

## SSM CHRISTMAS COME & GO



*SSM President— Joanne McDonald; Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition— Lorne Calvert; SSM Executive Director—Bev MacLeod*

On December 6, 2007, the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism was excited to host this year's Come & Go Christmas Party. Although the day was slightly cooler, we were pleased to welcome approximately 70 people.

Joanne McDonald, SSM President and M.C. for the afternoon, welcomed all our guests. Mrs. McDonald read a greeting from the Honourable Dave Batters, Member of Parliament for Palliser, and a letter from the Saskatchewan Pro-



*Mayor Pat Fiocco, City of Regina, greeting SSM Christmas Party Guest*



*Terri Berglund, Program Manager for Philips Lifeline serving punch*

vincial Government. Lorne Calvert, leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, and Pat Fiocco, Mayor of Regina, were in attendance and brought greetings. The program was concluded with a greeting from SSM Executive Director, Beverly MacLeod, and a few Christmas Songs led by SSM staff & friends.

Each year we look forward to renewing old acquaintances and welcoming new friends of the SSM. Your contribution to the Seniors Mechanism in the past, present or future is appreciated. We thank each one of you who participated in this afternoon of fun, fellowship and good food.

***The Staff & Board of the SSM hopes you had a wonderful Christmas and wishes you all the best in the New Year!***



### Editorial Committee

John Knight (Chair), Trevor Quinn,  
Shirley Lomheim, June Mitchell

### Technical Support

Lynne Couzens

All editorial matter published in *Gray Matters* represents the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the publication's editorial board or the S.S.M. Statements and opinions expressed do not represent the official policy of S.S.M. unless so stated.

Look for *Gray Matters* to be available quarterly: January, April, July, October.

Articles for consideration for publication are welcomed. Reports of past, present and future activities and programs associated with member organizations are also invited. Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month preceding publication.

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Regina, SK S4P 3X9

## RICHLEA School #3402



Have you a connection with Richlea School, 1914-1966, at Richlea SK, as a student or teacher? A cairn is to be unveiled July 19, 2008 at the site of the former school. For more details, contact: [alever2@sasktel.net](mailto:alever2@sasktel.net)



## Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism

is an umbrella organization that brings together groups of older adults who offer their wealth of experience, knowledge and time to work together in the interest of seniors in Saskatchewan. From a wide range of backgrounds, these groups work selflessly to better the life of older adults, whether advocating about issues of interest to seniors, providing specific types of programming, or sharing information to benefit seniors in our province.

***Donations to SSM to support our seniors programs are gratefully accepted. Charitable receipts will be issued for gifts of \$15.00 or more.***

*Organizations represented on the SSM Board are as follows:*

### Seniors Working Together

- Saskatchewan Retirees Association
- Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association
- Saskatchewan Seniors Education Corp.
- Saskatoon Council on Aging
- Fédération des Aînés Fransaskois
- Senior Power
- Regina Senior Citizens Centre Inc.
- Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan
- Federal Superannuates National Assoc.
- Saskatchewan Seniors Association Incorporated
- Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees
- SaskTel Pioneers Chapter 59

**SENIORS HOTLINE 1 – 888 – 823 – 2211**

OR CHECK OUR WEBSITE

**[www.skseniormechanism.ca](http://www.skseniormechanism.ca)**

## **Seniors Education Centre Dates to Remember for 2008**

### **Registration for Winter Classes – is ongoing until classes begin**

- New Classes include Afghanistan in World Affairs, Art Appreciation: The Arts of Africa, Australasia, Climate Change, Healing Power of Hope and Humour; Introduction to Latin America.
- Ongoing Classes include Art, Belly Dancing, Drumming, Logic and much more...

### **Winter Classes Start – Week of January 14, 2008**

#### **Thursday Noon-Hour Forums – from 12 noon-1:15 pm**

- Jan 17 – Life Capsules
- Jan 24 – Naturopathic Medicine
- Jan 31 – Fair Trade – Why Should we Care?
- Feb 7 – Burma – Historical Background and Recent Headlines
- Feb 14 – The Stroke
- Feb 21 – Heritage Lunch 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
- Feb 28 – Prairie Lily Funeral Cooperative
- Mar 6 – Amateur Archaeology in SK
- Mar 13 – Against Celibacy: The Case of Abelard and Heloise

#### **FREE Forum on March 4**

##### **Aging Well in Regina: Knowledge is the Best Medicine**

Join the SEC Research Committee to learn more about some exciting research they will be undertaking to find out more about the link between lifelong learning and Aging Well.  
12:00-1:00pm in Gallery Building Room 106

#### **FREE Forum on April 7**

##### **Climate Change and Its Impact on Health**

You are invited to a FREE Forum on World Health Day 2008 to find out more about a key global public health challenge – climate change. Climate change is a major concern for vulnerable groups which includes seniors.  
12:00-1:00pm in Gallery Building Room 106

#### **Spring Classes Start – Week of April 14**

SEC Spring/Summer Program Guide will be mailed to all SUG members in late March. Others can pick up copy at SEC, check our website, or call 585-5816 to request a copy.

