

COMING of AGE

ISSUE 55—WINTER 2010



Fashion Show a success

In November, more than 50 people attended the Council on Aging's monthly drop-in program for a fashion show with volunteers and staff modeling clothing from yesteryear. Pre-show entertainment was by the Allspice Girls. The show's success is a testament to the talent and commitment of SCOA's volunteers, who played a key role in organizing and running the event. Special thanks to Jeanette Weber, Carol Johnson, Margaret Humphries, Elaine Lane and Marilyn Wiebe.

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Annual Message

By Eleanor Williams, President
and
Candace Skrapek, Board Member
Saskatoon Council on Aging



SCOA is evolving.

What began as a small, grassroots group is now becoming a thriving and diverse organization. The Council's programs and services have expanded, and now include the important function of advocacy, seniors' issues and government relations.

This became more apparent in 2009 with several initiatives.

In the fall of 2009, the Saskatchewan government undertook a series of consultations to prepare for its development of a new Seniors Care Strategy. SCOA was proactive in preparing a list of recommendations for Laura Ross, the legislative secretary responsible for surgical wait times and long term care. Our response ensured the concerns and needs of Saskatoon's older adults were well represented in this important process.

Also in 2009, SCOA's board met with both the Saskatoon NDP caucus and with representatives from the Saskatchewan Party. A common theme we emphasized during these meetings is that seniors' policy dialogue must change. Today, the emphasis is on medical care and long-term care issues and while these are important, SCOA believes the dialogue must also include seniors' issues from a social justice and population health perspective. In other words,

we can't just think of older adults as patients in hospitals and residents in long term care homes. Many reside in their own homes and make a positive contribution to their communities. SCOA believes that policy makers need to think of this larger picture.

The year 2009 also saw the Council on Aging continue to see more demand for its programs and services. The number of older adults is increasing and with this demographic trend comes a greater demand for information and support services. SCOA's Caregiver Centre has seen a marked increase in the number of calls for information, and more people in attendance at its Caregiver Forums.

The Council's Resource Centre continues to see more walk-in traffic and telephone inquiries, and programs such as computer lessons and art classes are growing. SCOA events, such as World Older Adult Abuse Awareness Day and the annual Spotlight on Seniors, are continuing to draw larger crowds.

What will 2010 bring for the Saskatoon Council on Aging? More evolution is on the horizon, all with the goal of promoting the dignity, health and independence of older adults in Saskatoon and area. Stay tuned!

Coming of Age

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SCOA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the dignity, health and independence of older adults. Visit us online at www.scoa.ca

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Coming of Age gets French version

SCOA partners with Francophone seniors federation

By **Michel Vézina**

Editor's note: Thanks to a new partnership, Francophone seniors in Saskatoon and area now have their own version of Coming of Age. The French-language version was launched with our last edition (Issue 55—Fall/Winter 2009).

The French version is produced by SCOA and the Fédération des aînés/es fransaskois (FAF). This new initiative is made possible by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Population Health Fund.

The following article is intended to provide readers with more information on the activities and scope of the FAF.

The Fédération des aîné/es Fransaskois (FAF) has been involved in the Saskatchewan Francophone Community for more than a quarter century.

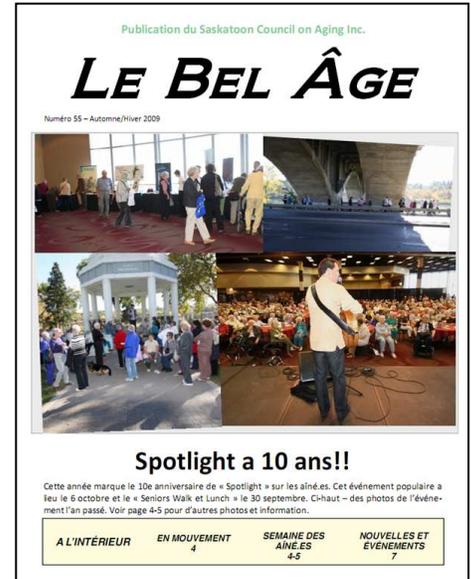
When created, the Fédération aimed mainly at building a network that would allow Golden Age Clubs

of the province to get together, improve communication and organize activities. Over the years, 15 or so clubs have joined the Fédération.

