

GRAY MATTERS

Published by SSM
Winter 2021



**CONNECTING
DURING
CHANGING
TIMES**





Connections - Behind the Mask

...it can be argued that the efforts to safeguard these residents have also impeded their rights to choose, make decisions and manage their risks

As we move into a new year and leave the turmoil of 2020 behind, it's important to consider the impacts the pandemic has made. Being viewed as a vulnerable sector, older adults have been given special attention. Despite having fewer cases of COVID-19, the death rate for the elderly has been higher than other demographics.

The efforts to contain the pandemic has led to decisions to increase protections for older adults, especially those living within the umbrella of the “special care” continuum. Among assisted living, personal care, long term care, urgent care and end of life care, special provisions have been introduced for older adults. However, it can be argued that the efforts to safeguard these residents have also impeded their rights to choose, make decisions and manage their risks. Keeping people safe has led to arbitrary lock downs, shifting the balance towards safety, regardless of a person's interests and needs. Unfortunately these decisions have also reinforced ageism – understanding that old people are incapable of making choices themselves.

With this backdrop, there are also questions about the implications for the emotional/mental health of older adults. While there appears to be a calm, accepting demeanor among older adults, behind that mask lurk issues affecting longer term mental health for older adults. What will be the toll of isolation, anxiety and depression on older adults, their families and caregivers?

At the SSM, priorities include raising questions about the implications of prolonging security measures aimed at protecting physical health. Concerns abound about the lack of a holistic approach that deals with the overall physical and mental wellbeing of older adults.

When you see a calm, apparently well-adjusted person, consider what may be churning behind that mask, looking to reach out, reconnect and return to having the full rights, privileges and responsibilities of being a fully functioning citizen in Saskatchewan. It's important to continue to expect balance in how older adults are respected as we journey through the pandemic.

GRAY MATTERS

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SSM

Older Adults Moving Forward

SSM 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.

SSM Member Organizations:

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SSM Office - 306-359-9956

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Older Adults Moving Forward

LET NO ONE BE ALONE WEEK will be dedicated to reaching out and connecting with older adults who live alone, as well as those in care facilities.

SSM invites everyone in Saskatchewan to participate in this week at the end of January, a time when isolation is a big concern. Social isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, fear and negative self esteem. It affects physical, emotional and mental health.



During the week SSM will provide ideas to help combat isolation. Each day will have a special theme: **Communication, Exercise, Spiritual Practices, Arts, Music, Nature, and Virtual World**. We will have ideas on our website as well as social media.

Our hope is that you reach out in your communities and do something special for someone who may be lonely.

Let No One Be Alone Week

January 25th to January 31st, 2021



Together we can brighten someone's day.

"Now, more than ever, smiles and laughter are precious."

Please join SSM as we celebrate this week in January.

If you use social media, please use the hashtag #letnoonebealoneweek
SSM website: www.skseniorsmechanism.ca
SSM Facebook name: skseniorsmechanism

Upcoming Opportunities with SSM

SSM is going to start offering Zoom presentations once or twice each month. They will be on a variety of topics. Some will be basic presentations with an opportunity to ask questions of presenters. Others will offer opportunities to engage in conversation with other participants.

Possible topics we are considering:

- Recognizing Ageism – Changing Attitudes
- Home Supports – Enabling Older Adults to Stay in Their Own Homes
- Age-Friendly Communities – What's Special About Them
- Other topics of concern to older adults – Let us know if you have suggestions!



Watch our website and Facebook page for more information. The information will also be sent out to SSM Member and Supporter Organizations.

CONNECT - Seniors Mental Health During the Pandemic Marathon

P R E S E N T A T I O N

SSM staff have developed a presentation that we are offering to provide to groups of older adults. **It is suitable for seniors living in various care facilities, seniors' clubs, or any other group of older adults.**

It focuses on resilience to survive the pandemic by using our ability to connect.

- **C**ommunication
- **O**utreach
- **N**otice
- **N**ew
- **E**xercise
- **C**ommunity
- **T**ime

The **presentation is done virtually** and includes a presenter with a Power-Point. There is also an accompanying handout.



Any groups wanting a presentation need to make the local arrangements – let people know about the event and collect names of those interested. If your group is able to arrange the virtual presentation (i.e. you have access to Zoom or another videoconferencing platform) it will be easier if you set that up locally.

If you do not have access to that technology, we can set it up via Zoom from our end. However, in order to do that, we will need the local group to collect the email addresses of anyone who will be participating and send them to us ahead of time. We are very careful about security and require a list of participants' names and emails in advance for anything we set up.

If you are interested in booking a presentation please contact the SSM Office.

AVAILABLE

PRACTICAL OPTIONS TO SUPPORT OLDER ADULTS CONTINUING TO LIVE IN THEIR OWN HOMES

SSM is moving forward on **STRATEGIZING FOR POSITIVE AGING**. For the next several months, we will be focusing on one specific area that was identified in our research - **Supporting Older Adults with Practical Affordable Services**. At our recent SSM Member Organization Consultation, those in attendance affirmed this direction.



For years we have heard older adults say conclusively that they want to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

For years we have heard older adults say conclusively that they want to live in their own homes for as long as possible. For years we have heard governments tell us that they want older adults to live in their own homes for as long as possible. **It's time to provide the practical, affordable and accessible supports necessary for this to happen.**

Expanded Homecare

One possibility is to expand our current Homecare to provide assistance beyond medical and personal care. This could include assistance with:

- Housekeeping tasks e.g. vacuuming, laundry
- Meal Preparation
- Shopping for groceries

Expanding homecare to offer these ser-

vices would require an investment into increasing home care staffing and organizational tools for scheduling. Ideally the homecare staff person would consistently work with the same person who needed the service. Service would be provided through the regional/local health system. Recipients would pay part or all of the costs, depending on income.

Trusted, capable workers available locally

A second possibility, which would be in addition to expanded homecare, is the development of a home support program. This consumer-based program would be developed collaboratively with municipalities and provincial government.

Support services could include:

- Yard maintenance
- Minor renovations
- Home maintenance
- Major cleaning

The older adult might assist/work with contract person when feasible.

Each municipality that becomes part of the program identifies workers, interviewing and assessing them so that they can be approved as reliable and trustworthy. Municipalities know local needs and people who could be involved in the program as recipients and as workers. Such a program could help maintain the population of a village, town or city, providing income for local businesses and a tax base to support community services. A sliding scale based on income would need to be developed for the subsidization of costs.

If the aging population can be supported so that people age healthily and happily, the investment will reduce other expenditures such as those related to long term care facilities. This can be a win-win-win program for individuals, municipalities and provincial government.

For years we have heard governments tell us that they want older adults to live in their own homes for as long as possible



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IT ONLY TAKES A PHONE:

Social Participation in the Time of COVID

What can each one of us do to stay connected with others during this pandemic marathon? The global Age-Friendly movement includes *Social Participation* as a major focus of community life. We know that social participation is essential to mental health.

