

# ACA News

## Taking Flight



**Alberta Council on Aging**

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## 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.

### Editor & Publisher

Alberta Council on Aging

### On the Cover

Bohemian waxwings, by  
D. Murray Mackay

### Formatting

Laureen Guldbrandsen

### Next Issue:



Up close and personal with the  
Edmonton Raging Grannies

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Vice-president:	Ron Rose
Past-president:	Gary Pool
Treasurer:	Gail Hiller
Secretary:	Lynn Podgurny

Directors may be reached through  
Alberta Council on Aging office.

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Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Alberta Council on Aging. The council reserves the right to condense, rewrite, and reject material. This newsletter follows the Senior Friendly™ principles for clear communications.

## Contact Us

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Help reduce paper use...  
please request an electronic  
newsletter.

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Suite 232, Circle Square Plaza	Fax: 780.425.9246
Edmonton, AB T5L 4G4	info@acaging.ca

## President's Report: The Kindness of Strangers

This past November, I was invited to speak at an ACA meeting in Calgary, to be held at Kerby Centre.

I determined to travel a day ahead from Irma, and stay outside the city. I did not book a room in advance and drove to a hotel in Airdrie. I selected this hotel because there were restaurants across the street and that would make getting something to eat a little easier.

Reception was pleasant, what I would call "Senior Friendly™". I asked if the hotel had a veterans rate, and as I went to produce my card the woman at reception said, "I don't need that but let me shake your hand". She smiled and said, "thank you for your service". I was taken aback; this had never happened to me before.

After settling in my room, I went across the street to a restaurant. Across where I was seated, with a row of tables in between, sat a family of four. Mom, Dad, a young daughter and a younger son. It felt good to witness their loving interactions.

I slowly enjoyed my meal and as I asked the server for my bill I was told "sorry, when I tried to bring it up, it had already been paid". She then credited the family across from me as being the ones who paid for my meal. Once I regained my composure, as I was very moved by this gesture, I went to their table and introduced myself. The father introduced himself as Dave and then gave the names of his wife and children. When I enquired of their kindness, he told me I reminded them of a family member who was no longer with them. We talked for a few minutes. I

left thanking them and promised to pay it forward. I walked teary eyed back to the hotel. What an astounding evening.!

The next day, after the meeting at Kerby Centre at which I was introduced as a military veteran, a small woman with a big voice approached me saying, "Thank you for your service". Twice in 24 hours.

These acts of kindness by strangers made me feel respected as a senior and a veteran; that I had been welcomed in. This is community at its best.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the Health and Housing committee members for their service. This committee will reconvene once our Outreach Program is well underway.

Yours truly,

Fred Olsen



## Executive Director's Report: Taking Flight

We chose this theme as many changes are in the air and this will most certainly be a year of movement. We are considering an office move as our lease has run out. We are reviewing our staffing needs as we have been awarded a grant from the provincial government to enable us to implement our outreach plan. Outreach in itself means movement... we will be coming to an Albertan town near you!

Part of our data base will now be managed by Johnson Inc. which offers the Medoc travel insurance product. Those members who have identified Alberta Council on Aging as their "group" will have their memberships renewed through Johnson Inc. This will take an administrative burden off of our shoulders. As we have been transitioning the data base, we have had a few snags that fall nicely under the expression "learning curve". I apologize for any confusion this change has caused and I also want to thank our members for their patience and willingness to go forward. Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you require further information.

A significant strength of Alberta Council on Aging is the way we are structured as an organization. In order to advocate for older persons we need to be able to hear all voices. In part this is achieved through regional representation. These representatives are either older persons themselves or a representative with vast experience with older persons. We are thrilled to see new volunteers come forward in order to

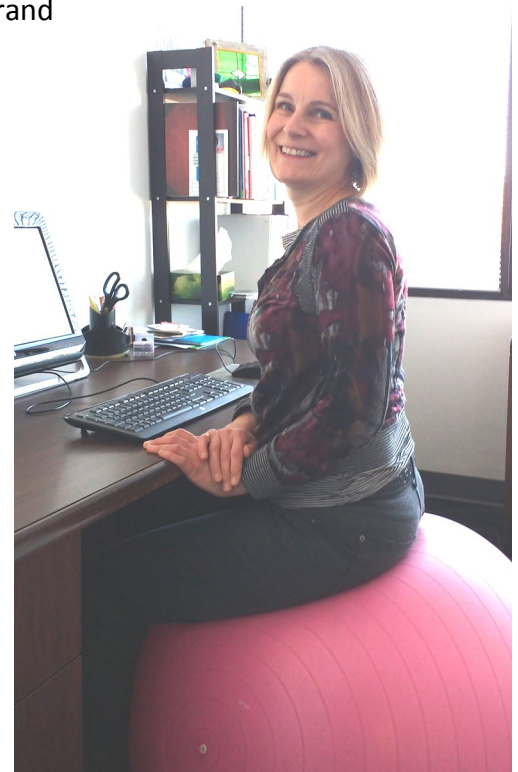
serve their area of the province. We welcome Brenda Josephs of Calgary and Charlene Sitar of Hinton.