Many activities have taken place during this period. These include two events held every autumn—L'épluchette de blé d'inde (Corn Husking) and Les Jeux des aînés (Games of Older Adults). In summer, during the Fête fransaskoise, we have La Folie des aînés (The Follies of Older Adults).

We also publish a newsletter, Des nouvelles en or (Golden News) in the weekly L'eau Vive publication, and develop audio and video productions for the Francophone seniors of Saskatchewan.

The Fédération also defends the rights of older adults in the areas of health, social services,



pensions, housing and other policies concerning them. The Fédération is a member of various associations in Saskatchewan and also a member of the Fédération des aînés et aînés francophones du Canada (FAAFC) at the national level.

In 2010, the FAF and its members face many challenges. The needs concerning older adults are always current on the provincial as well as the local level. Membership renewal, finding ways to attract younger seniors and the needs facing a new clientele (younger seniors and newcomers) also constitute new challenges for our organization.

Michel Vézina is President of the Fédération des Aînés Fransaskois (FAF). He is also Directeur Général of Collège Mathieu-SEFFA-Le Lien in Gravelbourg.

For more information, contact the FAF at (306) 653-7442.



Michel Vézina

The Doctor will see you now

How to make sure you're getting the most from your appointment

Thanks to a shortage of family doctors in many communities and growing patient demand, many doctors face the challenge of squeezing quality care into a shrinking window of time for each patient.

What steps can patients take to make sure we're getting what we need from a doctor's appointment?

Here are a few tips that may help:

Be clear with the receptionist

Before you call, make sure you can identify the main reason why you want to see a doctor. The receptionist needs to know a general reason for the appointment, such as "my arthritis" or "I've been having headaches." You could also spend time before calling to decide when you hope to schedule a visit; keep a pen, paper and calendar nearby when you call.

Remember your records

If you are seeing your family doctor, they have your medical records. But if the doctor is new, you should get your medical records – at least bring a short summary of what has happened with your health, or have the records sent from your former doctor.

Also, if you have seen a specialist or have been hospitalized after your last visit to a family doctor, bring those records with you or have the office staff send them.

Make a list of medications

Some doctors prefer that you bring all medicines (including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and herbal remedies) with you to the appointment, so he/she can see what you take and make dose changes to that medicine "package." Others suggest you bring a list of everything you take. You should also **take your Health card, and names and phone numbers of other doctors you have seen.**

Communicate clearly

To ensure that communicating with your doctor will be as clear as possible, you should bring your glasses and hearing aid with you. If your doctor doesn't speak your language, bring an interpreter or family member who speaks English.

Talking with your doctor or specialist

Before the appointment it is a good idea to list all your concerns. This helps you to remember what to say and ask. If you have more than a few things

you want to discuss, put them in order and ask about the most important ones first.

It's important to describe your symptoms adequately:

What symptoms do you have? When did they start? Are they constant? If not, when do you experience them? Is there anything that makes the symptoms better or worse? Do the symptoms affect your daily activities? Which ones? How? Which time of day do they happen? How long do they last (minutes or days)? How often do they occur? Do they seem to

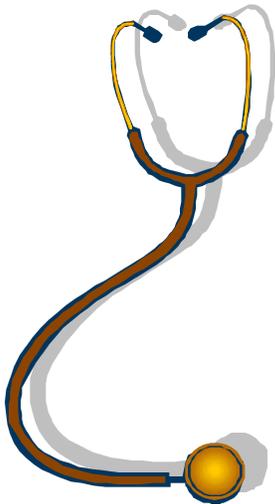


be getting worse or better? If they have changed, when? Have you done something with them (like take painkillers) and if you are, has it helped?

Medications

It's important that your physician knows about your medications, including over-the-counter medicines, herbal remedies or supplements, eye drops, vitamins and laxatives.

Interaction between any of those can cause side effects. Be prepared to tell your doctor what dose you take, and how often you take the medications. It's also important to mention if you have any allergies to drugs or reactions you have had.