How can you make a phone call unique, fun, and engaging for you and those with whom you talk?

Several older adults offer their suggestions of how their telephone is a lifeline of mutual support.

Landline Use - 2 people:



Sarah, who is in her late 80s, decided that every two weeks, she would call all her friends that are **older than her**. Sarah asks a specific question: **"How are you TODAY?"** She focuses on today, not "since we last talked", not "this week", but rather "How are you TODAY?" At this moment.

Paul decided to phone someone he knows who is in **every decade of life** (from under age 10 to over 100). Paul asks two questions to start the conversation: What is **challenging** today? What are you **thankful** for today? At the end of the call, he asks each person he talks with **to call one of their friends** whose age is in a different decade.

The phone calls initiated by Sarah and Paul **engage** the person they are calling and themselves in a **mutual** way. They are not simply someone doing something for someone else. Sarah and Paul make sure they get to respond to those questions from their perspective, too!

Landline 3-way Call:

Anyone with a landline can talk with two people at the same time whether those they call have a landline or a cell phone. On his landline, George calls both his brothers at the same time. One lives in the next town, and one lives two provinces away. George laughs when he says: "We try to out talk each other just like we did when we were boys".

INSTRUCTIONS

Here are SaskTel Instructions to set up a **3-way Call from a landline**: First step: "Call the first number. While you are connected to the first party, press the switchhook or link button*. You will hear three short beeps and then a dial tone. Second step: **Enter *71**, dial the second number, and when you are connected, press the switchhook or link button again. Your three-way call is established." **All three of you are on the call together.**

* A **switchhook** is the control mechanism that answers and hangs up a phonecall. When you place the handset in the telephone cradle, it depresses the switchhook's **button** and hangs up (puts the phone "on hook").

The **"link"** or **"flash"** is a button that takes the place of pressing and quickly letting go of the switchhook. It allows you to add a third person to your call.

Cell Phone 3-way Call:

Anyone with a cell phone can talk with two people at the same time whether those they call have a landline or a cell phone.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Dial the first person and wait for the call to connect.
- Tap **add call**. The first person will be placed on hold.
- Dial the second person, and wait for the call to connect.
- Tap **merge calls**.
- The two calls merge so the three of you can speak at the same time. To add additional people, repeat steps 2-4.



Cell Phone Conference Call or Phone-Tree:

Anyone with a cell phone can talk with **up to five people** at the same time whether those they call have a landline or a cell phone.

INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the instructions above for a cell phone 3-way call. Then, to add additional people, repeat steps 2-5. If one of those five people has a cell phone, they can follow the same instructions and **add up to five more people**. At that point, the first caller will have to do roll call, and then “chair a meeting” by calling on each participant to speak!

Decades ago, after a long work day, my farmer Dad would often phone a friend in the evening. He would jot a note at the supper table to remind himself what questions he planned to ask to keep the conversation flowing and interesting. Those questions included: What did you hear on the *Radio Noon Farm Show* today? What happened at the Wheat Pool Committee meeting? Do you know what the Smith girl is studying after high

school? Dad also jotted down items he wanted to tell his friend about his own day. His open-ended questions expressed interest about livelihood and community. Dad also made sure he got time to talk about how he was feeling and what he was doing.

What is significant is that Dad took time to **plan his call** so that it was **mutually beneficial** and **interesting**.



What might be some open-ended questions to discuss on your calls this winter?

Remember:
How are you TODAY?
What is challenging today?
What are you thankful for today?

Here are some other questions that you might add:

- When was another time in our lives that we were part of a community effort to promote safe health? What happened then?
- What did our parents or grandparents do to survive and thrive in The Thirties — or during the War Years?
- What plans do you have for this afternoon?
- What was your telephone like as a child? What was your childhood phone number?

You will find information on doing video calls on page 23. We encourage you to explore that option, too. However, remember how important a phone call can be to break isolation, improve mental health, and increase *Age-Friendly Social Participation*! Happy calling!

SSM Collaboration with University of Regina

SSM took advantage of a unique opportunity recently. Dr. Gloria DeSantis, Head of Justice Studies at the University of Regina connected with Holly Schick, Brian Harris and Shan Landry to develop topics for a Problem Based Learning case study for students in their 4th year “Community Advocacy and Public Policy” course.

Students were provided in advance with an outline of SSM and the work we do and **six topics related to issues for older adults for which SSM has been advocating.** The 17 students met electronically on October 7 with Board members and others to review the topics which included:

- **Changing provincial government structures re: older adults**
- **Public transportation between communities and the closure of STC**
- **Human rights – the right to choose – regardless of age**
- **Range of available and affordable homecare services**
- **Older adult abuse hotline**
- **Vulnerable older adults impacted badly by COVID-19**

After this initial meeting the students had a month to put together an Advocacy Plan for their topic. On November 4, the students and the older adults reconvened electronically and each student team made a presentation on their advocacy plan for their assigned issue.

The students had done excellent research and presented well thought out plans. A number of them expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to expand their understanding of ageism and issues that older adults care about. We were inspired by their keen interest. **It was gratifying to know that people of other ages can relate to issues that matter to older adults.** Both groups, I think, were very satisfied with the experience and the connection it brought.

- Brian Harris
SSM VP



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In the photograph, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II is wearing her Canadian insignia as Sovereign of the Order of Canada and the Order of Military Merit. She is also wearing “The King George VI Victorian Suite,” a diamond and blue sapphire necklace and earrings that were given to her by her father King George VI as a wedding present in 1947. The jewels date back to circa 1850; the matching tiara and bracelet were added to the suite in 1963. Her Majesty wore the sapphire suite in Canada during the 1990 Royal Tour.



The following is an excerpt from a letter to the Meath Chronicle in Ireland. Nancy, the writer, turned 107 in October 2020.

I have been in lockdown in my house since March, alongside my granddaughter Louise and even though it has been a tough time, we have got through it together. We drink tea. We say prayers. We bake. We laugh. We make phone calls. I can even video call lots of my family and friends and am making new friends every day that God gives me on this earth.

And that's a very important thing to say. **If you are feeling low, make sure to try to call someone or even go for a walk.** I also ask God to help me if I'm feeling low. This is a hard time for everyone but please make sure you keep yourself well and wear your mask. If you keep healthy, your mind will stay healthy too.

Keep talking to one another. All my life I have always believed in chatting and drinking tea and saying a prayer or a decade of the rosary and it has got me through. This is our moment to keep our faith and to keep believing that everything will turn out ok.

We must try to make sure we leave nobody behind and also that we don't lose

sight of each other. This is a moment for humanity to step forward to take care of the other. We must mind ourselves but we must also mind all those around us. Look up and smile even if you have your mask on.

Your eyes will smile and that might be all someone needs to keep going. No good deed ever goes unnoticed so try your best to keep being good. We are not here to live for ourselves but to live for each other.