We have formed new organizational alliances in the past year and believe this will also help strengthen our position. You will hear more about these partnerships in this and upcoming newsletters.

Thank you for your support and please keep in touch with us so that we may continue to learn how to better represent and support you.

Happiness today and in the new year,

Donna Durand



Donna using an exercise ball as a computer chair. See page 7 for more wellness tips.

## Your Third Ear

by Donna Durand

Alberta Council on Aging representatives were in attendance at Your Third Ear seminar presented by Cindy Gordon of Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Edmonton Branch where we learned more about what our third ear is and how to develop it. It was an informative session with some interesting facts for takeaway.

50% of people over age 65 have some form of hearing loss along the four different stages: mild, moderate, severe, and profound. Because of this, it is important for people who are 50+ to have a baseline hearing test every five years. **The brain (the third ear)** needs time to adapt to any hearing changes, so there will always be variables. You need to wake up the brain to help you learn to adapt.

If you have a hearing aid, it should be worn for everything, not selectively. Also most batteries will last 4-6 days. We did not know this! There is a provision for coverage as a tax deduction under medical expenses to take care of everything from hearing aids to those many batteries you'll need.

Hearing loss can be the new normal, it just requires a few adjustments to make it easier to adapt to. For starters, tell people if you have hearing loss. You should face the person with whom you are speaking and take turns speaking. Those old rules for children can be especially helpful now! Talking over someone makes it

much more difficult to hear what is being said. And of course, the positioning of your phone will need to change as the speaker of the phone needs to be held towards the microphone of your hearing aid. Don't talk to each other from different rooms of your house and expect to be heard. This practice doesn't work well for people with excellent hearing either.

There are advocates and resources if you are experiencing hearing loss, for example the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. There are also self-help groups for people who are hard of hearing. As with any life change, support can make a big difference in helping you accept the changes and develop strategies that will maintain your quality of life.



Resource:

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Voice: 613-526-1584

TTY: 613-526-2692

Fax: 613-526-4718

Toll-Free: 1-800-263-8068

Website: [www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca)

## You Can Help Take Wellness Off The Waiting List

Les Hagen for Wellness Alberta

Make Alberta Better is a new campaign by Wellness Alberta aimed at securing provincial government support for the creation of a well-financed, effective and sustainable wellness foundation. The proposed foundation will tackle the enormous impact of chronic disease and injury through proven prevention strategies.

While serving as the NDP health critic, Rachel Notley declared that it's time for the Alberta government to walk the talk on wellness. Wellness Alberta couldn't agree more.

Chronic disease and injury account for 90 percent of the illness burden in Canada and yet only one percent of the total healthcare budget is invested in the primary prevention of these illnesses and conditions. Wellness Alberta is urging the government to double this investment and to direct the funding to the creation of a new wellness foundation that will be sustained for many years to come.

With healthcare costs approaching 50 percent of the total provincial budget there has never been a more critical time for the government to invest in wellness and reduce demands on healthcare. However there is much more at stake than rising healthcare costs and protecting our healthcare system.

Most Albertans have been touched by the tremendous impact of diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental illness and addictions. These illnesses are placing an enormous strain on individuals, families, communities, the economy, and our quality of life.

Fortunately, these illnesses are largely preventable if effective measures are taken well in advance to address the risk factors that cause chronic disease. A properly funded wellness foundation could tackle these risk factors head-on through proven primary prevention strategies.

The time to act is now. You can support the campaign by visiting [makealbertabetter.ca](http://makealbertabetter.ca) and signing the petition to take wellness off the waiting list.

Your support will help to tip the scales toward a healthier and brighter Alberta. Don't let wellness wait any longer. You can help make Alberta better now.

**MAKE ALBERTA BETTER**  
*Take wellness off the waiting list*



## It's Never Too Late!

Now is the time we usually set goals related to health and wellness. Research shows deliberate small steps work well in achieving goals.

### Hearing

It is important to get a baseline hearing test done so you and your doctor can monitor your hearing and take proactive measures should you begin to experience hearing loss.

### Cognition

Because dementia may be linked to other health related concerns, getting a comprehensive health check up is important.

### Strength and Flexibility

To regain strength and flexibility, incorporate stretches and the lifting of light weights such as cans and containers. Walking is also a weight bearing exercise. Small steps that you take now can help reduce the risk of chronic illnesses and falls.