Habits

To provide the best care and to determine if there are any

changes in your health condition, the doctor may ask about your habits: eating, sleeping, daily activity, smoking or drinking. It's important to be open and honest with these things. It's for your own good. If major changes have happened in your life (divorce, death of a loved one), let the doctor know about this.

Diagnosis

Discuss your diagnosis and what you can expect. If the symptoms get worse, should you first try something on your own? When should you call a doctor again?

If the doctor prescribes new medication, find out the name of the new drug and what it's for. Write down any instructions the doctor provides, such as how often and for how long you should take it. Are there any foods or drinks to avoid? Any common side effects?

To remember what was said at the appointment, you can write notes. You can also ask for written material to take home. And remember to ask if you have any concerns about what was discussed. A way to verify you under-

stood correctly is to repeat what you think the doctor means in your own words, and ask if it's correct.

Enlisting help

Patients may feel more confident if someone is with them. Your companion can take notes and help remind you about



things you planned to tell or ask the doctor. He/she can also help you remember what the doctor said, or ask for clarification if needed.

This article was prepared by Marie Pulkka, a visiting nursing student from Finland. Marie spent several weeks with the Saskatoon Council on Aging during her exchange in 2009. The preceding article includes information from a presentation by Lynda Smallwood of the Saskatoon Health Region.

We need your calculators!

A special request

Bishop Klein School needs calculators for those students who can't afford the equipment. SCOA would like to collect more than 100 calculators for this worthy cause. Send any functioning calculators you no longer use to the Saskatoon Council on Aging at 301 506 25th St. E., STK 4A7 or call 652-2255 for more information.

About SCOA and Bishop Klein School:

The Saskatoon Council on Aging has, since 2000, enjoyed a mutually-beneficial relationship with Bishop Klein School. The partnership is part of SCOA's efforts to bring older adults and young people together to learn from each other. Students from Bishop Klein can be relied upon to perform and volunteer at various SCOA events.

Motivation is the key to active living

By Janet Barnes

Many people have difficulty getting (and staying) motivated when they want to make a change to their lifestyle. This is especially true for older adults.

Health Canada recommends that older adults be moderately physically active at least 30 minutes most days of the week to improve their health.

The benefits of being physically active are well known: better health, more energy, less stress, stronger muscles and bones, better posture and balance, reduced body fat, more independence in later life, decreased risk of chronic disease and much more.

However, knowing the benefits of physical activity and changing your behaviour (the way you do things) are very different.

We're all motivated in different ways and you need to find the best fit for you. Here are some tools you might want to try:

- Set realistic goals and develop a plan on how you will reach those goals. Write them down. Share them with your

family or friends.

- Keep track of your progress. Is the plan still working for you? Is it too simple or too hard? Do you feel better?
- Find something you enjoy doing. Have fun!
- If you haven't been active for awhile, start small and work towards being active for 30 minutes per day. This might be 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes in the afternoon and 10 minutes in the evening. It all counts!
- Schedule it in: Use calendars to mark down the days and times you will be active.
- Use positive language: "I will do..." not "I should do..."
- Have an answer for your excuses – self talk can work well.
- Give your plan enough time to work. A new habit takes between three- and six months to develop.
- Keep it up even if you miss a day.
- Join a Forever...in *motion* group.
- Find an in *motion* buddy. This could be a friend, family member or even your dog!

- Try walking poles – they can provide support and help you burn up to 30 per cent more calories when walking!
- Use a pedometer to keep track of the number of steps you

do each day, and gradually add on a few more.



"Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough, we must do." Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

If you haven't been active for awhile, talk to your family doctor first.

For more information on how and where to be active, visit the in motion website: www.in-motion.ca/olderadults/resources or call the in motion Do It line 655-3648.

Janet Barnes is a Senior Recreation Therapist, Community Older Adult, with the Saskatoon Health Region.



News & Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting

SCOA's annual general meeting is on May 20th at the Frances Morrison Library (Room 3), starting at 1 p.m.

The AGM will feature reports from all SCOA program areas and a speaker (TBA). This free meeting is an excellent way to learn more about the Council and talk to someone about becoming a volunteer.