Thank you so much for reading my letter. I hope I have, in even a little way, helped you feel less alone in this moment. There is always hope and once we keep talking to one another, no day will seem empty and we can get through this together. **It only takes a small candle to take away the dark and each of us can be that light in the world.**

This hard time will indeed pass like all the rest and all that matters is that we helped each other through.

*This is
a moment
for
humanity to
step forward
to take care
of the other.*

*It only takes
a small
candle to
take away
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each of us
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world.*





Key Findings:

Attitudes and social context make a huge difference and vary among countries.

How should we treat seniors? How much autonomy and ability to make their own decisions should old people have? What happens during a crisis?

Australia showed concern about people in long term care even during severe COVID-19 by concentrating on mitigating the risk rather than “locking down”. They arranged for safe visits from designated visitors who were tested, provided with PPE and were scheduled to limit the number of

Tiffany Cassidy, journalist, provided research to SSM about how some countries care for their aging populations. Research during the global pandemic revealed differences in managing the stresses on care for older adults. The report is available on the SSM website. Tiffany also connected via Zoom during the November Member Organizations Consultation.

visitors at one time. e.g. Mother’s Day became Mother’s Week

Denmark – Jane Holm 73, illustrated Danish attitudes when she said, “We’re well informed about our rights. We’ve paid our taxes and so we expect to be looked after.” Quote in *The Guardian newspaper*.

Almost everyone wants to stay in their own home.

“I want to stay in my home forever, and probably most of you do as well,” Tiffany declared, and surveys and opinions from every country she researched back up that statement.

Successful home care models are saving governments money and providing better support for aging populations

- **Denmark:** seniors over 75 get up to 6.5 hrs/week of home care with no charge (paid through municipal taxes and state grants). Government says this is cost effective if less than 20 hrs/week are needed because it saves the expense of building and maintaining congregate care facilities.

- **Netherlands:** 95% are living independently. Apartments for Life for people 55+. These are not care homes and not typical apartments. They combat 3 big issues: loss of power to organize everyday life, loneliness, perceived loss of identity. Communities are part of Apartments for Life buildings, e.g. pre-school, activities. Founder Dr. Hans Becker ensured that Apartments did not confine people with high care needs (mental and physical) together in one unit. He calls such units “misery islands”.
- **Australia:** Home Care Packages Program. Consumer empowerment model: Customers choose the services they need and the service provider for a range of qualifying services such as housekeeping, home modifications and maintenance. Income-tested care fees: (AUD=CAD) \$15.43/day or \$5,617.27/year for people with income below \$53,627.60; \$30.86/day or \$11,234.96/year for income above. (Single person rate)

**Governments need to learn from the pandemic and from one another and focus their planning and financial support for what they say they want to do:
KEEP OLDER ADULTS IN THEIR OWN HOMES FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.**



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Times have changed! We are not as connected as we once were and I feel that it has hit us, the seniors, probably

more than any other group. We were in some cases more isolated than other groups. Our families have left to build their own lives. We become empty nesters. Some of us end up in seniors homes. Others of us live alone hoping for a visit from someone, our children or our friends.

Isolation, to an extent, has been a part of our lives and then the pandemic hit us. Those of us that live alone could no longer go out and gather with other groups, or have people visit us. The younger

people could still go to their bars and meet with people at work, etc. We seniors became even more isolated which has caused, I believe, a lot more stress on us than ever before. We know that human contact is important to us as people, and we need to be able to feel and know that we are loved and cared about. There are ways that we can continue to have these important feelings. Fortunately modern technology helps with isolation. Yes, we are still isolated and we can still connect via the phone. We can connect in so many other ways:

- Video conferencing.
- Zoom and Skype.
- Facebook Live and Face Time (Apple).
- Our daughter in Florida sent us a gizmo that lets us know when she is home. We speak to Alexa and she makes a video call.
- You can also play games on

your phones and computers with other people.

- Take up a hobby or write poetry.
- Do something you have always wanted to do.
- Take online courses.

It is important for us to keep our minds and our hearts active and involved by doing what makes us feel good and alive.

The Bible tells us that we need to love one another and this is more important than ever. We need to help every person feel that they belong, to realize there are possibilities, with kindness, encouragement and compassion - remembering that each is made in the image of their maker and that there is no such thing as an unimportant person. We need to keep this in mind. We are all important and special people. This too will pass!

- John Knight

How to Shovel Snow (Without Stressing Your Spine)

Shovelling snow is easier and safer if you use the right technique. Before heading out, bundle up and do a brief warm-up.



1 SHOVEL BASICS 101: The handle should be curved and long enough that you don't have to bend much. Go with a smaller blade size: pushing and lifting lighter loads reduces risk of injury.



2 FOCUS ON YOUR POSTURE: Push snow to the edge of driveway before you have to lift it into a pile. Keep your back straight as you push. Switch between shovelling right- and left-handed.



3 LIFT STRAIGHT: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, bend at knees and scoop up small-to-medium amounts of snow. Keep blade close to you to minimize back strain. Try not to twist your body when lifting.



4 REST & REHYDRATE: In frigid temperatures, moisture is being pulled from your body, but you may not notice the signs of dehydration. Allow yourself occasional water breaks.



5 SHOVEL IN STAGES: Deeper- and especially wetter- snow means heavier loads. Instead of shovelling it all at once, skim half off the top and do a second pass.



6 PILE THE SNOW UP: If space allows, throw snow farther from your driveway at the start of the job, then dump it progressively closer. You'll have a shorter distance to heave snow later.



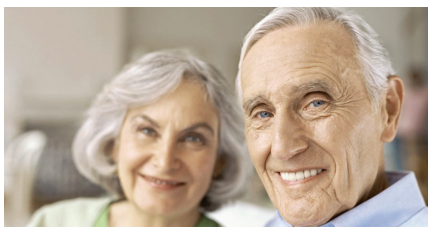
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In Times of Pandemic

2020 has certainly been a difficult year on many levels. The Canadian Mental Health Association predicted early on that the COVID-19 pandemic would result in an “echo pandemic” of mental health issues and unfortunately, that has proven all too true. People are concerned about their own health and that of their loved ones. They are anxious about school or work, their finances, their ability to participate in community and social events and other important parts of their lives.



Long term anxiety such as is being experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic can cause serious mental and physical consequences.... During times such as this, it is critically important to take care of ourselves by leaning on social supports, trying to get enough sleep, eating healthy foods and exercising and engaging in enjoyable activities. **We all know that exercise is good for our physical health, but it is also known to boost mood, improve sleep and help you deal with stress, anxiety, depression and more. People who exercise regularly tend to do it because it gives a sense of well-being.** The good news is that you don't have to be a super athletic individual to see the benefits. Research is showing that even modest amounts of exercise can make a real difference no matter your fitness level or your age....

Exercise relieves tension and stress, boosts physical and mental energy and releases endorphins that fight anxiety. If you add a mindfulness element – really focus on your breathing, how your body feels as you exercise, sights and sounds around you – it will help to interrupt the flow of constant worries that get stuck in our head.

