelvic floor muscles can improve an individual's quality of life.

The nurse continence advisor has an important role to play in helping those affected to cope with this lifestyle-limiting condition. An NCA can make a difference in a special care home by teaching residents prompted voiding or bladder training. Dealing with incontinence **will** improve quality of life and reduce costs for the individual and society.

Elizabeth Meggs is a nurse continence advisor at Nightingale Nursing Group, 652-3314, e-mail: ea.meggs.rn@sasktel.net

Things politicians say (and what they mean)

I'll all come out in the wash. *(Clean but shrunken.)*

I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for my husband Biff/ wife Muffy. *(I wanted to get a real job, and now look at me.)*

What goes around, comes around. *(Until the batteries wear out.)*

I see your point. *(Your silly, wrongheaded, stupid point.)*

We'll have to see how that impacts on the other parameters. *(As long as my pension is safe, I couldn't care less.)*

I agree that the plight of the carpenter ant merits the attention of all Canadians and I give you my solemn word that I will take up this matter with the prime minister at the earliest opportunity. *(Which could be never, since he doesn't even know I exist.)*

There's an exception to every rule. *(And an exception to every exception.)*

I hope you believe me when I say this. *(And ignore the last time I lied to you.)*

The honourable member must be joking. *(Not that I would know.)*

Our education system/medicare system/sewer system/road system/legal system is a shambles. *(And I wish I knew what to do about it.)*

As Tommy Douglas/Winston Churchill/Cicero once said. . . . *(Oh, I wish I had a brain and could think of clever things to say on my own.)*

The immigration situation warrants our serious attention. *(Memo to executive assistant: Book my '05 Grey Cup tickets this week.)*

Let me say this about that. *(Warning! The following monologue has a rating of 9.5 on the Density Scale.)*

Merry Christmas. *(Don't forget to vote for me.)*

Two wrongs don't make a right. *(Unless you've got a good speechwriter.)*

Thanks for coming out. *(You ARE leaving soon, aren't you?)*

Ha ha ha ha ha. *(I don't find that funny.)*

The free exchange of opinion in the Legislature is a sacred heritage. *(The honourable member for Ganglion Creek's mother wears combat boots.)*

No more taxes. *(The same taxes at a higher rate.)*

I'll get back to you. *(Let me out of here.)*

I hear what you're saying. *(But I can't believe we share the same planet.)*

**MICHAEL
GILLGANNON**

Michael Gillgannon is a member of the Publication Committee.

C O U N T D O W N T O SASKATOON'S 100th ANNIVERSARY

In just one year we will start celebrating Saskatoon's 100th anniversary. Planning is now underway for this great event in 2006, and a centennial committee is chaired by Darlene Bessey. The centennial theme, "Our Time to Shine," recognizes our accomplishments as a community and shows our excitement for the future. Start planning now how you as a senior, a member of a seniors' organization or a family member with Saskatoon roots can celebrate our anniversary. Go to the city's website (www.saskatoon.ca) and check the centenary link for more information, or call Joanne (City Hall) 306-975-2880 or Bubs (seniors' representative) 306-652-9044.

