



COMING of AGE

A Publication of the Saskatoon Council on Aging

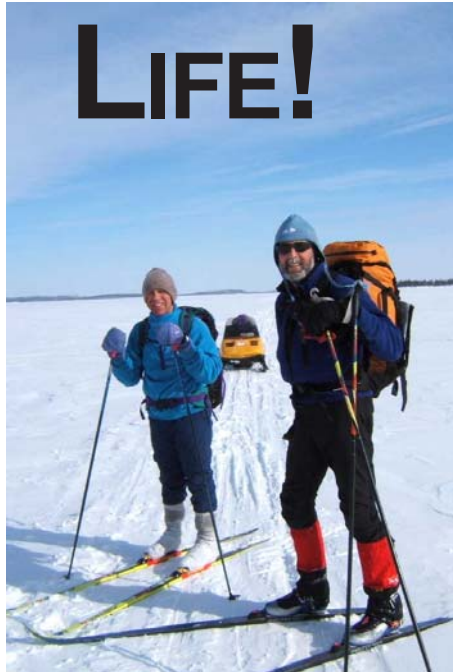
SKI FOR LIFE!

By George James

Does winter loom long and dismal? The Ski for Life program just launched by the Saskatoon Council on Aging and the Nordic Ski Club Saskatoon can help change that.

Ski for Life is aimed at beginning cross-country skiers aged 50 and over. Financial support from our sponsors means it costs only \$30 per person, which includes membership in the Nordic Ski Club until Oct. 31, coffee after each session and a wind-up social.

But don't delay. Deadline for registration is Jan. 16, and an orientation meeting is set for Jan. 17 at the Council. Ski instruction will begin at Kinsmen Park Jan. 24 and continue on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons until Feb. 2. These dates are flexible to allow



Dave Bober and Dick Cassidy enjoy a sunny day of cross-country skiing.

for extremes of temperature or wind chill, and adequate snow.

All sessions will run from 1 to 3 p.m., the warmest part of the winter day. Free parking is available in the Kinsmen Park lot, and the après-ski social sessions will be held at the Council Centre

(Continued on page 2)

Making Saskatoon a world-class city for seniors

By Michael Gillgannon

Think of a project as having six phases: enthusiasm, disillusionment, panic, the search for the guilty, the punishment of the innocent and, finally, praise and honours for the non-participants.

This humorous take on projects, put forth by Dr. Alex McPherson at Saskatoon's 2020 Health Vision conference in November, is very much NOT the model for a committee calling itself Saskatoon: World Class for Life. Four years after being created (under a different name), the WCFL committee has not let its enthusiasm flag.

A paper presented at the conference by World Class for Life outlined trends experienced by the Saskatoon region. For instance, age distribution is high at both ends (young and old) but

(Continued on page 5)



Stuart and Mary Houston of Saskatoon cruised in the Arctic last fall in the "tiny" boat seen to the right of this iceberg. More on their trip on pages 4 and 5.



President's Message

BY MURIEL BAXTER

PRESIDENT, SASKATOON COUNCIL ON AGING

Preparing this message in November for the Winter issue of *Coming of Age*, it occurs to me that many steps and much time are involved in preparing each issue. The Council is most appreciative of the members of the Publication Committee for their contribution in creating this publication, of which we are very proud. A special thank-you to Jenni Mortin, our editor. Aside from the normal responsibilities of an editor, Jenni assumes the task of jogging the memories of those of us who tend to forget deadlines. Thanks, Jenni!

Council's work continues with both established programs and investigative committees seeking new ways we can contribute to the well-being of older adults in the area.

The new directories will soon be available with current information on services and activities for seniors. We trust you have found these directories a valuable resource and will make good use of the updated versions.

In 2006 we are again enjoying centennial celebrations – this time for the City of Saskatoon. One of the things we might celebrate is the diversity of our city. In keeping with that thought, I would like to pass on a quote from an e-mail I received:

"We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colours, but they all live in the same box."

Muriel

Goal -- to Promote Healthy Physical Activity

(From page 1)

in the Saskatoon Community Service Village.

The goal of Ski for Life is to promote healthy physical activity for older adults who are capable of moderate activity in our winter climate. Participants will learn the basics of safe cross-country skiing from a certified instructor, on a prepared, groomed track set grid with 10 tracks, and the rudiments of proper ski waxing technique. And you'll be part of a social and activity network that encourages participation, learning and continuity.