When we are under a lot of stress our muscles become tense (especially face, neck and shoulders) and this can bring on back or neck pain and headaches. Prolonged stress can also cause physical symptoms such as tightness in the chest, rapid pulse, muscle cramps, sleeplessness, heartburn, etc. These symptoms in turn lead to more stress – a vicious cycle. **Exercise can be an effective way to break this cycle.** It helps relax those muscles and the endorphins produced as a result of physical activity can bring on a feeling of calm. Our bodies and minds are very closely linked and when one part feels better, the other does as well....



Exercise for Mental Health

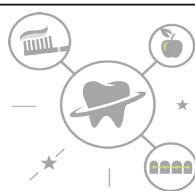


Make exercise a fun part of your everyday life and you will soon start to experience the mental health benefits as well as the physical ones.

The good news is that you don't need to devote many hours out of your busy day to go to a gym or to run a marathon. Even modest amounts of exercise several times a week can provide real benefits. **It can even be as little as 10 to 15 minute sessions a few times a week.** When you start, don't feel you need to push yourself to exhaustion. Listen to your body. If you need to take a break after 5 or 10 minutes, that's okay. **The more you exercise, the more energy you will build and you will gradually be able to increase the amount.** If you keep at it, it becomes a habit and the benefits will start to pay off.

Even when we know exercise is going to help us feel better, sometimes it's really hard to get motivated -- even more so when you are struggling with a mental health issue. Depression can make people feel too tired to make the effort, but the truth is physical exercise will actually increase energy levels. **Start small and build up what you can do....**

Excerpts from a SPRA post by Phyllis O'Connor, Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) <https://sk.cmha.ca/>.



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The Honourable Everett Hindley,

Minister of Mental Health & Addictions, Seniors, and Rural & Remote Health



During these extraordinary times, it can be difficult for all of us to ensure that we are taking care of our overall health. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused several disruptions in daily routines, and while physical distancing guidelines are meant to protect everyone, we know that isolation can create challenges as well – especially for our seniors.

Our government is working diligently to prepare to distribute a **vaccine** once it is available in Saskatchewan, particularly to our most vulnerable citizens. In the meantime, however, we need to stay safe and connected in whichever ways we can.

As your new Minister of Seniors, I encourage our senior citizens of Saskatchewan to safely and regularly reach out to your loved-ones, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. **Here are some ways you can stay safe, healthy and engaged in your community:**

- **Ask for help with your errands** – This could include having groceries delivered, or having your front walk shovelled. We are all in this together, and there are plenty of safe ways those around us can assist.
- **Call family and friends regularly** – While this is a simple thing to do between family members, it also provides great opportunities for neighbours as well. We all have interesting histories, and you might just learn something new.
- **Continue to seek health care services** – Your family doctor, pharmacist and other

members of your health care team continue to be available to assist with your health-care needs. Many practitioners are offering virtual appointments and prescription deliveries in addition to regular in-person services.

- **Get introduced to interactive technology** – We know there are constantly new improvements to the latest technology, so learning about platforms like Zoom, FaceTime, social media networks and so much more, is a great way to stay connected to friends and family during the pandemic.

As we all work together to remain connected, I will also ensure that this government upholds our commitments made during the 2020 Provincial Election to support seniors.

That means that over the next four years, this government will increase the **Seniors Income Plan** from a maximum of \$270 per month to a maximum of \$360 per month, making life more affordable for older adults in Saskatchewan.

We will also make **ambulance services** more affordable by eliminating charges for inter-facility ambulance calls for seniors and reducing the maximum cost of other senior's ambulance calls by over 50 per cent – from a maximum of \$275 per call to a maximum of \$135 per call.

Finally, we will support the health care needs of Saskatchewan seniors by hiring **300 more continuing care aides** to deliver home care services and support residents in long-term care facilities.

Seniors, like anybody else, need to partake in social interaction and feel supported. Staying connected and making life more affordable will ensure a positive quality of life for Saskatchewan seniors, and help to address the future needs of our province's growing older adult population.

On behalf of my wife Anita and our family, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2021.

Nuggets of Learning

Participants Comments:

- *I thought the conference was very well done including the central theme, variety of other topics and good Speakers – all interesting and relevant.*
- *This is the first time I have heard of this group. I appreciate the fact that you are working on the issues for seniors.*
- *The virtual way to do it was perfect and for the first time I was introduced to the “zoom rooms”.*
- *You were very brave to attempt a video conference, but in what other way do we make progress in these times?*
- *Great! No travel costs and total flexibility during conference times...content relevant and interesting...would have liked chat rooms to have had more time...nevertheless we did well in the time we had.*
- *Virtual displays feature was excellent. Watched Age-Friendly, What is Old? and What did the Vikings ever do for us?*

SPEAKERS:



Jim Hamilton
(collaborates with governments, seniors and non-government organizations in Manitoba, Canada and internationally)

- People are living longer than ever before so are adding years to life - but adding life to years is heavily dependent on one factor, health. With good health an older person's life is little different than when younger. Healthy aging is about the ability to function. Communities offer supports or barriers - build physical and mental capacities, provide support for losses in these capacities.
- Our capacity is shaped by the person we are and our interactions with the place and places we live. Person/place interactions influence aging right from childhood.



Norah Keating
(social gerontologist whose professional life has been devoted to enhancing quality of life for older adults)

- Ensure that everyone is in the picture and that no one is left behind. The virus has exposed deep weaknesses in the delivery of public services and structural inequalities that impede access to them.
- There is growing worry in Canada and globally about the rise of hate speech, targeting of vulnerable groups, nationalism, populism and authoritarianism.
- We put the burden on older adults saying they have choice. We have to be cautious about abandoning older adults where support is needed. Healthy aging is about the ability to be who you wish to be and to do what you wish to do.



Isobel Mackenzie (is British Columbia's Seniors Advocate, whose office makes recommendations to government and service providers to address systemic issues)

Isobel showed statistics that overturned some assumptions about what happens as people age.

| NOT Diagnosed with Dementia | 65 or younger | 65 - 84 | 85+ |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------|-----|
| | 94% | 97% | 80% |

Explanation of variances for <65 and 65-84: People can be erroneously diagnosed when possible early pre-dementia symptoms emerge. Dementia may not develop. Also people with very early onset dementia die early.

| Where seniors are living in BC | 65+ | 85+ |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Living Independently | 94% | 74% |
| Assisted Living | 3% | 10% |
| Long Term Care | 3% | 15% |

It is important to remember that one person's story about frailty and aging is that person's story. It is not everyone's story. Don't lump everybody together. Statistics show a pattern that is correct and a probability that is correct but don't tell the whole story for everyone.

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caask.ca/distracteddriving



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SURF is: a provincial group representing retired public, private & trade union members; affiliated nationally to the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC); an affiliated supporter of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM).

