

# ACA News



**Meet Ken & Joyce Edwards:  
Aging Can Be Victorious!**

**Alberta Council on Aging**

**An Independent Non-Profit Charitable Organization since 1967**

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Members may request electronic newsletter.  
Submissions are welcome.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for seniors and encourage their participation in all aspects of community by educating seniors and the public and by advising government.

## President's Report

## 2014 begins on strong note

The Alberta Council on Aging had an active year in 2013. We were involved in sessions with various provincially elected officials (both government and opposition parties). We were able to provide input on a number of government activities that had an impact on seniors. We have been involved in collaborating with other senior serving groups on activities centered on long term care, health care and pharmacare.

We also completed a strategic plan for the Alberta Council on Aging and continued major work on our Senior Friendly™ Program. Now we have over 20 trainers qualified to provide training. We are proud of our Senior Friendly™ Program as it is one of the few effective tools for communities, or organizations to use as they work towards becoming age friendly.

We are starting 2014 with three key concerns; the level of care available to vulnerable seniors, the Pharmacare program, and the implications of government programs being closely related to resource revenue.

We do understand that there has been an increase in facilities for various levels of assisted living, but, for those seniors requiring long term

care the situation has become more difficult. Overall, health care for seniors continues to be a high priority issue.

Last year, the government announced they would be bringing in a Pharmacare program, and suggested it may reduce costs in excess of \$100 million dollars. We aren't sure what effects this might have on seniors but we are paying close attention and awaiting more information.

Historically, resource revenue has been highly cyclical and underfunding social and educational programs during a down cycle has

continuing impact.

The Alberta Council on Aging remains convinced that the government needs a better strategy for dealing with shortfalls in revenue.

In closing, I bring your attention to the upcoming annual general meeting being held in St. Paul in June. The next newsletter and our website will provide more details.

Thank you for your commitment and the ongoing support of the Alberta Council on Aging,

Gary Pool



Gary Pool

## Executive Director's Report

# Aging can be victorious!

How wonderful to be chosen to present on Senior Friendly™ and Dementia Care Best Practice at the Canadian Association on Gerontology Conference in October. Throughout my career, I have held both the Alberta Council on Aging and Canadian Association on Gerontology in high esteem.

The main topic at the conference was Age Friendly Communities. Beth George, Senior Friendly™ trainer and the Seniors Safety Coordinator with Nova Scotia's Bridgewater Police Service, explained how her community achieved Senior Friendly™ town designation. This generated a good deal of interest as many leaders understand the concept of age friendly, yet how to get there remains a challenge.

One of the sessions I attended highlighted the growing concern of developers building seniors' residences, hospitals and fire stations close to the shore line. What happens should the tide overtake a town? Since Nova Scotia has the highest number of senior citizens per capital of all the provinces, there is a rising concern about older persons being isolated.

In Alberta, we have similar challenges when we look at our rural areas. Transportation is one of the top concerns because many services required to

support aging in place, such as buses and taxi services, are non-existent. Although we understand home care to be universal and a part of our public health system, we have heard from people in rural Alberta that they have been denied service due to travel concerns.



Donna Durand in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

The age friendly initiative has been announced world-wide and endorsed by our provincial government. While the Alberta Council on Aging applauds this initiative, we must also call all levels of government to take action. Some of these challenges and barriers to attaining age friendly communities are expensive and will result in the need to review economic and human resources.

The Senior Friendly™ Program is a filter for any question we wish to answer. Do our actions lead to inclusiveness and safety for all seniors, hence all members of society? Is what we are doing easy to see, hear, use and understand?

The theme of our winter newsletter is **Aging Can Be Victorious!** Aging is simply a part of life, and we want to focus on the joys and strengths of this stage.

(continued on page 5)



(continued from page 4)

Aging, in itself, is not a disease. Birth defects, genetics, lifestyle, education and poverty are what most influences disease not the mere presence of another birthday.

I suggest a new catch phrase: **pro aging**.

Pro aging requires: affordable housing and utilities, transportation, food, access to public health services, universal pharmacare, inclusiveness in our communities, and purpose at all stages of life.