Here are some ways you can work on



creating a more well you.

1. Reduce smoking and alcohol use with the eventual goal of stopping.
2. Eat a simple diet that contains more vegetables.
3. Drink more water.
4. Exercise. Even short walks are beneficial.
5. Socialize. Reach out.
6. Don't ignore warning signs.



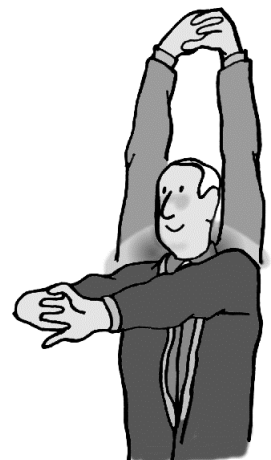
Six steps are a lot to start with, so it is recommend you pick one thing to work on at a time and gradually build your way up to creating a healthier, more well you.

### If You Spend a Lot of Time Sitting at the Computer

It is recommended that you give your eyes a break every twenty minutes by changing what you are looking at.

After thirty minutes of sitting, get up and stretch or walk around for a couple minutes.

Consider replacing your chair with an exercise ball to help work on your core strength.



## Correspondence

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December 21, 2015

Fred Olsen  
President  
Alberta Council on Aging  
Box 9, 11808 St. Albert Trail  
Suite 232, Circle Square Plaza  
Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4G4

Dear Fred:

As discussed with Donna on the phone last week, we are excited to contribute to the good work of the Alberta Council on Aging. Each year we typically provide gifts to our friends in government, our stakeholders and other partners during the holiday season. This year, we have chosen instead to donate to an organization that aligns with our Noble Cause: **Seniors are empowered to have choice and a life of purpose, wherein they are honoured, valued and respected.** The Alberta Council on Aging truly works towards this cause, and to support you, we have attached a cheque for \$1,000.00.

In your recent correspondence you advised us that you are launching an outreach program, which is so important to help Albertans age in community. We want seniors to have all the tools they need to make the best decisions and hope this donation will assist with the great work you have planned.

Thank you for all the great work you do. We look forward to working with you for great success on behalf of Alberta's seniors.

Sincerely,

Irene Martin-Lindsay  
Executive Director

Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association's donation towards our Outreach Program demonstrates a willingness to work together to ensure seniors are informed, valued and respected.



*Office of the Minister of Health  
Office of the Minister of Seniors  
MLA, Edmonton-Glenora*

### **Message from Honourable Sarah Hoffman Minister of Health**

For years now, we have been hearing about people who are prevented from visiting their loved ones in long-term care, in some cases indefinitely, with little recourse for action. This has to change.

I have asked Alberta Health Services to work with Alberta Health to draft a new visitor management policy that will apply to all Alberta Health Services' contracted facilities. The policy will be patient and family-centered and will ensure transparency and consistency as well as, provide for dispute resolution opportunities and clear avenues of appeal. It is expected to be in place by March 31, 2016.

Family members play an important role in the health care system and I want to support them while at the same time ensuring patients are protected and staff are supported with the tools they need to deliver quality care. I encourage you to write me with your ideas for how we can best achieve this.

**Sarah Hoffman**  
Minister of Health

Influencing a process for conflict resolution has been very important to Alberta Council on Aging. This is a significant first step.



## **Announcing our Outreach Program!**

This funding will help us better reach our members and older persons across the province.

Stay tuned!

Mr. Fred Olsen  
Alberta Council on Aging  
Box 9, 11808 St. Albert Trail  
232 Circle Square Plaza  
Edmonton, AB T5L 4G4

Dear Mr. Olsen:

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I am pleased to advise you that your Community Initiatives Program (CIP) Application No.CIP-040629 to assist the Alberta Council on Aging with developing the Community Outreach Program has been approved for \$53,550. A cheque will be forwarded in the near future.

Your organization is to be commended on its hard work in connection with this project. It will have a positive effect on the quality of life in our community.

The CIP assists Albertans, in partnership with the Government of Alberta, to enrich the quality of community life in our province.

Please note that you will be required to file a statement of accounting upon project completion or within sixteen (16) months of the cheque date. If you have any inquiries, you may contact CIP program administration at 1-800-642-3855.

I wish you continued success with your important work.

Best Regards,

**David Eggen**  
Minister

## Improving Health Care for Seniors

by Morris Maduro



*Morris Maduro, PhD, has taught at the universities of Panama, Alberta, Lethbridge and Regina. A retiree, he has volunteered with a number of seniors' organizations.*

The fragmented, patchwork nature of health care for seniors has been the subject of increasing efforts for improvement. Of particular importance is long-term care, which moves from independent home living across four confusing levels of supportive living, and lastly facility living in long-term care.