SURF provides: retiree health, wellness & insurance benefits through the CURC/Canadian Benefits plan; access to Pre-Retirement Planning workshops; assistance to unions in forming retiree groups/clubs; retiree members to participate at local Labour Councils; liaison with other retiree groups across the province; the SURF & CURC newsletters to keep members informed about activities.

**Saskatchewan Union Retirees Federation
(SURF-CURC)**

**#112-2001 Cornwall Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3X9**

Protecting Pensions & Benefits for Federal Employees & Retirees

The National Association of Federal Retirees is the largest group focused exclusively on pensions and retirement benefits for current and former members of Canada's Federal Public Service, Armed Forces and the RCMP. We proudly serve 176,000 federal government employees, retirees and their survivors, who belong to one of 79 branches located throughout Canada.

In Saskatchewan, there are 6 branches located in Moose Jaw, Northwest Saskatchewan, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon and Swift Current that are operated entirely by volunteers to provide social gatherings, promote our goals, and join forces with like-oriented organizations such as the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism.

Our goals are to protect and enhance the benefits of those in receipt of federal pensions; to inform and assist federal retirees with regard to their rights as federal pensioners; to co-operate with other seniors'/pensioners' organizations on mutual objectives; and, to protect and enhance the benefits of seniors in general. Our organization also has negotiated special rates with companies for travel, insurance, car rentals, health and other services.

If you are a member of the above groups and are interested in joining, it is as simple as registering online at www.federalretirees.ca or by calling 1-855-304-4700.

I've never had to ask for help. Until now.



 **Parkinson Canada**
parkinson.ca

Dear Auntie,

I am 93 years old and live in a small town, where I know almost everyone. This fall as we old people who are vulnerable to COVID-19 continued to stay at home and had fewer outside physically distanced visits, I found myself really missing seeing people beyond my small family bubble. Telephone is good but I wanted to **SEE** people.

I am so thankful that my daughter who lives in another town was very patient with me and taught me via several telephone calls how to use my tablet to go on Zoom. I had to learn about more than getting pictures through email. I was pretty clumsy at first but now I have even gone on to a “virtual retreat” using Zoom!

I have tried to pass the joy of using this technology on to my close friends who have computers or tablets or smartphones, but they are very resistant. I know that they are much like I was and only use their machines sparingly and without much confidence. Sally told me the other day that she had lost all her precious pictures when she pushed a button and they all disappeared! I didn't know enough to really help so I suggested she should talk to the local computer shop where we bought our tablets. Sally masked up and took her tablet to the store where a staff person laughed and pressed a few buttons and the pictures re-appeared. Unfortunately, Sally still doesn't know how they got the pictures and what to do if they disappear again. She is even more reluctant to use her tablet except for carefully getting email.

So Auntie, my questions for you are:

Why are my older friends so reluctant to learn more about their computers? They are good about learning other things like cooking with brand new recipes.

How can I help my friends to learn?



- Sophia (wiser now about Zoom)



Dear Auntie,

I work in a computer store in a smallish town that has a large population of seniors. They have bought laptops and tablets from our store – especially in the past year. But they are like all seniors who get the technology and don't learn how to use it – just like when seniors bought VCRs that forever after blinked 12:00 AM!

Several seniors like to save pictures of their families. They mistakenly press commands that move them and then they can't find them. I don't have time to keep “fixing” their laptops and tablets when there is nothing wrong with the machines!

Do you have any suggestions?

- Roseanne

Both these letters demonstrate the unconscious ageism that is present in ourselves and in our communities.

Sophia, you booted aside some internalized ageism when you were willing to overcome learning challenges because you had such incentive to master video-chatting – and your daughter was very supportive.

Many times older adults work out of the mindset of internalized ageism that whispers to them, “You're too old to learn some new technology. It's not that important. It

would show others how little you actually understand about your tablet and that would be embarrassing.”

It's hard to overcome those internal negative messages but if there is a goal that is attractive, and friendly support all the way, it is possible to succeed. The difference between learning new recipe techniques and new technology is that your friends are confident they know how to cook. You just have to encourage them that they can cook up something wonderful with their computers!

There are websites with helpful documents that can be downloaded and printed so they don't get lost. On the bottom of this page, you will find a list of some helpful resources.

Roseanne, you see the lack of understanding of computer technology when you deal with these customers. That can make your job challenging. Our own ageism blocks us from seeing that each older person is different and will have different abilities for using computers. After all, not every one of us older adults had VCRs that couldn't schedule recording because the instructions were confusing or the time was wrong!

With just a bit more time, you can do your part to help a person who comes with a problem like lost pictures

so they can help themselves in the future. First, be prepared to explain slowly and carefully what might have happened. Make sure the customer can see the screen and tell them what keys you use to solve the problem. Maybe the person will want to write down the facts and methods that could be used in the future. Written notes are a big help!

When I was learning advanced computer skills, my friend who is an expert liked to sit in the "control chair" and push buttons while I watched. I knew little when he was done. Eventually, I ensured that I sat in the control chair and he told me what keys to push and WHY – priceless!

- Auntie



Auntie Ageism highlights how anti-ageism critiques and challenges the ageist attitudes that are prevalent but often unrecognized in our society. Let's ALL do our part to challenge ageism.

Super Cool and Informative Websites Focused on Older Adults Using Computers



Gluu Technology Society – a non-profit based in BC, has fabulous information available through free on-line classes starting in January. Classes are based on the equipment you use iPad, iPhone or Android based. <https://gluusociety.org/>



Cyber-Seniors originated in USA and is about bringing generations together to help seniors wanting to learn about computer technology and using the internet. <https://cyberseniors.org/about/>



Lifelong Learning Centre
Centre for Continuing Education

University of Regina - Lifelong Learning Centre for Continuing Education – on-line classes

<https://www.uregina.ca/cce/personal-enrichment/current-courses/comp-tech.html>

Some links specifically related to using Zoom for video-chatting

Saskatoon Council on Aging – <https://supportoa.ca/tech-support/>



These short videos are very good:

iPad – Excellent 6 minute YouTube Video titled: "How to install and use Zoom on iPad"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MV_DrO9BLKY&feature=youtu.be

Android Device – Excellent 6 minute YouTube Video for Zoom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok-o-TambUI&feature=youtu.be>

**Keep your eyes open for local help that may be available post-COVID.
Organizations and schools are planning to provide classes or in-person help.**

U of R Teaching From Home

- Scott J. Wilson, Faculty U of R

In the early days of COVID-19 quarantine, late-night comedians Stephen Colbert, John Oliver, and Samantha Bee performed in empty theatres, backyard patios, grey voids, and even a forest. Colbert drank bourbon by a bonfire and laughed alone. They all looked sad when they delivered punchlines, in pain when they paused for laughter and received silence.

or Facetime or Discord, text messages, talking on the phone, outdoor physically distanced walk and talks, and even in video games which became a fun way to talk shop. There was uncertainty everywhere. We needed to check in on everyone and their families. We missed those chance hallway meetings, spur-of-the-moment office pop ins, and mailroom discussions. We had to get creative to stay safely connected.