And when you decide you love cross-country skiing – as I'm sure you will – you can readily continue thanks to the special complimentary membership in the Nordic Ski Club. You can join in club activities, such as the weekly Sunday tours during which members ski at their own pace in a

forest setting. You will be registered with Cross Country Saskatchewan and receive its literature.

A maximum of 10 people can participate in the program, but if more register, the Council will try to set up additional sections. A minimum enrolment is required. The Council will provide information about rental possibilities and availability of used ski equipment at local shops, but only information.

Financial assistance for this program came from Nordic Ski Club Saskatoon and a Cameco Community Caring Grant, admin-

istered by the Saskatoon Community Foundation. Forever in Motion – In Motion Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Health Region and the City of Saskatoon helped publicize the program.

Please contact the Council at 652-2255 for more information and brochure/registration form. Ski for Life is a great opportunity to learn a healthy outdoor sport that defies winter but, remember, you must register by Jan. 16.

George James is a member of the board of the Saskatoon Council on Aging.

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

SENIORS AND CITY POLICE LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Just over two years ago I was invited to serve on a Saskatoon Police Service committee as a representative senior from the Council on Aging. Aboriginals, immigrants, refugees, university students, people with AIDS, gays and lesbians, youth were all represented on the committee.

Our main task was to be resource people for a series of workshops for everyone working for the city police. In groups of about 25, they spent two days learning more about the needs of Saskatoon's diverse population. As the time allotted to seniors came at the end, we

were concerned that it should end on a high note, and every time I think it did!

Each time we had a panel of four: a professional working with seniors, a senior who had had some contact with the police, an immigrant senior and myself as moderator. We dispelled some myths about

By
Jeanette Dean

seniors – that we are all rich or very poor, all deaf and dim, all cranky and living in the past. Through often funny and moving stories we showed the police that these assumptions could not be applied generally to seniors.

Police members learned how devastating a break-in or car accident can be for a senior afraid of losing independence as a consequence. They learned that seniors deeply respect the work of the police, but they

expect their calls to the department to be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

In the discussion that followed, we learned so much from the police, too. They worried, for example, that sometimes

seniors who are in trouble because of a scam or are being exploited by their neighbours or family wait too long before they

contact the Police Service. They worried that seniors often do not carry identification, which makes it hard to find needed help; that they are sometimes too trusting, that their homes are not sufficiently protected.

We suggested ways to improve some of these situations and the police made us aware of their good work with community initiatives. Each workshop was a learning feel-good experience for everyone.

We hope the police went home knowing that though we have old bodies, we still have hopes and dreams of what we are going to do. We went home feeling safer and more cared for and echoing the words of an 85-year-old from the Middle East who was lost and taken home in a police car: "You are truly my sisters and brothers."

More than 20 seniors took part in these workshops, an experience we will always remember. We were only a small part of the two days of awareness and the police involved in arranging them are to be congratulated.

*Jeanette Dean is a member of the
Publication Committee*

We went home feeling safer and more cared for and echoing the words of an 85-year-old from the Middle East who was lost and taken home in a police car: "You are truly my sisters and brothers."

Websites of Interest and Value to Seniors

www.scoa.ca

Saskatoon Council on Aging site describes services and projects -- blood pressure clinic, drop-in program, computer lessons, school partnership, Spotlight on Seniors, informal caregiver, Century Club, elder abuse, etc. Directories of activities, services and physical activity can be downloaded.

www.canadian-health-network.ca

Health information from the Public Health Agency of Canada and major health organizations across the country.

www.seniors.gc.ca

Simple, fast route to key programs and services from Canadian governments.

www.skgerontologyassoc.org

Sask. Gerontology Association site includes its newsletter.