#### **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Distinguished Canadian Award Dinner – Tuesday, May 6 at 5:30 pm**

Join us as we celebrate the accomplishment of a great Canadian – tickets to be available for purchase early in the new year.



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# **SASKATCHEWAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION INC.**

## **NEWSLETTER**

Please send all your news and comments about the newsletter to:

Fern Haight, Box 393, Hanley, SK.

Fax: 544-2757, Email: fern.h@sasktel.net

### **President's Message**

Happy New Year to all my many friends across Saskatchewan and may 2008 be an exceptionally great year for us all.

SSAI have many activities planned for 2008.

- SSAI raffle held between Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> and June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Tickets will be mailed to Clubs in January unless S.S.A.I is otherwise informed.
- SSAI Board meeting – Jan. 15 & 16 – Rosetown, Sk.
- SSAI Provincial Bowling held at Minto Bowl, Prince Albert – March 30, 31, 2008. Be sure you enter your 5 member teams (\$20.00 per person) as soon as possible.
- SSAI 2008 Convention will be held in Tisdale June 9, 10, 11, 2008
- Prepare a brief from your 2007 resolutions and present to the new government.

I extend my best wishes to each and every Club in the province. May SSAI continue to be your advocate and to work diligently to prioritize seniors' issues and then inform our new government of these issues. We need to know what the Saskatchewan Party has in store for seniors of Saskatchewan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Fern Haight

Photo  
not  
available.

### **PELLEY CENTRE HOLDS 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY TEA**

In the picture you see the sign that has been drawing folks to the centre for the past 25 years.

In recognition of 25 years of operating, the Pelly Happy Hearts Centre held a strawberry tea on August 8. The tea was well attended. Irene Getty was mistress of ceremonies for the short afternoon program, which began with greetings from club president, Steve Kinuschuk.

Village Mayor, Sharon Nelson, brought greetings from council and spoke of the important role the seniors' centre has in the village.

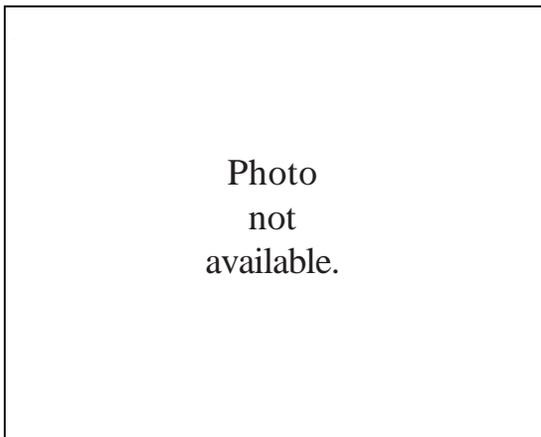
Entertainment was provided by local musicians; Peter and Sylvia Negraeff, Russell Hubic and Walter Hrushka. They played a variety of musical numbers.

Edith Kotzer of Canora, director for seniors' clubs in Region 8, spoke of the work being done in lobbying government for assistance for all seniors' organizations.

The final item on the program was a report by Ed Fissel who has been a member of the centre's board since Happy Hearts was formed. He presented an interesting history, going back to the first planning session. He discussed grants that were available and the decision to proceed to build a new building. Work went forward and in June of 1982, the official opening of the present Happy Hearts Centre was held, he said.

"It has served the community well with many different functions held through the years and is enjoyed by young and old," Fissel said.

A note to our readers: Ed Fissel and his wife, Kathy, left Pelly in late August of 2007 and are making their home in Lethbridge, Alberta. They will enjoy their later years of life where the winter season is somewhat milder than in eastern Saskatchewan and Pelly folk will look forward to their visits back "home".



The **Shaunavon Senior Centre** recently underwent a few renovations, including the addition of some new metal trim fronting the building. The local hall also benefited from the help of Henry and Amanda Auger, who volunteered to create a new sign for the facility. Above: Senior president Lawrence Pommier stands with Henry and Amanda in front of the new sign.

**1st Vice President  
Of S.S.A.I.**

Here we are in December with snow on the ground in most areas and driving conditions we have to become accustomed to all over again. The good news is, of course, that the provincial elections are over with for at least another four years and now we will be able to sit back and decide what this present Government knows about seniors and their problems.

There have been some significant moves by both Federal and Provincial Governments over the last few months to assist both individual seniors as well as seniors' groups. I refer to the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug price capping and now from the Federal Government comes news that we can obtain financial help with maintaining our centers through a new New Horizons Capital Assistance Funding Program. This will help with capital costs in the centers such as replacing worn out heating and electrical equipment and also replacing worn out furniture. SSAI received this information at the beginning of November and immediately took steps to inform as many clubs and centers as possible so that applications could be obtained and submitted before the December 14<sup>th</sup> deadline.

The application itself can be somewhat confusing with the amount of details required but if you are successful in obtaining the funds requested it will all have been worth while.