The Senior Friendly™ Program teaches us that all citizens have a story to tell.

I hope you enjoy our feature story on Ken and Joyce Edwards; a lovely couple celebrating life in an ordinary way, one day at a time.

I wish you much peace and happiness as we journey together into the New Year,

Donna Durand

## Senior Friendly™ Program Train the Trainer Seminar February 13 Edmonton



For more information contact:  
info@acaging.ca or call 780.423.7781

## Congratulations Bridgewater

on becoming  
Nova Scotia's first  
Senior Friendly™ Community  
October 2013

Senior Friendly™ Program aligns with the  
World Health Organization's  
Age Friendly Cities



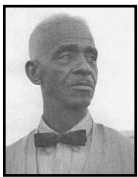
Beth George (left) and volunteer Muriel Hubley

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# Ken and Joyce Edwards

## Growing up in one of Alberta's first black communities

By Terry Jorden



Jefferson Edwards was only 21 when he left Oklahoma for Canada in 1910, seeking an escape from segregation and prejudice. That summer, he arrived in Edmonton by train and then walked 140 kilometers north and staked a homestead near Athabasca. The following year more Oklahoma families settled in the district. At its height, the resulting community of Amber Valley had a school, a church, and more than 300 black settlers. Jeff Edwards soon married Martha and together they had seven boys and three girls. One of those children was Ken Edwards, who is now 95 and living in Edmonton with his wife Joyce. These are some of their memories of more than six decades of life in Amber Valley.

\* \* \*

What Ken Edwards likes to remember most about Amber Valley was baseball.

In the 1920s and 1930s most towns in the area had baseball teams, but Amber Valley's team was different. They had style, flair, and wherever they played people gathered to watch.



Amber Valley's baseball team in the late 1940s

Ken's father JD Edwards coached and managed the team. Ken was the pitcher and some of his brothers played in other positions. He remembers traveling to Boyle, Athabasca, Peace River and other towns to play, sometimes even riding in the back of cattle truck beside a keg of beer.

Looking back, Ken realizes that his teammates did more than just play baseball. They broke down racial barriers among the predominantly European farmers in the area. It wasn't easy. He remembers the time a local black boxer went to Calgary for a fight but was not allowed to stay in the hotel.

The government of the day wasn't helping either. The federal government was doing all it could to block or discourage American black settlers from settling in Canada. Immigration agents were opposed to the new settlers and attempted to convince blacks that the climate was too cold. The Edmonton Board of Trade even went on record opposing black immigration.

"When we first came here, you couldn't go to certain places," said Ken. "We were called names. There were harsh words but we took it. A lot of the people now say how crazy it was back then."

"We changed a lot of people," said Ken. "We changed the relationship between whites and blacks."

Joyce married Ken when she was 18. She had known him all her life. Her family had come to Amber Valley around the same time as the Edwards. Together Joyce and Ken had six boys.

Joyce admits she was not as enthusiastic about baseball, although she did play softball in school. Her family, like the Edwards, were farmers, raising cattle and pigs and growing grain.

"Our parents never complained," she said. "They had things to do and they just did it."

She remembers fondly how women would get together to sew quilts, butcher chickens and do the canning. "We helped each other," said Joyce, recalling the mission work of the ladies at the Baptist church. She enjoyed attending community dances with music provided by local bands.

In the years following WWII, Amber Valley, like many other towns, began to decline.

Post-war prosperity brought modern conveniences like water and electricity. People began to move to larger communities where there was employment and other opportunities.

In Amber Valley, the school closed and the post office was gone. A recreation centre was built in the 1970s but by then the decline was unstoppable. "Many left," remembered Joyce. "Many just died and there was no one to take over the farm so it was sold."

"There's no community now," said Ken. "That's the system now. They had electricity in Boyle and Athabasca and we had nothing. What was the little farmer to do?"