Art Lessons

Letting Go: Exploring acrylic and beyond. Taught by accomplished artist and instructor Gisele Bauche, these five instructional sessions begin on January 25 and continue to February 15. The cost is \$90 plus the cost of supplies. Please call SCOA before January 25th to register. Note: Classes may move to a later start date—call to inquire.



Advanced Digital Photography

Get the most from your photography with popular instructor Dr. Barry Brown. This course is designed to introduce advanced techniques in digital photography and image manipulation. After completing this class, you will be proficient in using a digital camera and computer to obtain better images indoors, outdoors and on location. Sessions run from 1

p.m. to 4 p.m., February 3rd to April 7th (Wednesdays). The cost is \$200, and spaces fill quickly so register today. The deadline for registration is January 31, 2010.



Caregiver Forum

April 22nd at McClure United Church (4025 Taylor Street E). 8:45am-3pm. Speakers and details TBA.

The Forum is presented by the Caregiver Information Centre, an important resource located in the SCOA office at 301-506 25th Street East (in the Saskatoon Community Services Village). The Caregiver Centre can be reached at (306) 652-4411.

The Centre is a one-stop information and support resource for anyone who provides care to an older adult.



Blood Pressure Clinics

First Tuesday of every month, from 9:30am to 1:30pm. Retired Nurses take blood pressure and you can enjoy coffee, treats and conversation!

Big Screen Classics

Imagine watching Fred and Ginger glide across the big screen. Or

hearing Sam, in Casablanca, play it again.

The Broadway Theatre offers "Silver Screen Classics" every month for a low \$5 admission fee.



For dates and information on what's playing, call the Broadway Theatre at 652-6556. Or, visit www.broadwaytheatre.ca.

Facebook Lessons

Facebook is an online social networking service that lets you connect with friends, family and others who share similar interests. Your grandkids are using it—now you can too.

SCOA presents Facebook instructional lessons on March 4-5th. The cost is \$40—call early to register or for more details.

SCOA Resource Centre

The Saskatoon Council on Aging serves as a Resource Centre, with information on many topics including housing options, community programs, and services for older adults in Saskatoon. Call or visit today!

Call the Saskatoon Council on Aging at 652-2255 for more information, or to register for these programs and events. Or, visit our Resource Centre at 301-506 25th Street East. You can also find more information online at www.scoa.ca.

Once more with feeling

Michael Gillgannon

This is interesting. I wonder what it means:

“The opening of the first movement is remarkable for its delicacy and sunshine, but also for its nosing accents and crescendo which destabilize the texture. Chailly’s counterpoint throughout is limpid, the orchestral timbres so freshly balanced we marvel anew at Mahler’s imaginative orchestrations.” (From a Globe and Mail CD review of Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, with Richard Chailly and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra).

Was this review mistakenly lifted from the “Food and Drink” section?

The delicacy and sunshine are fine by me but the nosing accents and destabilizing textures make me want to turn on the basketball game, culturally depraved though that urge might be.

If not basketball, perhaps a nice glass of wine would be in order.

Methinks it’s as hard to write about art as it is to write about music:

“Norman Bryson’s ‘Vision and Painting’ critiques realism in painting because its apparent invisibility as technique and as meaning in a social formation appeals to an ahistorical, dis-



embodied, programmatic ‘gaze.’ In contrast, he describes the ‘glance’ as anchored in history, in body, in desire, and in improvisation. (From “Words of Art” at the web page of Okanagan University College).

Or perhaps it’s easy to write about these things but hard to understand them.

Or I could be dense. Or both. It’s funny, though — back in the olden days when I edited a little magazine called *Western People* (drawn and quartered some years back by the good ship *Western Producer*) a then 10-year-old girl named Ashley Pelham was able to describe a certain ranch near Yellow Grass, Sask., in terms I could easily understand, and still can.

“The flowers blow as if they don’t care . . .
“The sweet smell of seasons pass and come bringing life to everyone.
“Bathe in the sunshine that bleaches the ground . . .
“. . . the wind forever glides upon your face.”
So maybe, just maybe, music and art

can be explained in words.

Maybe the so-called experts aren’t picking the right words.

Michael Gillgannon is a retired newspaper writer and editor, and lives in Saskatoon.