The increasing complexities, costs and segmentation — and the fact an increasing number of adults will live into older age with chronic, long-term, complex and interrelated conditions — all point to the need for a comprehensive, integrated system that carries seniors seamlessly across a continuum of care.

The over-65 population will increase from 15 percent today to nearly 25 percent in the next 15 years, numbering close to nine million at a time

when the general population will grow at less than two percent.

Some argue this “silver tsunami” is not a real fiscal threat to universal health care, as normal, increased economic growth and related increased tax revenues will offset higher costs. But the math does not bear this out: Canada has a slowing labour force growth, high labour costs, low productivity (GDP/worker), low innovation and a lack of economic diversification.

According to a new Conference Board of Canada report entitled Future Care for Canadian Seniors, spending on continuing care supports across all provinces is projected to increase six-fold from \$28.3 billion in 2011, to \$62.3 billion in 2026 and \$177 billion in 2046.

Integrated delivery, treatment and follow up would result in cost savings, as has been shown in Denmark. There's less wastage, inefficiency and duplication, and more effective delivery, especially in the emphasis of home care. The oft-used comparison figures of \$100-per-day home care cost versus \$1,500 hospital cost may not be realistic, but data shows expanded home care can be significantly less costly than hospital or long-term care facilities, and yields more favourable patient outcomes. Savings can also be found through more efficient pharmacare purchasing.

A comprehensive/integrated plan would embrace age-related acute, chronic and/or special conditions, whereby the patient is:

1. treated, in a publicly controlled setting, to a seamless, integrated continuum of care ranging from primary to tertiary to quaternary (highly specialized) and palliative care, and that ranges from aging-in-place and home care to hospital care to long-term facility care, but
2. where the stress is placed on aging-in-place and community care to the fullest extent possible,
3. where this continuum is addressed by staff trained in geriatric and related complex conditions, including dementia and best practices thereof,
4. where the patient is treated through a procedural awareness and linkage of previous, ongoing, and possible future conditions and treatment,
5. where performance measures are implemented and carefully monitored, and
6. where access, equity, choice/options, value, and quality are the key underlying principles.

**Added to this are the essential social determinants — addressing poverty, housing, transportation, caring for caregivers, ageism and elder abuse.**

The comprehensive care concept is not new: The recently implemented Living Longer, Living Well seniors-care strategy approved by the Ontario government in March 2014 has made impressive strides in achieving the integration of care referred to above, as well as that province's recent Bringing Care Home initiative and new Telehomecare program that links patients at home with their health-care providers.

A similar system was recently created in Quebec with its integrated health and social services centres — Centres Intégrés de Santé et de Services Sociaux (CISSS).

A comprehensive seniors' care program for this province would not necessarily be modelled on any of these systems, as we have our own needs and resources that require our own made-in-Alberta system. But the framework, processes, experience and outcomes of these other models provide a basic blueprint.

At its annual meeting this August, the Canadian Medical Association endorsed the comprehensive care concept in its official paper, *A Framework for a Seniors Health Strategy*, and has since been strongly advocating across Canada for its adoption, as have several health professionals.

The challenge of researching, developing, implementing and monitoring performance is daunting.

However, the troubles in our health-care system cry out for a bold, new integrated system.

## What has Alberta Council on Aging been doing?

- Trained three Senior Friendly™ trainers: Carmel Farrelly of Fort McMurray, Brenda Josephs of Calgary, Nadia Willigar of St. Albert
- Presented on the dementia experience, and facilitated the public forum at the Early Onset Dementia Alberta annual conference
- Met with Pat Power of Seniors Protection Partners
- Discuss Wellness Alberta initiative and endorsement- Les Hagen
- Teleconferenced with Alberta Council on Aging Health and Housing chair and president
- Board of Directors met via teleconference
- Demonstrated use of equipment for Recognizing Fraud presentations for Region 4
- Prepared donors campaign ad for Gazette
- Processed membership renewals
- Reviewed business plan for successful CIP grant for outreach
- Met over phone with Charlene Sitar, newly appointed Regional Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinator for Region 3

### Attended:

- Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital's spotlight on research breakfast featuring **De Hogeweyk Dementia Care Revolution**
- **Alberta Disabilities Forum** – Dialogue on Health and Physician-Assisted Dying
- **Boyle Street Community Services** campaign launch
- **Third Ear Seminar** – Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
- Final meeting with **Alberta Dementia Strategy** advisory committee
- **Resolution not Retribution** session hosted by Elder Advocates of Alberta Society regarding quality of long term care
- **Christmas gatherings:** Alberta Medical Association and College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD) and The Alberta Disabilities Forum (ADF) , MLA Sarah Hoffman's open house

Did you know Alberta Council on Aging turns 50 in 2017? How shall we celebrate? Please submit photos, memories and suggestions.