Seniors in this province have worked hard and long together with SSAI, forwarding numerous resolutions at many conventions to obtain assistance with both the cost of drugs and the chore of maintaining our

centers. These two programs can now spell relief for all seniors and many centers throughout this Province.

Of course our work is not yet completed as there are still many medications being prescribed for seniors that are expensive and not covered by the Saskatchewan Drug Plan. We still have seniors who are forced by poverty to make that decision between medications to keep them healthy or food to keep them well every day of their lives. Seniors have a natural reluctance to stand in line at a food bank or at a social service office asking for help and in reality, why should they? They have worked hard all their lives, have brought up families, have paid their share of taxes and now that the escalating economy has raced far in advance of their small pensions, they are left in this difficult circumstance.

The escalating cost of living is leaving many seniors in situations where they never dreamed they would ever be. People who thought that the money they had strived to save for their retirement would take them through their “golden years” are now finding out it isn’t enough. Inflation is draining their resources faster than bath water leaving a tub. The last figures published show that at least 14% of seniors in Saskatchewan are existing at or below the poverty line. That is a statistic we should not be proud of!

At this special time of the year, as we approach Christmas, we realize that so many people need our help who are so worse off than we are. So for all the people who can help, please do, and for all those people who are unable to help, maybe a small prayer for those less fortunate.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all, from my wife Rosalie and me, a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Len Fallows S.S.A.I.

## 2nd Vice President Of S.S.A.I

A new name, new face, new SSAI writer – not really, just a bit of recycling. I’ve been attending SSAI conventions pretty regularly since about 1995, firstly as a Saskatchewan Government Superannuate Association executive member (secretary SGSA) 1996-2001. Then also as a Union retiree activist with the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Congress of union retirees, (CURC) attending most CURC national bi-annual conventions since 1997. I have also represented CURC at four of The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation (NPSCF) national conventions. Stir in 5 years of local Legion Branch presidency – being recruited into SSAI as a coordinator, by President Fern, just meant more of the same seniors issues to me, under a different label.

As a farm boy who earned his spurs riding purebred Clydesdale draft horses, I learned early how to use my spurs to get reaction. Those burrs on my spurs proved useful during my 33 years with Saskatchewan Government Health Insurance, and also at times in retirement - sometimes, it just seems necessary and appropriate to give a little jab of those old spurs to get action going within some seniors’ retirement groups!

So how do I try to approach contentious issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – essentially with “horse sense”.

My life experiences have taught me that, like some of those old Clydesdale pelters, some of us seniors have pretty tough hides, but some little fillies have to be brought on gently - my father’s sage showmanship expertise caution was always “don’t ruin the horse”. Same with people – a gentle nudge where necessary, to encourage, but always expect good results. Retiree volunteers are the same – they won’t be bossed; treat them well and just admire the joy of their enthusiastic achievements.

One might wonder why do I consider it useful to travel across Canada, at considerable personal expense, to attend these CURC and NPSCF national conventions? That’s easy – I

want to mingle with new people, get to know them on a personal level, find out more about how they live, solve problems, do things better, what can I learn. While I visit around the floor with Saskatchewan delegates and other acquaintances, my wife and I will almost always, mingle with delegates from other provinces in work panels, meal times and social events, enjoying new friends from afar. When attending subsequent conventions, it is such a great pleasure to revisit good people from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Ontario, British Columbia and all the others – the Saskatchewan folks, I visit with when we meet closer to home.

Some of the important 2007 issues presented in panels and debated under resolutions included:

- a universal National Pharmacare Plan incorporated into the Canada Health Act with a national formulary, Federal shared testing, approvals, generic access, bulk purchase and distribution. Essentially: safe, available, fairly priced drugs.
- Safe water supply, not plastic bottled, and protected from bulk export.
- Secure public pensions – (OAS – CPP-GIS) and private pensions that are truly COLA indexed, controlled equally by both employer/employee representation, limited employer contributions holidays, and pension funds first security under bankruptcy.
- A National Childcare Program: **Why a SENIORS ISSUE?** Because retiree grandparents are being forced into family childcare because of parents with multiple low pay, part time jobs, single parents, family/health breakdowns; offering occasional help is great family time: ongoing obligation with no alternative can be disaster!
- Identity Theft: The federal justice minister has labeled this crime a **form of SENIOR ABUSE** as he

rightfully moves such theft **from CIVIL LAW to THE CRIMINAL CODE**. Seniors, along with all citizens, must lobby provincial justice ministers and all MLAs for early major changes to strengthen provincial consumer protection legislation that parallels their federal counterpart. The provinces must put teeth into their enforcement and protection laws, unequivocally removing the innocent victim (senior) from the corporate harassment of bill collectors seeking redress from such victims.