www.50Plus.com

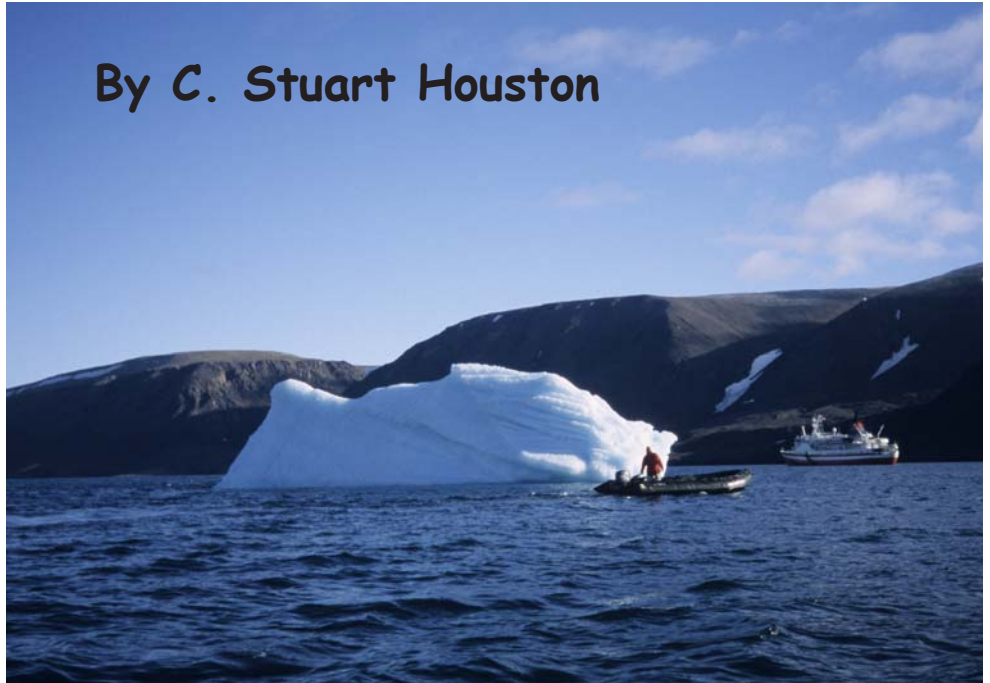
Website of CARP, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons.

www.naca-ccnt.ca

National Advisory Council on Aging offers data on health, housing and other topics of concern to seniors..

Couple Delights in Cruise North of Arctic Circle

By C. Stuart Houston



Zodiacs took passengers close to an iceberg that dwarfed the Explorer as it waited nearby.

My wife Mary and I signed up for a 12-day Arctic trip in the *MS Explorer*, because of our interest in Sir John Franklin. We wanted to see the graves on Beechey Island of the first three sailors to die (in early 1846) on his fatal Third Expedition.

The Adventure Canada trip didn't start as planned, for the second leg of our flight from Ottawa was delayed by high crosswinds at Resolute. But that proved an unexpected bonus, giving us a full day in Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, where we visited Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park, the Anglican cathedral (in the shape of an iglu), the territorial legislature, the museum and the bookstore with the best selection of Arctic books in Canada. Nunavut legislators wisely avoid confrontation by sitting in a circle, choosing the premier from among those elected.

When the winds changed direction at Resolute, we flew

there after dark, donned our mandatory rubber boots and waded in the surf to the Zodiacs that carried us out to the *Explorer*.

We reached fabled Beechey Island on Aug. 30, and we were very interested to see the graves there. This was a "dry landing" without rubber boots. Our fellow passengers were mainly seniors, but the Filipino staff assisted each into and out of the Zodiac.

Ice a Foot Thick

The next night the *Explorer* drove slowly through a field of 80 per cent ice, much of it a foot thick, to reach Grise Fjord, Canada's most northern settlement. We went to shore in the five Zodiacs among small icebergs through heavy fog. The Inuk inhabitants seemed healthy and happy; the school put on a fashion show.

On Sept. 1 we visited interesting Inuk grave sites and the former RCMP post at Dundas Harbour, where we saw a peregrine falcon in its nest in the

cliff above the fort. The next day – the only one with heavy waves – we headed north along the coast of Ellesmere Island. We had excellent views of polar bears on the ice, walrus and special birds such as northern fulmars, ivory gulls, great cormorants and a white-tailed eagle. After reaching 77 degrees 41 minutes north latitude, we turned back to take a sick passenger to the U.S. Armed Forces hospital at Thule, Greenland.

On Sept. 3, we returned north to Qaanaaq (population 650) and its museum in the home of Arctic explorer Knud Rasmussen. We landed at Cap York the next day for a hike around an inland pond, and on Sept. 5 sailed south. To make up lost time there was no Zodiac trip ashore that day.