## Farewell Jean Polasek



Margery “Jean” Polasek was born in Sexsmith, Alberta on March 22, 1932 and passed away in Grande Prairie, Alberta on November 20, 2015 at the age of 83. She had a varied and satisfying career as a teacher and farmed with her husband Mike in the Clairmont area. Mike passed away in 2007. Jean is survived by three children, Lorea Marston, Carrie (Bruce) Willis, and Jim (Deb) Polasek

Jean became a life member of ACA as early as 1997. She was a strong promoter of Alberta Council on Aging throughout the entire region. She and Mike made a summer odyssey enjoying camping and selling memberships along the highways and byways of Northwestern Alberta. From the time she joined she attended every annual meeting and every informational meeting that was held in Grande Prairie. Cliff Mitchell remembers her well. He was one who was encouraged to join and purchased a life membership in 1997. In those early days he attended planning meetings hosted by Jean at the Polasek home.

Jean had a wonderful sense of humour as well as a strong sense of justice. She befriended new Canadians such as a refugee family from Kosovo and raised two foster children. Up until near the time of her passing Jean was an active member of Clairmont United Church, Northwestern Alberta Retired Teachers’ Association, and Parkinson’s Alberta as well as ACA.

Cliff Mitchell says of Jean, “She was more than a strong supporter (of ACA). She breathed life into ACA Region One. She was a vibrant and enthusiastic individual.”

## Farewell Manmeet Bhullar

We met Manmeet Bhullar when he was the Human Services Minister. We were celebrating the opening of Service Alberta centres that would be more age friendly by providing face to face information and support. Mr. Bhullar was very much interested in Senior Friendly™ Program. He provided us with a public opportunity to speak about the program and train some of the staff members. He was kind and hospitable and commended us on our work. We are saddened by his tragic death and extend condolences to his family, friends and community members whose lives were made better for knowing him.



Manmeet Bhullar and Gary Pool

## Comments From Our Members

The end of December 2015 was a busy time as many of you probably learned. We received a lot of questions about the new procedure for members who have Johnson Inc. MEDOC Travel Insurance.

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to this new procedure.

A number of people chose to apply their cheques for membership renewals as a charitable donation instead, as the renewal process is now being handled by Johnson Inc. Thank you!

-Laureen Guldbrandsen, Office Assistant

In response to the new MEDOC and ACA partnership: "Brilliant. I wonder why no one thought of this before?"

-Rex Blarney

Season's Greetings to you and your staff at the Alberta Council on Aging, and thank you again for

your wonderful assistance in June when my enquiry then was associated with an initiative regarding age friendly/Senior Friendly™.

Our Mayor and council of our small town in BC are enthusiastic about becoming Canada's first Dementia-Friendly Community (DFC). I attended a town meeting on December 1 attended by about 150 people! Since those at the Alberta Council on Aging seem to have been "leading the parade" on a number of senior related initiatives, I was wondering if you have pondered expanding the Senior Friendly Program to include Dementia Friendly? If you are interested in what we are about to undertake here, please advise and in any event, I will be passing your contact info on.

I'm excited about this prospect for our wee community and hope you are too.

Best Regards,

Dianne E. Jorgenson, Life Member



## Winter Reflections

### New Years Resolutions

"Many years ago I resolved never to make resolutions, and it's worked for me so far."

- Ron Rose

"Resolution for Calgary Region is to do a better job of connecting with local members."

- Lynn Podgurny

"Drink more water."

- Laureen Guldbrandsen, Office Assistant

"Frown less. Smile more."

- Donna Durand, Executive Director

"Treat myself more."

- Nadia Willigar, Office Volunteer

### Musings

"Why is it when you pair odd gloves, you never lose either?"

"It's not work I don't like. It's the time that it takes."

"When one is younger, we dislike getting out of the vehicle to open a gate. But when we get older we are glad that we can!"

Submitted by D. Murray Mackay



### My Worst Habit

by Rumi, 13th Century Poet



My worst habit is I get so tired of winter  
I become a torture to those I'm with.

If you are not here, nothing grows.  
I lack clarity. My words  
tangle and knot up.

How to cure bad water? Send it back to the river.  
How to cure bad habits? Send me back to you.

When water gets caught in habitual whirlpools,  
dig a way out through the bottom  
to the ocean. There is a secret medicine  
given only to those who hurt so hard  
they can't hope.

The hoppers would feel slighted if they knew.

Look as long as you can at the friend you love,  
no matter whether that friend is moving away  
from you  
or coming back toward you.