- Poverty: The Canada Assistance Act complimented by the Saskatchewan Assistance Act and the Saskatchewan Seniors Plan, back in the sixties substantially improved living and health standards of impoverished people. The Guaranteed Income Supplement offers top up of Old Age Security where seniors have no other resources. The trouble is these incomes, scaled to past cost of living rates, no longer cover the costs of today's basic needs! Home upkeep, rent, transportation, are escalating beyond predictability. Your home insurance may double with each review; a 27% increase in Regina water rates is predicted. Public pensions are not indexed to this harsh reality, yet governments tend to ignore social poverty in favour of growth, infrastructure and tax cutting priorities.

Pensions earned from employment are also, essentially stagnant or regressing. Some of the wealthy are doing fine; the mid-income seniors are losing ground fast; the low income, those who are ill, the homeless, are in serious need of help.

We seniors have to make our voices heard by those in power if we really believe in being our brother's (and sister's) keeper.

Bob Walker S.S.A.I.

# F R A U D A L E R T

## MASS MARKETING FRAUD

Mass Marketing Fraud is fraud committed over communication media, namely telephone, fax, regular mail and the internet. It can involve several different fraudulent scams, such as lottery/prize pitch, 900 scams, recovery pitch and West African frauds.

**Lottery or prize pitch frauds** are usually in the form of a prize notification. The individual is led to believe that in order to collect their prize, they must pay a series of bogus taxes or fees. There has been increased public awareness with respect to having to pay to receive a prize. As a result, most recent lottery frauds have been altered and include a cheque, usually in amounts in the range of \$2000-\$4000, to "cover the costs" of the fees required to claim the prize. This creates the appearance that the victim does not have to front any money. The victim is instructed to deposit the cheque into their account and then wires the money to cover the fees to collect their winnings. The cheque is counterfeit and if not detected in the first instance, it will be discovered later by your financial institution and depending on the policy of the financial institution, you could be held responsible for the amount of the cheque. There are no legitimate prizes in Canada that require taxes or fees to be paid.

The best protection against Mass Marketing Frauds is to use common sense and the old adage that "If it sounds too good to be true, it is." If you receive solicitations similar to those described above or any other suspicious solicitations or if you receive correspondence that you are just not certain about, in the Regina area, contact the RCMP Commercial Crime Section, Regina Office at (306)780-6005 or Regina Police Service at (306)777-6500. In the Saskatoon area, contact the RCMP Commercial Crime Section, Saskatoon Office at (306)975-5159 or Saskatoon Police Service at (306)975-8300.

For more information, you can also visit the RCMP website at [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca) Phonebusters at [www.phonebusters.com](http://www.phonebusters.com) or RECOL (Reporting Economic Crime on Line) [www.recol.ca](http://www.recol.ca)

*Submitted by Constable Jody Vail  
Commercial Crime Unit, RCMP*

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# Health Care in Question - Themes to Consider

The Fall Issue of Gray Matters, after soliciting responses on the ten key issues that were listed, identified Health and its many facets as the number one concern. The following questions to our MLA's regarding the 3 themes listed below, are questions all Saskatchewan residents and particularly our seniors need answers to. These themes are almost identical to what the Saskatchewan Senior Mechanism has developed from the concerns of our seniors. It is our hope that SSM can reach out to a lot of the rural ar-

reas (that the two major daily newspapers don't cover) through the Gray Matters Newsletter. The more people that are interested in knowing what governments will be doing to improve our health care system the better. We need to network or partner with any organization that has an interest in the betterment of our Health Care System in Saskatchewan. We will be dealing with other facets of health in the future issues of Gray Matters. We look forward to hearing from seniors from all areas of the province.

## **Theme 1: Recruitment, Retention and Health Human Resources**

Physicians must have a central role in recruitment and retention efforts.

- ◆ What is your plan to reach self-sufficiency in the provincial supply of physicians?
- ◆ What patient-physician ratio for Saskatchewan will you set as your target?
- ◆ What are your plans regarding the provision of medical care in regional centres?
- ◆ What is your physician retention plan for Saskatchewan? In particular, what is your plan to support International Medical Graduates who have recently arrived in Saskatchewan?

## **Theme 2:--- Improving Access to Care and the Cost of Waiting**

More facilities and equipment are required to increase capacity in the health care system.

- ◆ How will you enhance access to services for rural patients visiting urban or regional specialists?
- ◆ How will you increase capacity throughout the system?
- ◆ Do you support the current organization of health care through the existing RHA structure?
- ◆ What is your plan to increase the availability of mental health and addictions services, including access to emergency care and long-term care?

## **Theme 3:--- Health Care Infrastructure**

The SMA calls on all parties to re-affirm their commitment to publicly funded health care.

- ◆ What is your commitment and timeline for the development of a children's hospital?
- ◆ How will you fund the infrastructure needed to provide better patient access to diagnostic services?
- ◆ Will you commit to long-term, sustainable funding for Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) in physician offices?
- ◆ What is your plan to work with other provinces to expand 'Prairie Centres of Excellence' in health care?

The above three themes and questions are excerpts from an advertisement by the Saskatchewan Medical Association in the October 27, 2007 issue of the Star Phoenix. They have kindly given us permission to use any or all parts of their ad.