Both Ken and Joyce drove school busses in the area in the following years. Joyce also took a job in the cafeteria at the Union Hotel in Athabasca. Ken and Joyce held on until 2001. Finally, after 53 years, they sold the farm and moved into a modern bungalow in north Edmonton. They were the last of the original families to leave.

Although Ken reminisces about the old life, Joyce

enjoys her new home close to the seniors' centre where she takes exercise classes and learns to use the computer. Unlike in the past when there was not much for older persons to do while living on the farm, she sees plenty of social and recreational



**Ken and Joyce Edwards**

opportunities available for seniors today.

Joyce recently had knee surgery and was very happy with the level of care she received. She said the hospital staff were surprised to see her up and moving around the next day. She has only praise for the home care she received while recovering from surgery.

Ken, who has traded baseball for a weekly game of bowling, reflects: "We have a good life. I enjoy life."

"Seniors these days are treated very well," says Joyce. "Everyday I get up and look around and I realize that this day is a blessing."

## News from Johnson Inc.



### Can I call Johnson for help with a MEDOC quote or application?

In addition to the online quote tool, ACA members and potential ACA members can call Johnson to get a MEDOC travel insurance quote and receive more assistance. You do not need an ACA membership to get a quote. Simply identify ACA as the group you may belong to.

Johnson staff can now complete an enrolment application over the phone. By completing a Health Option Questionnaire (HOQ), you may qualify for a premium discount. Members are required to have a valid email address, as once the phone application is completed, the member will receive an email confirmation.

Members must read through the confirmation (which includes their answers to the HOQ, banking info, along with their name and address). Once the member reads through all the information, they must select a button in the email which states they agree to all terms.

Once that button is selected, the application is sent to our system for processing.

**Note:** If members still have questions on how to answer the HOQ, they are advised to consult their physician.

**For assistance with a quote, please call Johnson at 1.877.989.2600**

#### Am I eligible for the \$50,000 Personalized Prize Contest?

Our current MEDOC policyholders will automatically be entered into the contest. Potential Johnson clients who call or visit the website [www.johnson.ca/medoc](http://www.johnson.ca/medoc) and select Alberta Council on Aging to get a MEDOC travel insurance quote will be entered.

**Note:** For those using the online quote tool, you must complete the eQuote in its entirety to be entered.

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The options are as unique as we know our customers are. You can see a full listing of prizes at [www.johnson.ca/contest](http://www.johnson.ca/contest)

MEDOC®, our Out-of-Country Emergency Travel Health Plan is designed for individuals of any age. Eligible expenses for medical emergencies are covered up to \$5 million and the policy allows expenses to be paid directly to medical providers where possible. The multi-lingual assistance hotline can help you anywhere in the world and direct you to a nearby medical provider. Protect yourself on your next out-of-country vacation with MEDOC®.

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The Alberta Council on Aging Board of Directors thanks you for your contributions and wishes our members and readers a Happy New Year.



Photo by Murray Mackay

# What Has the Alberta Council on Aging Been Doing?

## Meetings

- Assist and attend Region 6 (Calgary and area) revitalization meeting, held at the Kerby Center
- Meeting with Irene Martin of Alberta Senior Citizens Housing Association concerning mutual talking points, committee work and cross programming
- Attended first ever summit for executive directors in the voluntary sector
- Took part in Alberta Network of Senior-Related Organizations committee meetings
- Discussion meeting with Alberta College of Pharmacists regarding seniors needs and issues with pharmacare

## Partnerships

- Project review with two SCiP interns working on social media and marketing plans for Alberta Council on Aging

## Fund Development

- Grant proposals were and submitted for the Alberta Council on Aging's outreach program, benefits kick off, marketing plan and financial literacy

## Senior Friendly™

- Presented Senior Friendly™ Program at Canadian Association of Gerontology Conference in October
- Designated the town of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia as Senior Friendly™ (Video clip of message to Bridgewater Town Council can be viewed on Alberta Council on Aging website)
- Delivered fourth Senior Friendly™ Program train the trainer's seminar in November