Sept. 6 was a memorable day at Ilulissat, the third largest town in Greenland, population 4,470. We went by Zodiac to the northern hemisphere's largest iceberg "hatchery," where each day the glacier calves off ice-

(Continued on page 5)

World-Class City for Seniors

(Continued from Page 1)

sags in the middle, where the most significant tax base resides. The city's economy is stronger than the provincial average. Research activity is unprecedented; Innovation Place alone has 2,000 staff and the synchrotron's potential is nearly unlimited.

The "mixed bag" of pressures and opportunities is large indeed. Pressures continue to build on provincial funding for health services. Almost 50 cents of every dollar collected by the province goes for health care; by 2015 it could be 75 cents. While Saskatoon is attracting high-profile researchers, other regions of Canada and parts of the U.S. also see health care as an attractive growth target.

While Saskatoon is growing rather rapidly, the province is not, and "there is no compelling reason to expect it will change in any significant manner," the

discussion paper said.

This is the backdrop to the WCFL's labours: to wrest strategies from trends, not all of which are positive. Some of the key outcomes that would help cement a "world class" ranking for the area include:

- ◆ Positioning Saskatoon as the seniors' health capital of Canada;
- ◆ Fostering a healthy senior population and putting the brakes on at least that aspect of health care costs;
- ◆ Attracting skilled personnel and retaining more young people before they flee to Alberta and B.C.;
- ◆ Dealing better with aboriginal health issues;
- ◆ Encouraging new types of health-related businesses, which in turn would further boost the research field.

The workshop that followed was asked what services must be

provided to ensure that Saskatoon has a large population of healthy, active and vibrant seniors with a positive impact on the whole community. Discussion groups identified three important areas that can influence whether people stay here after they retire and young people return after having adventures elsewhere:

- ◆ Promoting health and wellness.
- ◆ Promoting pride in the community and its strengths and successes, so Saskatonians will tout the city to the world.
- ◆ Partnering agriculture, health care and technology, with world-leading developments as a result.

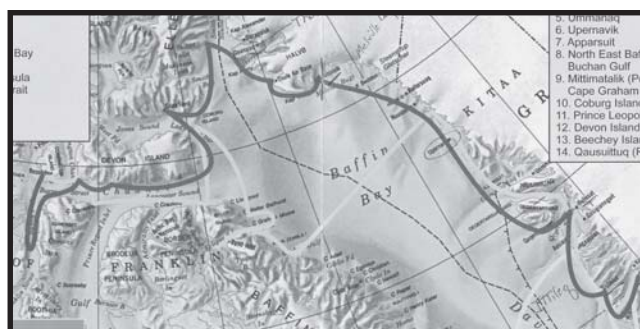
Business opportunities are offered in all these areas, participants agreed.

Michael Gillgannon is a member of the Publication Committee

Cruise Exceeded Expectations

bergs equivalent to the amount of water used by the New York City area in one year. We made shore visits to Qeqertarsaq on Disko Island, and Itelleq the next day, and when we were back on the boat, offshore among icebergs, the captain announced that passengers could dive into the Arctic Ocean. I became the oldest passenger ever to swim from their ship north of the Arctic Circle.

We disembarked on Sept. 8 at Kangerlussuaq, Greenland,



The Arctic cruise began at Resolute on the left, excluded the southern leg on the left due to time, and headed north and then south along Greenland.

after 1,930 nautical miles, all north of the Arctic Circle. Everything met or exceeded our expectations. The German cook

and Filipino staff provided superb food, with unlimited quantities of fresh fruit, yogurt and fish. Talks by the eight experts aboard dealt with archeology, oceanography, geology, geography, history and mammology. Tom Kovacs led the singsongs and Aiju Peter taught us to sing a song in Inuktitut. We flew to Iqaluit and then Ottawa, and home.

Retired Saskatoon radiologist C. Stuart Houston and his wife Mary are noted bird banders.

Certified Financial Advisors Specialize in Helping Seniors

Health, social and financial issues combine to determine whether seniors reach their goal of remaining vibrant, independent and joyful through the rest of their lives. Growing older should be enjoyed, not feared.