A complete copy Health Care in Question can be found on the SMA website at [www.sma.sk.ca](http://www.sma.sk.ca) or 1-800-667-3781

Submitted by Al Morrison, Issues Chair

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## YEAH BUT.....

As we age, we seem to slow down. We wake with more aches and pains than we used to and we, at times, feel down and depressed because of this. Society, to some extent, agrees to this because they look at us as grandparents or just the old folks. The 'Yeah But' is yes, we might move a little slower and we might have some severe pain and depression at times but we are a fountain of wisdom and we still have the same thinking ability that we always had. We might move slower but we definitely move smarter. As we age we become much more valuable as a person and much wiser.

- John Knight

### Story of Elijah

The Sunday School teacher in a little country church was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces, and laid it upon the altar. And then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times "Now", said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?"

A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand,. "I know! I know!" she said, "To make the gravy!"

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# DO YOU AGREE??

The other day I read a book called, "The Brain That Changes Itself", by Norman Daigne M.D. I found that it was very enlightening and profound.

Dr. Daigne has done a lot of studying of the brain both in humans and animals. He has concluded that our brains are ever evolving and changing and that we have the ability to control and channel that change.

We are all aware that the brain is a muscle and, like all muscles in our body, needs constant nourishment and exercise. Water is one of the best ways to nourish our brain as it helps improve the ability of our brain to send impulses to the nerves and various lobes of our brain.

However when it comes to exercise there are certain exercises that are better than others. Physical exercise creates new neurons and sends oxygen to the brain. Whatever keeps the heart and blood vessels fit invigorates the brain. People who lead mentally active lives have better brain function. However not all activities that involve genuine concentration are best: studying a musical instrument, playing

board games, reading and dancing are some of the better activities. Less intense activities such as bowling and golf are not that beneficial to the brain.

Monotony undermines our dopamine and is very detrimental to our brains so we need to keep active and engaged in life to preserve our brain health.

At 90, the architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, designed the Guggenheim Museum. At 78 Benjamin Franklin invented bifocal glasses. In studies of creativity, H.C. Lehman and Dean Keith Simonton, found that while ages 35 to 55 are the peak years of creativity, in most fields people in their 60's and 70's, though they work at a slower speed, are as productive as they were in their 20's.

When Pablo Casals, the cellist, was 91 years old he was approached by a student who asked "Master, why do you continue to practice?"

Casals replied, "Because I am making progress".

- John Knight

## PRECIOUS MEMORIES OF PRAIRIE WAR HEROES



The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism was delighted to write a book honouring Saskatchewan and Alberta WWII Veterans. It is our desire that these stories be handed down to the next generation as a legacy to freedom won. While this book is serious in nature, we have tried as well to incorporate a humorous, or light-hearted, side to better portray real-life situations encountered by those who served overseas.

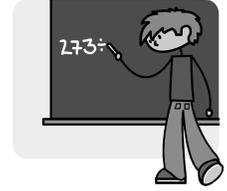
We are excited to offer '**Precious Memories of Prairie War Heroes**' to the public for \$21.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping & handling. If you wish to order by mail, please send your cheque to:

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism  
112-2001 Cornwall Street  
Regina, SK S4P 3X9

Or in the very near future you will be able to order it through our website:  
[www.skseniormechanism.ca](http://www.skseniormechanism.ca)



## CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES



It's been said that every challenge is really an opportunity, yet so often we focus on the problem, complain about what's wrong, find someone to blame and forget to explore possibilities for creative solutions. An example of this with a high profile in today's world is the planned closure of more and more schools all across Saskatchewan. We seem to have become obsessed with the benefits of bigness. We focus on dollars instead of quality. We attempt to impose uniform standards rather than encouraging the attainment of excellence.

Isn't there some way our grandchildren could be provided with increased support for development of creative talents, social skills and athletic activities? Can anyone find any such enhanced support in the increasing imposition of larger class sizes and longer rides on school busses? Has anyone noticed how many of those who have provided the leadership which brought us to our current quality of life were those who developed their life skills in small schools in small towns and rural districts of Saskatchewan?

Instead of closing the school due to a reduced student population, couldn't part of the facility be used for smaller, multi-grade classes while the extra space is used for community-enriching services such as library, museum, health clinic or seniors' activity centre? There are so many potential programs that work effectively to bring people together in community. Even in cases where new facilities might be needed, a multi-purpose building would make good economic sense and provide future flexibility.

Sometimes I wonder how long it will be before a large corporation introduces the concept of private education centres in small communities and city suburbs. Computers with distance-learning programs will no doubt be part of such developments. Occasional inter-centre activities and student exchange visits could enhance the development of communication and interpersonal skills (while still providing the occasional "opportunity" for a ride on a school bus). Imagine the widening of the "gap" as those unable to afford such private programs are condemned to even longer bus rides and larger classes. Are penny-pinching school boards putting aside funds to cope with the cost of po-

*(Continued on page 15)*

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### **Did Noah Fish?**

A Sunday School teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"

"No," replied David. "How could he, with just two worms?"