## Government

- Meeting with MLA and NDP health critic David Eggen to discuss the role of Seniors Advocate, hospital discharge planning, developments around pharmacare, long term care beds within continuum of care, and the sudden announcement of the interim Health Advocate
- Forwarded second letter to government about the discontinuation of Community Spirit grant
- Attended Alberta Health Taking Action Against Elder Abuse train the trainer session
- Teleconference with George Vanderburg regarding the change in his post. Dave Quest is the new Associate Minister for Seniors. Vanderburg becomes party whip

## Communication

- Interview with CTV on the promise made by Redford government during 2012 election campaign that a Seniors Activity Tax Credit of \$500 for every Albertan over 65 would be implemented if their party was elected. This has not been implemented
- Live radio interview with Erin Skye Kelly of NewsTalk770, Kingkade and Kelly show, on the neglect of persons in care facilities
- Interviews on the subject of Canada Post's discontinuation of door-to-door mail delivery service with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Calgary Herald, Edmonton Senior and Calgary Seniors
- Submitted response article on Home As Hospital at request of Alberta Views
- Phone interview with Prime Time concerning the discontinuation of discounts to seniors
- Developed opinion paper in response to Parkland Institute's research document From Bad to Worse

## Regional Reports

### Region One (Northwestern Alberta)

Region One held their first executive meeting November 25, 2013 since their AGM. Karen Burgess is the new Vice-Chairman, Martha Dawson returns as Secretary, and Marion Carleson is Treasurer, the position of Chairman is open, with Karen filling in as needed.

It was noted at this meeting that one of the requests we hear is the need for additional information on subjects of interest to seniors. Considering this current need, the following plans, to occur between March 17-21, were put into place:

Region One will sponsor a panel discussion on the topic of seniors' care. This will include clarifying the terminology used in health and housing programs.

The second information session will be on the Senior Friendly™ Program. Invitations will be sent out to Grande Prairie organizations who have seniors coming into their establishment on a regular basis, groups that support seniors and community services groups. A general invitation will also go out through the local media.

We will also host a one-day Senior Friendly™ Program train the trainer session.

Check the Alberta Council on Aging website for more information.

My best wishes for a safe and healthy holiday for you and yours!

Submitted by Yvonne Dickson

### Region Two (North East Alberta)

The executive of Region 2 met at the Family and Community Supports Services office in Elk Point October 23 to do a mail-out to senior centers and organizations in our area, letting them know about the funds available to member organizations who are interested in a project benefitting their members. Ten organizations submitted a letter of request and explanation of its project to Secretary Sandy Kummetz.

On October 30 executive members Diana Anderson, Paul-Emil Boivert, Gaby Baydza, Sandy Kummetz and Donna and Paul Chambeland traveled to Lac La Biche for an ACA meeting in conjunction with the Senior Center's Wednesday Luncheon. Following a brief business meeting, guest speaker Lawyer Christina Tchir of St. Paul spoke on the importance of having an updated will, personal directive and Power of Attorney. She pointed out the pitfalls and problems of not having these documents in place. Many in the audience had questions following her excellent and informative presentation. Vice-President Paul-Emil Boivert spoke briefly on the concerns that are surfacing regarding the Pharmacare Program being planned by the government. Questions to the Alberta government are not being answered and the concerns are not being addressed in a transparent way.

Diana Anderson attended November's provincial meeting in Edmonton where she presented the Terms of Reference for the new Health and Housing Committee. We are looking forward to having an active committee that can make informed recommendations on behalf of the seniors of our province.

Submitted by Donna Chamberland

(Regional Reports continued on page 12)

Regional Reports, continued from page 13

### **Region 5 (Central Alberta)**

#### **General Meeting - September 3, 2013**

- Wills and Powers of Attorney – Yoshio Sumiya, lawyer
- Personal Directives – Glenna Thompson, Office of the Public Guardian

#### **Annual General Meeting - October 1, 2013**

- Update: Central Alberta Cancer Clinic - Mona Udowicz, Project Leader, Director of Radiation Therapy, Community Oncology, AHS
- Motion that Region 5 explore its relationship with ACA and bring recommendations for change, if any, to the 2014 AGM