When I started my first synchronous online class, I hoped for an easy transition: I would see familiar faces and hear familiar voices and we would pretend like nothing happened and continue creating podcasts and learning to write research papers. It worked well for the first class or two, but it did not last and the dialogue became a monologue. There was a monitor full of little black boxes. I felt like a comedian speaking to an empty room.

However, at some point the emails started again. Then students arrived in Zoom office hours and they posted replies in discussion forums. They were kind and generous and I tried to follow their example. It was like some sort of lengthy satellite delay, but it was comforting to know they were out there in the universe. They sent memes to cheer me up. They asked me to post pictures of the cats that always appeared on-screen.

Off-campus life is different and often awkward, but it is good enough until we can make our safe return. Until then, I will pause for laughter or comments or questions and understand that an immediate response is nice but not necessary.

Online Teaching

I had that sympathy stomach pain that happens while watching a bad wedding speech. I tried to send positive vibes, willed them towards success, tried to make them feel a little better with some cosmic clue that the joke worked here in Saskatchewan. Part of this absurd attempt to help was knowing I was shifting my courses to remote learning.

We had a one-week break for instructors and students to get settled somewhere else and do their best to pivot online. While that week was mostly spent recording lectures and figuring out new functions on our online learning platform, plenty of time was spent finding any way to connect: Zoom

Scott and Morse Teaching

Zoom Zoom

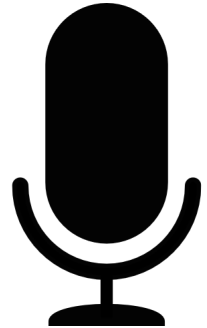
- Jeanne Alexander, CJTR

I was truly fortunate 18 years ago when I received the proverbial shoulder tap from an acquaintance named Blair who said, "You would love to do this," and he handed me a pamphlet entitled, REGINA COMMUNITY RADIO. I became the host of Toast n Coffee, an hour long program featuring guests from all walks of life who discuss their respective organizations' raison d'être. Thus, we assist our guests and the public by informing and entertaining them about various aspects of society. As the host and programmer, my life has been enriched by meeting so many wonderful people many of whom volunteer their time, energy, resources for the betterment of all. Saskatchewan is built on altruism, think of the programs and facilities built and maintained by volunteers that have enhanced your families' lives. CJTR 91.3 FM is heard world-wide on www.cjtr.ca as well as on Sasktel Max 806 and Access7 700.

Families can be supportive. One of my brothers-in-law suggested the theme song, *She Say*, by the Diamonds while another brother-in-law was delighted by the prospect of my laugh being heard world-wide. Families! Toast n Coffee has been a huge part of my life. Then the pandemic hit.

Up until that point words like zoom, twitter and cloud had a traditional meaning for me even though I was aware that they had other meanings for those who were conversant with technological jargon. Due to COVID-19, restrictions included closing the doors of the studio to the public where approximately 100 programmers and hosts and their guests transmitted the programs. Thinking that this lockdown would be temporary many of us bided our time, but it soon became apparent that we would not be returning to normal any time soon. Zoom became an option. Zoom meant that we could continue our programming. It was for me totally uncharted waters. Frankly, I felt at a distinct disadvantage. In the old age manual I had envisioned for myself, it did not include having to learn computer skills in order to produce my radio show. With the aid of CJTR staff and my tech savvy grandson, I have managed to produce my weekly program. As with any new skill, it takes time and patience with yourself and the process but the end goal, my desire to remain viable and provide programming which is pertinent to the public interest and well-being, provided incentive.

Interviewing via Zoom is not the same as interviewing in person, but it is a workable alternative. Often the problem lies in our own insecurities as we have not yet become comfortable with the process. For me, the telephone is an instrument of choice for communicating, possibly because I grew up with it. Zoom opens up the visual component but many are still shy about being on camera. I have many years of experience doing local television yet there is something different about Zoom. I have come to the conclusion that the difference is mostly my comfort level. Zoom offers the opportunity for longer distance interviewing. Zoom can be a time saver in that participants don't have to travel nor bear the cost of travelling. Participants and hosts can be more flexible in terms of arranging interview times. Thanks to Zoom, I am able to continue to as Leonard Cohen stated, to "ring the bells which still can ring".



Faith Communities Respond to Unusual Times

As has been said repeatedly, we are living through unusual, and for most of us unprecedented, times. As various faith communities attempt to deal with this, **technology has allowed them to reach out to their flocks in ways that would have been impossible even a few years ago.**

Since the initial “lockdown” in March congregations have experimented with various means of communication, while not being able to have face-to-face interaction. One of the first, and best, has been the good old-fashioned telephone. “Phoning trees” have checked in on those who have been unable to be in touch by other methods. “Zoom” has become a familiar tool for many to whom it meant nothing a few months ago.

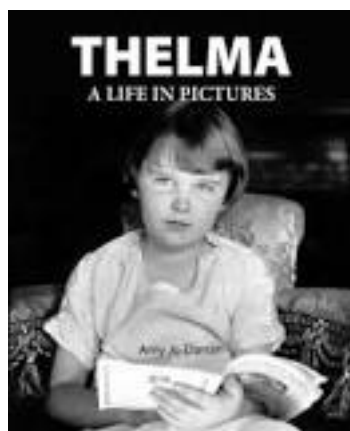
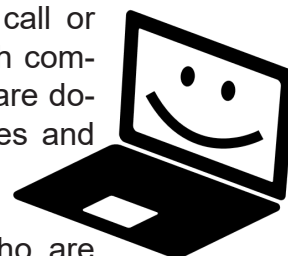
According to a member of Regina Multi-Faith, few, if any, faith communities are currently having in-person services. My own, Wesley United in Regina, conducted Zoom services from March till late September, at which time we began meeting in person, with very strict requirements for pre-registration, mask-wearing and measures that limited any kind of personal contact, e.g. - not passing an offering plate. At the same time, these

services were live-streamed, as most of the congregation chose not to attend in person. As of November 22, we have again returned to online-only services.

From their website we see that Beth Jacob synagogue is offering online services Friday evening and Saturday. A telephone call or visit to the website of most other faith communities will let you know what they are doing to make contact with their families and provide services to them.

Frequent emails, letters to those who are not online and telephone calls are now the standard for staying in touch with members of our worshipping groups. **While we regret the loss of in-person contact, we are grateful for the marvels which allow us to remain connected day to day** and for those with the technological know-how to keep these systems going. Whether with the newest innovations or with our old familiar tools, it is the human touch that makes the difference. Reaching out to neighbours or friends in whatever way you choose is a gift to them and to you.

- Linda Gunningham
SSM Communications Advisory Group



An Antidote for Pandemic Boredom!

Thelma: A Life in Pictures by Amy Jo Eamon

In this beautiful book, Thelma Stevens Pepper from Saskatoon reflects on her hundred years of life, love and pictures.