### **Lot's Wife**

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mommy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

# SSM MEMBER PROFILE

## FÉDÉRATION DES ÂÎNÉS FRANSASKOIS

The FAF (Fédération des Aînés Fransaskois) was founded by Jeanne Leblanc at Zenon Park in 1983. Her aim was to assemble the elderly Francophones of the community at least once a month for an informal supper and some entertainment where communication would be entirely in French.

She helped other communities to do likewise and affiliated themselves with the Zenon Park Club. The clubs structured themselves, elected an executive and drew up Statutes and Regulations. Within a few years, 13 clubs joined the Federation.

The mission of the FAF is to contribute to the vitality of the French community by fostering the well being of the 50-year old or older and retired Francophones and Francophiles.

The mandate of the FAF is:

1. To regroup the above mentioned to be better able to promote their well-being
2. To assist any group to organize themselves into an affiliate club
3. To form a representative group for lobbying
4. To organize cultural, educational, recreational and even political activities

The FAF's priorities:

1. Health care and accident prevention in the home
2. Education in line with the previous item: CPR, artificial respiration, The Heimlich Method, nutrition, and first aid assistance
3. Intergenerational projects with the ACF (Francophone Youth Association)

The highlights of the year are:

1. The annual general meeting and a health forum
2. Pioneer Days

Submitted by Laurent Desrosiers

# CRYPTO CORNER

CLUE: A = D

H K R N A B A N K Z A Z O N B E N E R I N D N K Z L Q A P Z ?

K Z E R B A " B E H Z R V N D M Q U U N K Z N D D N K R O A

O D N K B O P P Q N N K Z N D D N K ! "

(solution page 17)

# Grandma's Apron

By Tina Trivett



I wrote the poem years ago for my Grandmother when she passed. She was a sweet dear lady who lived to be 96. She was from Kentucky, wife of a farmer, mother of 13 children. She may have treated herself to a few puffs from a corn cob pipe once in a while, but she was also very dignified. "She wore a fresh, crisp, clean apron over her dress every day. The pockets held little treasures like chewing gum and mints. When she passed, I could not attend her funeral in Kentucky. That's where the poem 'Grandma's Apron' came from.

*The strings were tied, It was freshly washed, and maybe even pressed.  
For Grandma, it was everyday to choose one when she dressed.  
The simple apron that it was, you would never think about;  
The things she used it for, that made it look worn out.  
She may have used it to hold, some wildflowers that she'd found.  
Or to hide a crying child's face, when a stranger came around.  
Imagine all the little tears that were wiped with just that cloth.  
Or it became a potholder to serve some chicken broth.  
She probably carried kindling to stoke the kitchen fire.  
To hold a load of laundry, or to wipe the clothesline wire.  
When canning all her vegetables, it was used to wipe her brow.  
You never know, she might have used it to shoo flies from the cow.  
She might have carried eggs in from the chicken coop outside.  
Whatever chore she used it for, she did them all with pride.  
When Grandma went to heaven, God said she now could rest.  
I'm sure the apron that she chose, was her Sunday best.  
I miss you Grandma.....*

(Continued from page 13)

tential class-action law-suits related to the long-term adverse effects of the prolonged periods of inactivity and the inhalation of exhaust fumes associated with lengthy, daily bus-rides? This shift from a student-centred to an administration-centred public system could well be the final push over the edge of a steep cliff. Are we being pushed over the edge of that cliff by the short-sighted focus on bigness and dollars rather than quality? Or are we already over the edge?

At a recent health conference, one of the speakers, while extolling the importance of healthy living in relation to costly treatments, said, "It's better to build a strong fence at the top of the cliff than to have an ambulance waiting at the bottom". Such a significant metaphor fits many other public programs besides health. Could not smaller, student centred schools be part of that fence?

T. Quinn

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## Lifeline Saskatchewan

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#### **It may be time to consider Lifeline if you:**

- \*Are home alone on a frequent basis.*
- \*Are at risk for falls.*
- \*Are using adaptive devices to assist you with walking.*
- \*Are managing a medical condition*
- \*Are considering a move to assisted living*

If you or a loved one fall into one or more of these categories then it's important to feel safe at home and have access to immediate help.

In emergencies, every second counts and studies show that delays in receiving medical care can jeopardize a healthy recovery.

#### **The service is easy to use:**

Lifeline is a medical alarm designed to reduce the risk of living alone. It allows you to summon help any time of day or night – even if you can't speak. Simply press the Lifeline button that you wear (on your wrist or as a pendant) to activate the Lifeline Home Unit. The Home Unit then dials the Lifeline Response Centre (a toll free number) and establishes two-way communication. Within seconds one of our professionally-certified Response Associates quickly assesses your situation. They will contact a neighbour, loved one or emergency services to ensure you receive help – quickly.