Certified Senior Advisors (CSAs) are professionals such as financial advisors, accountants, lawyers or social workers who specialize in helping the elderly enjoy their lives to the fullest extent possible. As of September 2005, Saskatchewan had 30 CSAs, with six in Saskatoon. Seniors find it rewarding to do business with someone who wants to work with them in a positive, respectful atmosphere.

From the professional's perspective, the CSA designation indicates that he/she has decided to learn as much as possible about the issues facing seniors. These issues might seem a little foreign to younger people, but we change as we grow older.

The CSA program is an asset to any professional who works

By Robert Letts

with seniors, improving communication, heightening skills, increasing credibility and giving a new appreciation of the elderly and the roles they play. The curriculum encompasses 23 key aspects of life that affect seniors and their families, including:

- Social aspects of aging
- Health and nutrition
- Chronic illness
- Income security programs
- Seniors and money
- Elder abuse and exploitation
- Estate planning
- Alzheimer's disease
- Long-term care and caregiving
- Housing affairs
- End-of-life planning
- Canada's health care systems.

After writing a national exam and agreeing to adhere to the Code of Professional Responsibility of the Society of Certified Senior Advisors Inc., successful candidates may use the CSA designation. (People interested in becoming a CSA can find details at www.canadacsa.com.)

As a professional, I have found it beneficial to understand and

appreciate the challenges seniors face, and rewarding to be able to help them overcome those challenges. I am often called on to assist families with a parent experiencing such health issues as Alzheimer's or dementia, and other caregiving concerns. Families are usually forced to react by a crisis and I help educate them about where to turn next. I tend to take a more

Seniors find it rewarding to do business with someone who wants to work with them in a positive, respectful atmosphere.

proactive approach talking with families and showing them some of the events and stages that may occur. This empowers them to be more forward-thinking.

Robert Letts of Letts Consulting Services is one of Saskatchewan's first CSAs and Elder Planning Counselors. He speaks in Canada and the U.S. on trends in aging and their effects on the business community and the public. He can be reached at 343-8282 or gdiinvestments@ifsgroup.ca.

Confidential Caregiver Counselling Introduced

Confidential counselling is now available for caregivers through a new program sponsored by the Saskatoon Caregiver Centre and the Saskatoon Health Region (SHR).

Social workers with SHR's Community Services will provide individual counselling

at no charge to the caregiver. Sessions will be held at the Saskatoon Council on Aging, and will include assessment, counselling, advocacy and referral.

Those interested should telephone the Caregiver Centre at 652-4411. They will be contacted within two weeks.

SASKATCHEWAN 211 WOULD CONNECT US

By Sheri Benson

Director of Community Services
United Way of Saskatoon

Work is under way to give Saskatchewan a 211 number that connects people to **non-emergency** social, health and government services in the community. The United Way of Saskatoon is spearheading the drive, though we do not plan to operate the service.

Callers to 211 can get information about services for children, youth and families; physical and mental health services; assistance to the disabled, seniors and newcomers; and employment support. They benefit from one access point, targeted help, a personal touch (human operators!), multilingual capacity, 24-hour access and confidentiality.

Toronto introduced Canada's first 211 in 2002 and more than one million people have used it. That success has inspired others; Edmonton, Calgary, the Niagara Region and South Georgian Bay in Ontario have begun. Quebec City will be next, and Nova Scotia should start the first province-wide service this year. Efforts to have national 211 by 2011 are being led by the United Way of Canada and InformCanada, the organization of public, non-profit and government information and referral providers.

Because of our small population, Saskatchewan 211 would have to be province-wide to be sustainable. It may also need to find ways to collaborate with Manitoba 211 to provide an effective service that is also affordable.

In 2002, we brought together community stakeholders from across Saskatchewan to introduce 211. Data on information and referrals have been analysed to find where people go for information and identify databases. Deloitte prepared a business plan, donating much of its time, and we have three different provincial models.

A costly part of launching 211 is getting a database of information. The province's Community Connection database might be a start, and Regina and Saskatoon public libraries have on-line community directories. We won't be starting from scratch but we would have a way to go to develop the comprehensive database needed.

A workshop in September brought stakeholders up to date and now we need to get a project manager. The province and companies like SaskTel are being asked for support, because the service must be sustainable long-term.

It's a huge project and will take a while. We don't want this great service to end up as a short-term project.

