



# Sunburst

The Newsletter for Alberta Seniors United Now

**1st Quarter 2011  
Issue 22**

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## What’s Inside?

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| President Report                          | Pg 2  |
| Membership Renewals                       | Pg 2  |
| Executive Director                        | Pg 3  |
| <b>Chapter News</b>                       |       |
| St. Albert Chapter                        | Pg 4  |
| Sherwood Park - Strathcona County Chapter | Pg 5  |
| Dr. Raj Sherman Healthcare in Alberta     | Pg 6  |
| Senior Healthcare Perspective             | Pg 7  |
| Adult Guardianship and Trustee Act        | Pg 8  |
| Fraud Awareness                           | Pg 10 |
| Volunteer Spotlight                       | Pg 11 |
| <b>Fundraising</b>                        |       |
| Casino 2011 Report                        | Pg 11 |
| Cash Raffle                               | Pg 12 |

**MORE AGM  
INFORMATION  
Page 12**

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Notice is hereby given** that the Annual General Meeting of Alberta Seniors United Now Society will be held as follows:

**Wednesday, April 27, 2011**

**Santa Maria Goretti Community Centre**

**11050 - 90 St Edmonton, AB**

**9:00 AM – 10:00AM Meeting Registration**

### For the purpose of:

1. **President’s report**
2. **Receiving and considering financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2010 and the report of the auditors thereon**
3. **Electing directors; and**
4. **Transacting such further and other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof**

**Dated the 28th day of February, 2011**

**On Behalf of the Board of Directors**

**Independent MLA Dr. Raj Sherman addresses  
over 250 SUN members & guests  
HEALTH CARE IN ALBERTA**

See page 6



## SUN Board of Directors 2010 - 2011

Gordon Voth – President Richard Tansey - Vice-President

Barrie Pratt - Treasurer Tony Powell - Secretary Denis Beaudry - Director

Joe MacLellan - Director Reg Wood - Director Mathew Romanow - Director

## Presidents Report:

The Board of Directors has been very busy this past fall and spring responding to the ever growing crisis in Healthcare. To better understand the extent of the crisis, we asked for a meeting with the Honorable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness to discuss our growing concerns. Mr. Zwozdesky did not grant us a meeting. Your board then developed a position paper entitled "A Crisis in Healthcare" and sent this position paper to all of Alberta's MLA's. This position paper is printed in this Sunburst for your information.

In a follow-up to the position paper, we met with Mr. Brian Mason, NDP leader and with Mr. David Swann, Liberal Leader in early December, 2010. We discussed the current issues in Healthcare and what they envisioned was unfolding in the future. Both these leaders expressed concern that the Provincial Government was on a path to privatize Health Care.

This vision was then confirmed by Dr. Raj Sherman who stated in the Edmonton Journal that "the government does have a secret plan". I quote "this is basically privatizing healthcare". Dr. Sherman was the parliamentary assistant to Health and Wellness minister, Gene Zwozdesky; therefore he should be aware of the provincial governments Health Care strategies.

Your board was alarmed by these public statements and in response prepared position paper entitled "Alberta Health Act – Privatization or not" We believe that the recently passed new Alberta Health Act is a precursor to a move, to increasingly privatize the delivery of Health care and to deregulate currently paid services.

This is an alarming possibility and one that is not in the best interest of seniors as it will result in user pay and will take dollars from seniors pockets to pay for the healthcare system. It appears that this provincial government wishes to download Health care costs to seniors who are viewed as being wealthy and are the major users of Health care. No thought has been given to all the tax dollars we paid to develop the system when we were minimum users.

Another strategy development was the proposed plan to move stable seniors to waiting rooms in long term care facilities to alleviate the backups in active treatment hospitals. This was so ill conceived that I wrote to Mr. Zwozdesky outlining how foolish this was. Surely this is not an acceptable plan therefore we requested the minister to intervene and squash the proposal.

Another issue that your board is investigating is the plan to cut long term care beds in half and move those patients to designated living facilities which will be operated by the private sector. It appears that these facilities will not be monitored by the government as to standards of care. These will be cost plus facilities and will be moving our Healthcare dollars into company profits, not delivery of care.

The issues that the seniors of this province face appears to be growing and SUN needs to be present to advocate for seniors rights and to preserve what we have built. This we can only do if our membership supports us and we can gather new members. It appears that SUN will need to be very active in 2011 and with your support we will.

Gordon Voth - President

## Membership Renewal

If your membership is due for renewal: **January, February or March 2011** you will receive a **Yellow** renewal notice. Current & Lifetime members will receive a **Green** notice.

Members due **April & May 2011** will receive a **White** renewal notice.