#### **Signing up for Lifeline is easy...**

- ◆ The Lifeline service is accessible in every community across the province.
- ◆ Please note that Veterans Affairs Canada **may** be able to cover the cost of the service (contact Veterans Affairs directly—1-866-522-2122).
- ◆ We offer complementary, in-home visits if you are interested in seeing how the service works.

#### **We offer a range of service options:**

Only Philips Lifeline offers a variety of personal help buttons designed to suit your taste and lifestyle. Our latest is the Lifeline Tempo Watch – which combines the reliability of Timex® with the built-in security of the Lifeline service. Now with the simple push of the button on your watch, you can have access to emergency response or support 24 hours a day.



Almost 40% of all seniors will fall this year. Will your loved-one be protected?

**CALL TOLL FREE NOW—1 –800-856-0599**

## 55 Alive – Renewing Your Driving Skills to Meet Today’s Traffic Demands

The question of whether or not senior citizens should be allowed to drive after a certain age is a highly contested issue. The question of safety – not only of the senior driver, but of other drivers and pedestrians on the road – and the effect of the aging process on our reaction times and health are primary issues in this debate. That is why the Saskatchewan Safety Council has developed the 55 Alive course. This course is designed to help seniors renew their driving skills and learn how to cope with the aging process to help minimize its affect upon their ability to drive and to keep them driving for as long as possible.

The six-hour course takes place inside a classroom; however, participants can also choose to take part in an optional driving lesson with a driving instruction after the course is over. There are no exams involved and performance in the course will not impact a participant’s drivers license.

Ed Osiowy is one senior who has participated in the 55 Alive course. Through the course, he refreshed his skills in proper turning techniques, right-of-way rules, night driving tips, proper turn signal use, dealing with handicaps, proper child restraint use and much more.

“All seniors should take the 55 Alive course for a general review of driving skills because a lot of seniors don’t realize the changes and the differences that occur in traffic rules over the years,” says Osiowy.

Osiowy is accurate in his statement. The “rules of the road” change continually based on new safety standards and research. For instance, the government recently passed a law that places tow trucks under the same jurisdiction as other emergency vehicles. Motorists are now required to slow to 60 km per hour when passing these vehicles on the highway. Through the 55 Alive course, you will become up-to-date on the province’s traffic rules and regulations to help you avoid traffic violations and stay safe on the road.

“This course is more than just a review of traffic rules and regulations, it’s about breaking old habits,” says Osiowy. “I want to thank Harley Toupin and the staff of the Saskatchewan Safety Council for establishing this course. More courses like the 55 Alive program should be made available for seniors.”

The Saskatchewan Safety Council is dedicated to ensuring the safety of every resident in Saskatchewan. The 55 Alive course is just one of the many traffic safety courses that are offered by the council’s experienced and certified instructors. For more information on the Saskatchewan Safety Council and its programs and services, please call (306) 757 3179 or visit [www.safetycouncil.org](http://www.safetycouncil.org).

Submitted by Patrick Kurtz

# CRYPTO CORNER

SOLUTION:

What did the dentist say to the judge? He said, "I swear to pull the tooth and nothing but the tooth!"

### STUNNING SENIOR MOMENT

A very self-important college freshman attending a recent football game, took it upon himself to explain to a senior citizen sitting next to him why it was impossible for the older generation to understand his generation.

“You grew up in a different world, actually an almost primitive one,” the student said, loud enough for many of those nearby to hear. “The young people of today grew up with television, jet planes, space travel, man walking on the moon, our spaceships have visited mars. We have nuclear energy, electric and hydrogen cars, computers with DSL. BPS, light speed processing....and....”(pausing to take another drink of beer).

The Senior took advantage of the break in the student’s litany and said, “You’re right, son. We didn’t have those things when were young, so we invented them. What are you doing for the next generation?

The applause was resounding!

# Century Club Corner

## SYLVIA BIRNIE – PIONEER POET



(continued from Fall 2007 issue)

Of all the skills acquired at Lone Willow, Sylvia most valued horsemanship. “There were no saddles on the farm at that time. When you learned to ride a horse you rode bareback. I had a little brown mare called Maud, whose short legs and blocky build prevented her from speeding.”

In 1916, The Surrings moved into Weyburn. Ed bought a cottage at 62 Prairie Ave., a short walk from the school. He bought a piano for the children and hired a teacher, while he kept working at the farm. The children all became good students at Weyburn Collegiate. And in 1923 Sylvia went to Normal School in Regina. A year later, she was dispatched to Royal Edward School, an isolated location in the Cypress Hills near Maple Creek, at a salary of \$100 a month. “There were no trees there, very few farms. I was to board at the Gardner’s on whose land the school was built, and pay \$30 a month for board. And walk a half mile to the school.

“I woke up one morning to a blizzard. I had to go in. There was no way to cancel anyway -- no phones then. I froze my ear just getting to school.”

In 1930, Sylvia met her life-long partner, Harry Birnie. “He had a fabulous sense of humour and

loved to tell stories. However, the school board could not hire a married woman as a teacher, so I was suddenly unemployed.” It was the start of the Dirty Thirties, and life suddenly became challenging for the young couple.