# Thank You for Your Donations!

James Holtom	Ernest Spurgeon	Fran Lees
George and Esther Orescan	Guy and Wilma Vervoort	Doris A. Vallee
Sharon and Bob Burgess	Sarah Fox	Elizabeth and Richard Sykes
Glen Edwards	Vince and Moi Khoo	Norma Kinnear
Rondo E. Wood	James Blackhall	Sheron Pickard
Clayton & Annette Stanwick	Paul and Judy Stanley	Meryl Koenig
Jean Golonka	Bertha Harrison	Anton & Carol Prybysh
David and Ada Furber	Rachel Harkness	Nora McIvor
Laverne Hebner	Norm & Marie Bezanson	Grant & Sandra Peterkin
Jan and Dave Edwards	Eugene Topolnisky	Mary Stoltz-Jones
Ed Thomlinson	Donna Riback	Alice Gartner
Mary Watson	Alison Scott-Prelorentzos	James & Jeannette Ridley
Donald Kramer	Eleanor and William Wasylyshyn	Norman Metz
Donna Von Hauff	Julia Hudson	Ralph & Mariette Bergstrom
Davis Neave	Thomas and Vera Allan	Cliff and Joyce Mitchell
Catherine and Charles Vanstone	Helene Clermont	Gord & Gwen Vaselenak
Patricia Damghaard	Cornelius & Trudy Rodenburg	Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association

## A Special Thank You

And a special thank you to Johnson Inc. for the new ACA administration fee collection service for membership renewals.

Johnson Inc. local Administration Team from left to right: Barb Paras, Jess Simpson, Matt Kukotello, Terina-Lyn Brown, Barb Gejdos.



Information from Johnsons Inc.

## Advice for Comparing Travel Insurance Plans\*

Today's retirees are actively pursuing numerous interests and activities, of which travelling is a very popular choice. In addition to packing your toothbrush, you should also travel with comprehensive travel insurance while you are away from home.

But not all group Extended Health Plans are created equally. Be sure that you are getting adequate travel insurance coverage for any medical emergencies that you may incur while travelling out of country, province or territory of residence.

Having a comprehensive travel insurance policy means getting away without headaches. Before selecting travel insurance for your next trip, double-check to ensure that the appropriate activities and events are covered. The following checklist provides a guideline that will help you in your purchase decision, and help you understand what your policy may or may not cover.

- If you are taking multiple trips, does the policy allow for unlimited trips in a specified time period or are you required to purchase coverage for each trip you take throughout the year?
- Can you extend coverage while on a trip by calling your insurance company?
- Are there any age restrictions on the policy?
- Have you had a serious illness? Understand how the policy treats pre-existing conditions. How long do you have to be stable without new symptoms, treatment or change in medication prior to your date of departure from your province or territory of residence for coverage to be in place?
- In the event of a serious illness or accident, will the policy allow for a family member to be flown to your bedside?
- Air Emergency Transportation or Evacuation to the nearest appropriate medical facility usually must be medically required and approved and arranged in advance.
- Travel Insurance plans only cover "Emergency" events, not routine treatment.
- Extreme activities may not be covered. A common exclusion is participation in professional sports, scuba diving, motorized race or motorized speed contest, bungee jumping, parachuting, rock climbing, mountain climbing, hang-gliding or skydiving.
- Confirm if Trip Cancellation, Interruption & Baggage Loss is included in the policy.
- Familiarize yourself with the General Exclusions & Limitations in all policies as they apply to all policyholders.

**Read your policy and understand how it applies to you. If you have questions about your specific situation, ask before you buy.**

*\*Travel insurance is administered by Johnson and underwritten by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada ("RSA"), except in Quebec where it is underwritten by SSQ Insurance Company Inc. Johnson and RSA share common ownership. A 90-day Health Stability Clause applies to pre-existing medical conditions and other restrictions may apply. The terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions which apply to the described coverage are as set out in the policy. Policy wordings prevail.*

## Let's Talk Dementia

by Donna Durand

**Cognition** is the process of acquiring knowledge by the use of reasoning, analyzing, intuiting, and perceiving. Brain function affects every aspect of life including memory, judgment, abstract thought, speech, muscle movement, creativity, recognition, personality, vision, emotions, attention, and information processing and planning. **Dementia** is a broad term that refers to symptoms caused in a variety of brain disorders that are not a person's usual baseline of cognitive function. Different types of dementia are caused by different physical changes to the brain. Some dementias can be treated and cured. Some are irreversible, meaning that there is no cure yet. **Alzheimer's disease** is the most common form of irreversible, progressive dementia. It accounts for 64 percent of all dementias in Canada. Alzheimer's disease causes a gradual (slow) onset of memory loss and a continuing decline. There are also changes in judgment and reasoning, and performing familiar, everyday tasks becomes harder. One in three Canadians over 85 has an irreversible, permanent, progressive dementia.