A Good Way To Start Exercising

By Brenda Temple

Range of motion exercises are the easiest flexibility exercises and the best way to start to exercise if you have not been very active. Range of motion is the normal distance your joint can move in certain directions. To do these

exercises, you need to stretch and move all of your joints and muscles in their full range of motion. When you do them, think about moving all your joints (large to small) from neck to toes. They should be done smoothly, three to 10 times each, usually every day.



The benefit of doing stretching exercises is that it will help you move and do day-to-day activities such as dressing, bathing and driving more easily. Start by moving all of your joints and muscles each day. To keep or improve your flexibility, do stretching exercises after your endurance or strength exercises. If you can't do endurance or strength exercises, do stretching exercises three times a week for 20 minutes.



Always warm up your muscles before stretching by easy walking or arm-pumping.

Mild discomfort is normal but exercises should never cause pain, especially joint pain. Always use slow, steady movements, do not bounce in the stretch.



Illustrated are easy seated stretches you can try throughout

the day.

For more information on how to start a physical activity program, or to be a part of *Forever...in motion* by leading a group for older adults, call *in motion's* info line at 655-DO IT (3648), e-mail inmotion@saskatoonhealthregion.ca or visit the *in motion* website at www.in-motion.ca.

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

 **in motion**
Physical Activity - do it for life!

Who Can Understand the Odd Ways of the Computer World?

There is an application on my computer for editing images, a.k.a. “pictures.” It’s called Photoshop Elements, a slimmed-down version of the industry standard Photoshop. Like everything these days except socks and two-by-fours, it comes with a serial number, which I’m going to reveal right here and right now. (You might want to make a pot of tea while you’re waiting.)

1057220369361482867.

Confession: Some of the digits have been changed to protect the innocent – and to make sure Adobe Systems doesn’t sue me.

Now let’s compare the serial number of my copy of Photoshop Elements with the population of the world, which, according to the CIA, is 6,446,131,400. Ten digits in the population of the world, 20 digits in the serial number of a computer program. Not even Bill Gates’ chequing account can compare with that.

I guess I just don’t get it, but as long as no digits were injured in the production of that number, we can chalk it up to excessive fervour on

Adobe’s part. Perhaps for them, generating 20 random numbers is a truly fun exercise.

I wouldn’t want to torture you by reprinting any part of the agreement that accompanies software of all descriptions, but let’s listen in on breakfast discussion of a typical family headed by a corporate lawyer:

“Daddy, Daddy, can I have a puppy for Christmas?”

“Well, Jimmy, you’ll have to get your crayons and mark an X on this piece of paper, absolving your parents, hereinafter referred to as Mommy and Daddy, from any and all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, damages, liabilities, complaints and proceedings of any nature or kind whatsoever and whether in law, equity, contract, tort, under statute or otherwise

which you, Jimmy, hereinafter referred to as the Signing Party, and his or her respective successors and assigns ever had, now has, or can, shall or may have arising out of, connected with, incidental to, or in any way related to the Puppy, hereinafter referred to as the Desired Outcome.”

“I think I’d rather have a kitty.”



Michael Gillgannon is a member of the Publication Committee.

Mayo Clinic on Healthy Aging

Mayo Clinic Health Information, 2001
Edward T. Creagan, M.D., editor-in-chief

Meant for baby boomers marching into their post-employment years, *Mayo Clinic on Healthy Aging* offers a deliberate and practical approach to living our final decades. It is based on the expertise and advice of physicians and specialists on successfully managing the aging process.

The book takes us step by step through knowing the body and how to care for it, and how to be healthy emotionally as well as socially. Chapters are devoted to financial planning for later years and to spirituality and a

G
O
O
D



B
O
O
K

positive outlook on life. Another talks about safety at home from risk of suffocation and electric shock; how to accident-proof your home; health care at home and advantages of semi-supportive and fully supported housing.

The sound advice on improving the quality of one’s life certainly proves healthy aging doesn’t occur by chance, but requires careful planning and thoughtful action. Illustrated by real-life personal stories, this book is an easy read. I recommend it to all senior citizens.

The Saskatoon public library has two copies, one in large print (613.0438 MAY).

– Kamal Parmar

Kamal Parmar is a member of the Publication Committee.