“Harry was a jack-of-all-trades. He could do anything. We left for Hodgeville, where he had been offered a job as a garage mechanic. He was hired as a telephone repairman by the local telephone company, and we lived in the telephone exchange. I became the chief telephone operator of the Hodgeville Rural Telephone Company. Harry did everything. He was a driver for the local doctor and minister. He built snowplanes. Harry’s next business was running the power company at Ogema in 1947. We moved to Saskatoon in 1951, and bought a confectionery store, Birnie’s Confectionery, on Victoria Avenue. Harry and the boys operated it until 1958.”

Harry Birnie was a quiet man, who loved his workshop. In the course of his lifetime he built 17 grandfather clocks. He was also a ham radio operator, communicating with people around the world. Their household was a large and crowded; music and sing-a-longs were a part of life. Harry played the violin, Sylvia the piano.

“I went back to teaching in 1952. I loved teaching. I loved every minute. The children’s eyes always told me they were dying to learn. If my body allowed it, I’d still be doing it.” She opened the first elementary school library in Saskatoon, now the Sylvia Birnie Learning Resource Centre. In 1967, she was president of the Saskatchewan School Libraries Association.

One of Sylvia Birnie’s greatest accomplishments was to pass her faith in education on to her children. Her son Howard became a university professor and novelist. In 2004 – perhaps inspired by his mother’s writing career – Howard wrote and published his first novel: *Return to Willows, Celebrating the Cen-*

*tenary of the Prairies.* Her other children, Edward, Darryl and Beverly, all had successful professional careers.

In her family history, Sylvia gives this advice to fellow-seniors, “There are so many stories in the history of our province. If you are a pioneer, write them down that they not be lost. There were good times and bad times. Saskatchewan needs the infinite wisdom of good men and good women – where are they? Surely they don’t all worship the Money God. Surely the God of right, truth, love and peace must reign!”

In 2005, Sylvia’s family celebrated a huge centennial birthday in March, when she also joined the Saskatchewan Century Club. Her accomplishment is beautifully captured in her poem, “My Hands”, written at the age of 80.

-Ken Mitchell

### My Hands

I make no apology for my hands,  
Wrinkled and worn they be,  
Each long finger and Artist’s thumb  
Has served me faithfully.

They cooked for a husband whom I loved  
With a young bride’s sweet emotion.  
They cared for our children, all five of them,  
With a tried and true devotion

Today, I look at my self-serve hands  
And breathe a prayer, thankfully.  
These once beautiful, work-worn hands  
Are still loyal and true to me!

- Sylvia Birnie



## CENTURY CLUB HOUR

The Christmas Century Club Meeting was held at the Renaissance Retirement Residence on November 9, 2007 with over 50 in attendance.

Ken Mitchell presented several poems in addition to asking for favourites from the crowd. A highlight was the presentation of a story set in the dirty 30’s about a

grandfather’s ingenuity in acquiring electricity for his family, as well as neighbors. The laughter was contagious and everyone enjoyed a chuckle or two.

The Renaissance provided a scrumptious snack including coffee, tea and dainties! Thank you so much!

## SASKATCHEWAN CENTURY CLUB



### **The Century Club is**

- ◆ A province wide association of Seniors who have reached the age of 90 years and beyond
- ◆ And are determined to live in as full and active a style as possible to the age of 100 and beyond
- ◆ Pursuing physical activity, mental agility, social and spiritual creativity
- ◆ There is no membership fee

### **You may join the Century Club by calling :**

- ◆ Toll free 1-888-823-2211 or 359-9956 (Regina)
- ◆ or send a note to Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism  
112-2001 Cornwall Street, Regina, SK S4P 3X9.

**If you live in Saskatoon**, please call Saskatoon Council on Aging ( 306-652-2255) to register.



## Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism

Proudly Presents Our  
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# NAVIGATING THE HEALTH SYSTEM

May 6 – 7, 2008  
Novara Ballroom  
Delta Hotel  
1919 Saskatchewan Drive  
Regina

Our conference theme reflects what our grassroots members have told us is important to them. Everyone has faced their own challenges with the health system. However, over and over again seniors tell us that they face specific challenges, such as:

- Having difficulty tracking down specific information about availability of health services;
- Lack of availability of doctors, especially in rural areas; for instance, many seniors have to travel to larger centres to obtain things like prescription-renewals;
- Wait times in doctors' offices;
- Wait times for surgeries;
- Difficulty in accessing transportation to receive health care;
- Seniors making unhealthy food and activity choices (health/physical activity);
- Cost of long-term health care;
- Availability of space for level 3-4 patients in rural nursing homes;
- Separating family members to access long-term care; moving family members to another community to obtain this care;
- Appropriate level of care is not always available;
- Difficulty dealing with the system, especially when family members are not there to help "interpret" instructions, or where to go next, etc;

We are currently locating speakers to help seniors shed light on these challenges. We are also organizing workshops that we foresee as very informative. In our next edition, watch for all the details!