#### **Board of directors meeting - November 6, 2013**

Officers: President Ron Rose, Vice President Shirley Thomas, Past President Viggo Nielsen, Secretary Margaret Day, Treasurer Bev Hanes

#### **General Meeting – December 3, 2013**

- The Role of the Ombudsman in Alberta - Peter Hourihan, Provincial Ombudsman, Public Interest Commissioner

#### **Committees:**

- Community Relations: Mike O'Hanlon  
Regular article for Golden Circle bulletin
- Program Committee: Shirley Thomas  
We have a long list of suggested programs
- Membership Committee: Margaret Day  
updated list from ACA
- Outreach Committee: Glenna Thompson  
develop contacts with rural central Alberta
- Home Care committee: meet with Red Deer Home Care administration

#### **Letters:**

- Support for keeping Michener Centre open
- Questioning the "first available bed" policy for

long term care placement

- Support for Public Interest Alberta's position papers on Home Care and Pharmacare

Submitted by Ron Rose

**Upcoming Red Deer and Area Meetings:  
Golden Circle Senior Resource Center,  
Red Deer**

**February 4, April 1 and June 3 at 9 am**

**\$3 at the door for refreshments**

**Everyone Welcome**

### **Region 6 (Calgary Area)**

The revitalization for Region 6 began with a meeting of interested members. While attendance was limited, we had two volunteers agree to work together to plan the next step in the process. We will continue with rebuilding the core of Region 6. Thanks to Kerby Centre for providing space and refreshments. A special thanks to Gary Pool and Donna Durand for traveling from the north country to provide a marvellous presentation on the ACA's past, present and future. ACA staff must also be thanked for their many efforts to generate attendance.

Submitted by Frank Hoebarth

**The Alberta Council on Aging Board of Directors is seeking representation for  
Region 3 West Central, Region 4  
Edmonton and Area and Region 8  
Southeast**



# Why I take the bus

by William Dascavich

Before I moved to Edmonton in 2005, I had never taken a city bus. I was told that the seniors' complex I moved into had excellent bus service with direct routes to shopping centers. However, I was accustomed to driving my own vehicle and felt no need to take the bus.

Driving in the city took a great deal of care, skill, and patience. As I grew older, I could feel that my reflexes were slowing down. The incidents when I got honked or yelled at because I'd made a driving error became more frequent. I had several close calls where I barely avoided a collision. It got so that I begin to feel apprehensive every time I got behind the wheel.



Heini of St. Albert also enjoys taking the bus

Then one day I decided to try taking the bus. I needed to go to the Kingsway Mall and asked one of the residents which bus I should take. The reply was "Number 12." I had noticed the Number 12 bus stopping at a bus stop across the street so I went there and waited until the bus came and I boarded it. About 12 minutes later I found myself at Northgate Mall. Lesson number one ... one must pay attention to the destination as well as the number of the bus!

I should have taken Number 12 westbound instead of Number 12 southbound. The southbound goes to Northgate and the westbound goes to Kingsway. The resident I had asked likely thought I was already aware of that.

I picked up some Edmonton Transit System brochures and studied the routes and schedules so that I would not repeat that error. I also learned to use the ETS trip planner online. However, I had another problem. Being unfamiliar with the city streets and landmarks, I had a difficult time knowing when to pull the 'stop

requested' signal cord. As a result I missed my stop several times. Then I started asking the operator to alert me when I was near my destination. The bus drivers were very helpful and courteous, except for the rare occasion. Now that I use a walker, I find drivers as well as passengers very co-operative. Drivers lower the ramp when requested, and passengers clear the area reserved for disabled persons.

Another difficulty which I encountered while getting used to using the transit system was that I would be so preoccupied ensuring that I didn't miss my stop that I would absent mindedly forget to take my belongings when leaving the bus. This meant waiting until the same bus returned so that I could claim them.

Despite these tribulations, it wasn't long before I began to appreciate the advantages of using the transit system. No need to be tensed up and worrying about traffic violations or accidents every time I got behind the wheel; no need to look for a parking spot; no need to fill up with expensive gasoline or to pay for licences, insurances, depreciation, and for maintaining my vehicle. Last but not least, one less vehicle on the road meant one less source of pollution.