- Temporary dementia can be caused by: disease, dehydration, diet, drugs, deafness, depression, delirium
- Permanent & progressive dementia caused by: Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy body, Pick's Disease, etc.

According to the Alzheimer Society over 40,000 people in Alberta live with dementia. A recent survey of 1000 people noted many people in the general public believe people living with dementia have a poor quality of life.

Activity coordinators of the northern region of the province make it their business to ensure people living with dementia do have a good quality of life. Some tips they shared at a recent conference ACA presented at are:

1. Including everyone in your activities
2. Doing individualized prompting
3. Practising active listening
4. Giving positive redirection
5. Exercising patience
6. Don't take things personally if someone says something a bit off
7. Advocating for people with dementia
8. Building relationships with the person and their family

Alberta Council on Aging also recommends applying the Senior Friendly™ principle- make things easy: to see, hear, use and understand. Avail yourself to the vast information available and whether you are a caregiver or living with dementia information and support is imperative.

And excellent resource is [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca) or by phone at 1.800.616.8816

## This is My Story

by Larry Quintilio

My involvement with early onset Alzheimer's disease was through my wife June. She lived with the disease for thirteen years; ten at home and three at The Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury, Ponoka. Getting a diagnosis was not easy as June's family doctor was also her friend. For three years, our daughter tried to get the doctor to acknowledge the apparent changes.

In retrospect I can go back about thirteen years and see things that were not right with June's cognition. At first I put it down as June being forgetful. I thought I could help her with that. We soon learned Alzheimer's disease is more than just memory loss. The disease affects not just memory but includes all cognitive functions (speech, reasoning, perception, and emotion). This causes the roller coaster of emotions where everything is going great and then abysmal in an hour and it can go up and down like that all day some days.

June was fifty-two years of age. She had lived a healthy lifestyle and had little to no risk factors leading to the development of Alzheimer's disease.

Witnessing a loved one lose their ability to live independently is tough. Knowing there is no reversing Alzheimer's disease often leaves you feeling useless, hopeless and overwhelmed. But, there may be some unexpected surprises that are not unpleasant.

So you look for moments. We became very creative at finding ways to stay connected to June! I enjoyed our tender moments.

Education and support can help you come out the other side. I am grateful for the ongoing support of our friends, our children, the Alzheimer Society and members of Early Onset Dementia Alberta. The Seniors Mental Health Outreach and Centennial Centre did their very best to care for June, and for our family.

I always admired my Dad for his compassion for others. Through this experience, I found this same compassion within myself and that is why I share my story.



If you insist,  
they resist.

Better to be  
kind, than right.

## Regional Reports

### **Region 1 (Northwest)**

We took part in a workshop by Alberta Health Services on Goals of Care/green sleeve program.

Marlene Reddekopp

### **Region 2 (Northeast)**

We continue to rotate meetings around the region, the next one is in Athabasca. Recognizing Fraud program is presented at every meeting and is well received. Communities in this region would be interested in a Let's Talk Dementia program as well.

Diana Anderson

### **Region 4 (Edmonton Area)**

In the last report I noted that we had been a sponsor at the Senior's Housing Forum in late September. Many individuals and groups asked about our Recognizing Fraud program. I presented this program to a group (in excess of 40 people) from the St. Michaels Ukrainian Church in December. Another similar presentation is set up for mid-March. At the December presentation one person in the audience had experienced most of the frauds we talked about and this resulted in lively discussion and some excellent feedback from the group.

The Senior's Task Force under Public Interest Alberta had two meetings this fall. In addition the Task Force met with Sarah Hoffman, the Health and Seniors Minister, just before Christmas. As a group we feel that a number of commitments made by the NDP during the election campaign would have a positive impact on seniors if and when they are implemented. The Senior's Task Force is still discussing how we continue to push for implementation of these commitments.

Gary Pool

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

The Region 5 board held its organizing meeting on November 3. Special thanks go to retiring board members Doug Jansen, Sheila Stangier, Ann Snelgrove.

Region 5 held its first general meeting of the fall in September. Noel Somerville from Public Interest Alberta provided an update on the activities of the Seniors Task Force.

The Annual General Meeting for Region 5 was held on October 6. Following the meeting, we co-hosted a federal election forum with the Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre in Red Deer, with over 150 in attendance.

I presented ACA's Recognizing Fraud program to 20 seniors at the Chateau Three Hills retirement home. In Sylvan Lake, I helped organize a seniors' day mini-conference, 'Where Do We Go From Here'. The focus was on the importance of the caregiver, and provided information about resources and supports available, and how to navigate the continuing care system. Response to the presentations was very good, and plans are to repeat the presentations in January, 2016.