\$20
including
shipping

You can order your book by sending a cheque to the SSM Office at 112 -2001 Cornwall Street, Regina, SK S4P 3X9. Books can also be picked up at the SSM office (phone ahead 306-359-9956).

Please pay by cash or cheque made out to Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON SENIORS IS WIDESPREAD but there are ways to combat the negative effects. COVID-19 case numbers have been high this winter and it is important to follow Saskatchewan Health Authority guidelines to stay physically safe. **HOWEVER, WE CANNOT NEGLECT OUR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH.** In the spring, a study was completed by a team of researchers included four faculty from Saskatchewan Polytechnic and two seniors as partners on the team. We interviewed 40 seniors three times each in April, May and June. We found that seniors were affected in a variety of ways. Seniors experienced loneliness, boredom, stress, depression, and anxiety. Seniors were missing their family and particularly their grandchildren. Being unable to socialize, volunteer, and shop all led to seniors experiencing decreased levels of satisfaction. **WE ASKED SENIORS WHAT THEY DID TO HELP SURVIVE AND THRIVE DURING SOCIAL ISOLATION** and, based on their responses, we developed the following guidelines.

1. **Exercise** – Keeping active improves physical and mental health. Many seniors found walking helpful. Walking outside is challenging due to cold weather and slippery paths, but seniors need to continue to exercise in their homes as they are able. Some participants enjoyed online exercise classes, others did walking loops in their home.
2. **Hobbies** – Participating in hobbies added enjoyment for seniors. Seniors participated in a wide range of hobbies including puzzles, reading, sewing, baking, woodworking, and watching television. Many of the seniors in the study took up hobbies that they had not done in years such as sewing and baking. Therefore, find things you enjoy doing and don't be afraid to try something new!
3. **Communicate with Friends** – One of the things that seniors missed during isolation was visiting with friends. Some seniors were already using video calling such as FaceTime and Zoom. Others were adopting technology for the first time, while some preferred phone calls. Meet in person as able to, following SK Health Authority guidelines, or meet virtually. Staying in touch will benefit both you and your friends.
4. **Family** – Not being able to visit with family was one of the biggest challenges for seniors. Call your family regularly, use video calling to see your grandchildren, and visit in person when it is safe to do so.
5. **Stay Engaged** – Seniors missed their community and church groups. Stay engaged with these groups by attending church in person or virtually. Stay in contact with your community groups. Many seniors continue to participate in their community groups virtually.
6. **Volunteer** – Volunteering added purpose for many seniors and helped the community as a whole. During COVID-19 this was a challenge. Continue to participate virtually with your volunteer groups. Volunteering can be as simple as phoning another senior which can be uplifting.
7. **Regular Routine** – It is easy to get out of a usual routine when you are not able to leave the house. It is all right to have a day where you do not do much and enjoy a rest, but keeping a regular routine is important. Maintaining a regular schedule as much as possible by going to sleep and getting up at a regular time, eating regular meals and planning activities during the day can help you frame your day.
8. **Seek Help as Needed** – If you are feeling down, phone a friend. If you are experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety, including difficulty sleeping, focusing, or persistent low mood, contact your physician or a counsellor.

This is a challenging time but it is possible to survive and thrive. When considering activities and gatherings please follow Saskatchewan Health Authority guidelines for maintaining physical and social distance. Find joy in the simple things each day and support each other. **You are not alone, together we can do this.**

- Beverlee Ziefflie, Heather Nelson, Deborah Norton, Susan Page, Rhonda Unique, Paula Mayer

REBUILDING SOCIETY FOR SENIORS

SSAI EXECUTIVE 2020-2021

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| President | Mike Kaminski |
| 1st Vice | Lylie Herman |
| 2nd Vice | Barb Johnson |
| Past President | Pat Trask |
| Secretary-Treas | Shannon Wright |

CHANGE HITS SENIORS IN SASKATCHEWAN!

Wow! A COVID fall filled with elections - provincial, municipal, school board and, of course, the American Election. The times have shifted tremendously and we all have to adjust accordingly.

In addition, the provincial government has shifted the portfolios of many cabinet ministers. Donna Harpauer is now the Deputy Premier and Paul Merriman has replaced Jim Reiter as Minister of Health. We have a totally new representative as Everett Hindley becomes Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural & Remote Health. Hindley's portfolio includes a new, priority focus on mental health and addictions resources, programming and funding, while retaining a priority focus on Seniors and Rural & Remote Health. It is here that the seniors of the province have a lot of work to do to try to bring Minister Hindley up to speed on the key issues and concerns. It is hoped that Minister Hindley will make an effort to communicate and collaborate more with seniors in rural Saskatchewan.

In these challenging covid times, the seniors have likely felt the impact more so than any other pop-

ulation sector in the province. Prior to and during the pandemic, seniors have faced many factors that impacted on their quality of life. The loss of STC reduced or eliminated their access to transportation to access health services, shopping and family; the access to medical services has been reduced or closed during the changing regulations for health care; poorly managed Long-Term Care in many facilities has made usage a real family risk for their elderly; isolation and the impacting on mental health is one of the silent killers during these different times. Seniors are trying to connect in these different times by using social media. The only problem, once again, is two-fold – the lack of quality internet and the additional costs associated with it.

Too often, government programs – federal and provincial – have not placed sufficient priority in developing programs to address the needs of seniors during the COVID waves of social and economic restraints. Far more communications and collaborations need to be implemented with the seniors and other groups that are affected.

Mike Kaminski
SSAI President

CHANGING TIMES

Looking back at the old year 2020, what kind of memories are you taking forth into the new year? January 2020 was a normal month for most of us, but ever since then our way of life has been in a turmoil. "Stay home" were the keywords in every newscast while COVID-19 continued its trek throughout the world. Most people accept-

ed wearing a mask in public. Companies scurried to produce enough of them while other companies began production to develop a vaccine to conquer this life-threatening invader. People ceased shaking hands and hugging and maintained 6-foot space from each other. There were many people who did pay attention to this order and many

who didn't.

Shopping rules and restrictions were heavily in place. The situation changed regarding bar and bingo hall openings, sports events allowed or not, care homes visiting restrictions, hospital visiting restrictions and many more cases where an attempt to curb the virus were implement-

ed. No doubt it was because of COVID-19 that nursing care home disasters were exposed. Will this be the beginning of better supervised nursing home care being implemented? If the general public don't get involved and stay involved I'm not sure that things will really get a whole lot better or stay better. All of this occurred because most of the real big nursing homes are privately owned. That usually means profit before helping people. Too many of us sit back and don't get involved unless it affects us. What are we looking at for shopping opportunities in the future when COVID is gone? Many have opted to shop online to avoid people doing shopping in stores. Can stores, particularly small ones, survive or will we be left with empty store fronts? Will our only option be online shopping?