I sold my vehicle and now I buy an annual transit pass that is available to seniors. It enables me to take the bus or the LRT whenever I wish to go within the city I've graduated to the stage where I feel comfortable about which bus to take, catching it on time, and knowing where to disembark.

The only time I still miss my vehicle is on a lovely summer day when I would like to take a drive out in the country. Thankfully, my children and grand children are happy to take me for the occasional outing.

## Feedback from our members

• I recently received the fall ACA News and was very impressed with the thoroughness of the Strategic Plan for the coming two years. Obviously a great deal of thought and effort has gone into this end product. Given my background in seniors' health care, I am aware of one omission under the Goal of Continuing Care. The two bullets identified are very good but an omission involving the lack of long term care beds for seniors with unmanageable health care needs exists. The current number of these beds is not being increased by this government, yet the number of adults becoming seniors is increasing. Two problems come to mind. Assisted living beds do not supply appropriate care for some elderly people with severe medical issues. Not all seniors are in a position to be able to pay for the additional services they require to purchase in assisted living. Quality of life for those seniors caught in these circumstances do not enjoy quality of life. - Sandy McMeekin

• A young senior, retired from a career in health administration, is end stage in disease and is unable to afford medications not covered under any plan. Over the past five years he has spent \$115,000 on medications. He pointed out this does not include the expense of traveling to and from appointments, etc. In the next month he will be declaring bankruptcy. He is concerned for other seniors who will have compromised health due to the inability to pay for their medications.

• One member states: "These are not stories we are telling about what is happening in health care. These are the facts!"

• A daughter living in a city a few hours away from her mother calls in to share her "facts". Her mother-in-law has had surgery and is not yet able to weight bear. Her score on the mini mental (Folstein's test for cognition) is poor. The discharge planner tells the daughter the mother-in-law would like to live with her son and family. If this won't work, the patient can be returned to her own home and home care (under public health) will be put in place and more home care (private company) will need to be purchased to supplement the care.

**Editor's note:** Both options have the likelihood of creating family breakdown and patient re-admission to hospital.

• An informal patient advocate witnesses and writes us about insensitive actions and behaviors on the part of institutional caregivers. The author states "The Senior Friendly™ Program needs to be utilized in long term care facilities to promote a change in attitude. Empathy is crucial to patient wellbeing and satisfaction."

• A member lets us know he is disappointed there was no mention of Remembrance Day or veterans in the Fall ACA News.

**Editor's note:** Our sincere regrets for this omission.

• "Have some seniors ask about the FULL price of their prescriptions as this is what they will be paying when the new universal drug program begins next year. It will provide a strong message to seniors and government."

- Dr. John Bachynsky

**To report elder abuse or for more info  
call the Family Violence Info Line  
310.1818**

## Input sought for U of A Health Services research study

Researchers at the University of Alberta are looking for seniors to participate in a study to measure the relationship between a person's health and the health care services they have needed during their lives.

No research studies have been done on the total number of health care services that people have needed during their entire lives. Life-long health has also never been studied.

The researchers are looking for Albertans 65 and older to fill out the 10 question survey.

"We are doing this study because we do not know if health is linked to the health care services used," said chief researcher Dr. Donna Wilson. "It is commonly believed that when people age, they become ill and high users of health care services. Yet many are healthy all their lives."



**Dr. Donna Wilson**

This survey can be done online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/BQXSHBT](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BQXSHBT) or by contacting Dr. Donna Wilson at [dmwilson@ualberta.ca](mailto:dmwilson@ualberta.ca) or 780.492.5574

### Alberta Council on Aging Membership Form

Membership Type: **New** ☐ **Renewal** ☐

☐ Household: \$22.00 How many members in the household? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Life Membership: \$250.00

☐ Organizational: \$60.00 How many people belong to the organization? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Corporate: \$200.00 How many people employed in the corporation? \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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