In Red Deer, ACA was invited by the Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance to participate on a committee dealing with transportation issues, one of the areas of concern identified by that organization.

Ron Rose

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

The November 13 meeting drew 52 people and 3 volunteers. Fred Olsen and Shannon Patershuk, Johnson Inc. representative, were the main presenters.

Frank Hoebarth

**Region 8 (Southeast)**

I met with Senior Citizens Advisory Committee (SCAC) which is sponsored by City of Medicine Hat and tends to be the seniors body in Medicine Hat. I am now forwarding appropriate emails from Alberta Council on Aging. I also met with the Manager of Senior Services from Medicine Hat who is in contact with other community seniors group. Some communication links are now open to senior serving groups in the region.

Paul Howe

**Region 9 (East Central)**

The senior wellness fair in Vegreville was well attended. We continued to work on intergenerational programs with the Sunshine Club in Vegreville. We are also working with the Medically at Risk Drivers program.

Dwayne Hlady

## Meet Your Board Members

We're excited to introduce you to the Alberta Council on Aging board members, with this new feature. This issue we are introducing you to Ron Rose and Lynn Podgurny.

**Meet Ron Rose!**

Ron is the vice-president of Alberta Council on Aging as well as the President of Region 5.

Ron is a retired pharmacist who graduated from the University of Saskatchewan. He has forty years of experience in hospital, long term care and corrections as well as some part-time community pharmacy. He is married, with two children and two grandchildren.

Ron is active in Kinsmen and K40 clubs, with interests in computers, curling, golf, the Toronto Blue Jays and the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

**Meet Lynn Podgurny!**

Lynn is the secretary of Alberta Council on Aging, as well as one of the two regional directors for Region 6.

Lynn Podgurny is Director of Operations at the Kerby Centre which is a seniors' organization in Calgary. As Director of Operations she supports the Chief Executive Officer in the areas of human resources, staff development and special projects. She has served on numerous boards including the Calgary Chapter of the Alberta Association of Gerontology. She has a B.A. in Archaeology and a B.A. in English from the University of Calgary and has been at the Kerby Centre since 1987.

## Recipes: Comfort Foods and Childhood Memories

### Shipwreck Casserole

1 onion, chopped  
 2-3 potatoes, sliced  
 2-3 carrots, sliced  
 1 lb. raw ground beef or vegetarian ground round,  
 or 1 cup cooked green lentils  
 1/3 cup raw white rice  
 2 stalks celery, chopped  
 1 can tomato sauce  
 1 beef (or vegetarian) bouillon cube dissolved in 1  
 cup water  
 1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1. Arrange layers of vegetables in greased 1 1/2 quart casserole dish.
2. Spread crumbled ground beef over vegetables. Add uncooked rice.
3. Mix together tomato sauce, bouillon and water and Worcestershire sauce. Pour over casserole. Bake, covered, at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours.

Something about the smell of this casserole on a cold winter's day, the blend of tastes and the full belly and I am transported back to 10 years of age. I have made my way home from school, across the playing field, through the knee high snow banks and the shipwreck casserole is in the oven. I can smell it even before I open the door. I peel off my damp outer clothes, sit on a heat register and anticipate a delicious supper. Maybe if we are lucky, there will be tea biscuits as well. What are your family's comfort foods?

Donna

### Strudel

3 eggs  
 1 cup water  
 salt  
 flour (3 cups, or to the consistency needed)

1. Mix together ingredients with enough flour that the dough is fairly stiff and comes off the fingers.
2. Cut dough into four parts and roll each part out.
3. Brush lard or shortening on dough and let sit for one hour.
4. Stretch dough out until you can see through it, then roll it up and cut into 5" pieces.
5. Add to stew or casserole and cook for 45 minutes to an hour.

Strudel has been a family favourite passed down for generations. My great-grandmother made it, my grandmother made it, my mother made it, and now I make it. It's time intensive, but well-loved.

Some of my fondest memories of eating strudel go back to when I too was 10 years old, hunched over my bowl of stew and strudel, defending my supper from cousins, siblings, and even my father. To this day it's an ongoing joke that one must always be prepared to defend the strudel if you plan on eating any.

Laureen

Food is a lot of people's therapy-when we say comfort food, we really mean that. It's releasing dopamine and serotonin in your brain that makes you feel good.

Brett Hobel, Fitness Expert

## Alberta Council on Aging Members Receive:

- Access to a unique provincial network
- A voice representative of thousands of members and older persons that speaks with government on issues and concerns relevant to seniors
- Voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting
- Subscription to the ACA News—published seasonally
- Meaningful volunteer opportunities
- Eligibility to apply for Johnson Inc. MEDOC travel insurance

Memberships expire annually on December 31st.

## Alberta Council on Aging Membership Form

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