Will family shopping be changed drastically when COVID is finally beaten? Will a large number of the population still wear masks

afraid to be exposed to their neighbours? Will people eventually shake hands again? Will they hug again? I feel that a lot of the worries and health concerns real or not will still be present. This will change forever the face of all friendliness, compassion and caring. I am afraid that the portion of the population who is in their later years of life either through sickness or age are the greatest number who will forever be affected by the presence and future lasting effects of COVID-19 being a constant threat in our lives. Many of those same people lost so much consolation through the forced lack of contact, visits and hugs from their family, the absolute abstinence from any type of group entertainment and the overpowering quiet and boredom.

A really good exercise for any of us to do is to grab a piece of paper and a pen and make a history a list of the good things that took place in your life in 2020. Can't think of anything?

Just sit down think about it. Did your grandkids FaceTime? Your kids phone you for a chat? Did someone bring your groceries? Did you watch some good Christmas movies? Did loved ones have a positive report on a health issue? Do you have a warm roof over your head? Is there enough food? You didn't have to shovel snow.

So looking ahead at 2021 you need to get or keep a positive outlook. When you look at your future and the future indeed of those around you, do they need your help with a positive attitude? I want all of you to realize that's the only way we are going to conquer the effect of the whole COVID-19 situation. How many other world tragedies have there been through the years? Remember this too shall pass!

By the way, did you reach out to someone who you knew would be lonely and needed a call to brighten their day? Why didn't you? That's a responsibility for all of us.

Pat Trask

SSAI Past President

STORY OF LEO JANSSENS COACH – AT MEOTA, SK



This project by Leo Janssens of Meota started 25 years ago when he brought the makings from B.C. to Saskatoon, where it went into storage. After he built a new garage in Meota the project began to take shape. He had helped his father build rafters for a barn years ago, so knew how to build the wooden ribs for inside the coach, and he went to work. By mid-summer it was looking pretty good and with help from his granddaughter and wife Trudy, even got it painted. He had a hitch made so he could pull it with his quad. July 1 came with a cancellation of the annual Children's Bike Parade, and a morning of rain, so

prospects didn't look too good for their first demonstration of their coach.

However by four o'clock it cleared off and out Trudy went! She had two ladies who were celebrating their '60th birthdays' as drivers in the seat up front. The children showed up from all around town waiting for their turn to ride in Cinderella's coach! Soon they were followed by Warren Iverson in his old green Beetle, then Leo got out his white convertible – followed in case Trudy had trouble with the quad. One little girl remarked on her departure after her ride, "You made my dream come true – I've dreamed of riding in Cinderella's coach for six years!" The next day they were asked to bring it out again as some seniors missed seeing it, so back out they went, giving more rides to excited children, and something for shut-ins to enjoy seeing. So Canada Day was celebrated in Meota, in unique style!

WALKATHON REPORT 2020

Results – Our provincial walkathon has ended for 2020. Due to COVID-19 the participation this year was down quite a bit. Since the convention was cancelled for 2020, we will be making Walkathon presentations for both 2020 and 2021 at the 2021 convention. Congratulations to the 10 clubs that chose to take part this year. It is definitely a challenge to maintain some sense of normalcy at this time.

The provincial totals were 16,015.56 kms walked, 10 clubs participated and 113 members walked in 2020. The first-place finishers are as follows: Highest Average kms per Walker – Ituna Social Club with 281.64 kms, Highest Average kms per Club Member – Chitek Lake Sunshine Group with

98.63 kms and Highest Percentage of Club Members Walked – Gull Lake with 100%. Great job Gull Lake! That's two years in a row with 100% participation.

All of the clubs have a member that walked over 250 kms. Congratulations to Gary Granat from the Livelong Lakesiders Seniors. He walked 696 kms. Zina Verboom-Harris from Ogema walked 504 kms. Congrats to her also! Also, a well-deserved acknowledgement to 92-year-old Louise Pingert from Ogema. She walked 194 kms, still lives alone and does her own housework. Great work Louise!! Once again, great job everyone and hopefully next year's walkathon will not be such a challenge.

If anyone has questions please feel free to call me at (306) 980-8151 or email j.boyer@sasktel.net or by mail. I hope everyone can find creative ways to be active. Stay home and stay safe.

*Joan Boyer
St. Joseph Seniors Club
Box 248, St. Louis, SK S0J 2C0*

SSAI - PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS TO GET INVOLVED

The Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. came into being June 12, 1981, at a joint convention held in Saskatoon, the home of the first organized Seniors in Saskatchewan, by uniting the Pensioners and Seniors Organizations, with the Saskatchewan Association of New Horizons Projects.

SSAI is composed of clubs united to form the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. The province is divided into numbered districts; adjoining districts form a region (letters A-O). Each of the 47 districts will hold an Annual District Meeting (comprised of members from each club in the district) to elect a

Co-ordinator, to hold office for 1 year. A Regional Director is elected at an Annual Regional Meeting from the elected District Co-ordinators.

The SSAI Executive Board consists of: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Past President, and Directors.

READ MORE on our website: <https://saskseniors.com/wp/constitution-bylaws/>

REDUCING ISOLATION AND ADDRESSING HEALTH CONCERNS

SSAI has joined in partnership with *Senior Centres Without Walls Program* being offered under the leadership of Barbara Meneley – University of Regina. The program is to reach out to seniors in rural Saskatchewan and engage them in one of several different arts programs. Participation will be by phone. Watch for more information to see how you can participate - contact Barbara.Meneley@uregina.ca. This program will begin in early 2021.

ALZHEIMER INFORMATION AND SURVEY

SSAI has formed a partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Canada under the leadership of Ngozi Iroanyah, Community Partnership Coordinator. Seniors are invited to participate in this survey to assist in the data collection.

Contact Alzheimer Society of Canada
416-669-5715 or 1-800-616-8816

APPELS AMICAUX

The Provincial Francophone Women's Federation/ La Fédération provinciale des Fransaskoises - FPF, along with Vitalité 55+ and the Canadian Red Cross, is now offering Appels amicaux, or Friendly Phone Visits, en français in Saskatchewan.

The program is meant to reduce isolation and create community connections for family caregivers, their loved ones or seniors interested in being paired with a Red Cross Volunteer. Please see the Red Cross Fact Sheet for more information.

Pour participer en français, contactez la coordonnatrice Janice Thomas, avec la FPF: coordonnatrice.fpf@gmail.com or 1.639.533.3842

NAICAM



Presentations were made to 3 seniors in our group, who celebrated their 90th birthdays, by MLA Todd Goudy. The recipients are Clarence Otsig, Doris Poole and John Irving.
- Greta Hamblin at Naicam seniors.com

Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. Newsletter

Please send all your news and comments to:

Mike Kaminski,
136-2nd Ave. W., Invermay, SK S0A 1M0
Email aelkam@sasktel.net

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**IT'S MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN EVER
TO REDUCE
THE SPREAD
OF FLU**

**LET'S DO OUR
PART.**

If you are **65 years of age and older** or you provide **essential care to others**, talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office about getting the flu shot.



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