If your renewal is past-due, there will be a **Pink** renewal reminder enclosed.

For specific details as to when your membership is due for renewal, please contact the SUN office.

780-449-1816 or [unitenow@telus.net](mailto:unitenow@telus.net)

## Executive Director Report: John MacDonald



I echo the statement in the Presidents Report about the very busy fall and winter this year. When I came on board as the new Executive Director of SUN in November, 2010 I started into a very steep Learning Curve. As outlined again in the President's Report the issues facing Alberta's Seniors do seem to be growing in number and in importance.

For me, as the "new kid on the team", the single most important discovery was regarding the dedication and excellence in work being done by the Provincial Board of Directors and also by the two vibrant and active SUN Chapters. Sun members are being well served by these dedicated teams who all seem heavily focused on educating our Seniors by providing numerous highly skilled and informative speakers aimed at keeping us all aware of the issues, problems and potential solutions.

Another very positive learning experience was in becoming acquainted with many of SUN's partners who are involved in serving, supporting and resourcing the needs of Alberta's Seniors. These groups are essentially a "Who's Who" of Senior's Support and Advocacy starting with The Public Interest Alberta's (PIA) Seniors Task Force of which SUN is an active member. Other members include the following: The Alberta Council on Aging (ACA), The Alberta Retired Teachers Association (ARTA), Canadian Association of Retired Persons Edm. (CARP), Alberta College of Social Workers Retirees (ACSW), Central Alberta Council on Aging (CACAA), Senior Citizens Health Council Edm.(SCHC), Seniors Action and Liaison Team (SALT), Seniors I Care – Hinton.

This Seniors Task Force also is enriched by having representatives from other organizations that work with Seniors such as:

United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), Friends of Medicare, Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA) Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE).

In addition SUN networks with the Elder Advocates Society, Citizen Watch, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and more.

Another concern that emerged as part of my learning has been the seemingly increasing need for individual senior advocacy. SUN along with several of the organizations mentioned above are experiencing a significant increase in the number of seniors facing personal difficulties. These seniors turn to our respective organizations for help finding answers, in what has become a very complex, confusing and increasingly difficult system of Senior's services to navigate. These systems include Health, Justice, Taxation, Benefits, Transportation, Care Options and Care Facilities and more. On a positive note, recent meetings with various MLA's from several parties have provided constructive guidance and support in addressing these advocacy issues.

Apart from this obvious and necessary focus on learning the past few months have been heavily engaged in efforts to increase SUN's membership and in the development of our latest new Chapter in the North/East area of Edmonton. We are also looking to develop several additional Chapters in the Edmonton area as well as throughout all of Alberta. Communications has also been at the forefront of activities with an ongoing Web Page upgrade and the additional news brief called "Sunbeam" which is a monthly update that complements our regular "Sunburst" newsletter.

Respectfully,  
John MacDonald  
SUN Executive Director

One thing you can give and still keep....is your word.

## St. Albert Chapter...

## Quarterly Activity Summary

Chapter meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 1:30PM at the St. Albert Royal Legion on Tache Street. We do not meet in July, August and December.

Our Executive strives to keep our membership informed on any progress on the local issues which include property tax, user fees, utility costs and transportation. We are continuing to monitor and report on important issues including changes to Health Care, seniors' benefits, Property Tax Deferment Plan and on any other important matters.

In keeping with our efforts to provide informative speakers we acknowledge the excellent presentations in the following months:

### November 22/2010

The St Albert Chapter held an informal meet and greet with City of St Albert Mayor Nolin Crouse and Councilors Cam McKay, Wes Brodhead and Roger Lemieux. The format was unique in that each Councilor and Mayor were seated separately at a table with approximately 8 chapter members. The purpose was to allow our members to get to know the City Council members and to have open discussions about issues of concerns. Prepared questions were placed on each table to get the conversations going and a time limit of 10-15 minutes was set after which the Councilors would move clockwise to the next table and the questions were moved counterclockwise. This was repeated until each Councilor had visited each table. The format was well received by the councilors and members and it was requested we do this again in the future.

### January 24/2011

Our guest speaker was Maijory Buerger of Alberta Provincial Seniors Benefits who provided an interesting and informative presentation on Benefits that are available to Seniors.

### February 28/2011 (after the submission date for Sunburst)

Service Canada representatives; Jennifer Clarke, Shannon Currie & Sasha West regarding changes to Canada Pension Plan (CPP).

Our Chapter Executive is working for you, welcomes any questions/input you might have.

Regards,

R.P. Tansey St. Albert Chapter - Chair

**Please join us at our upcoming Chapter meetings**

**Monday March 28/2011 – Dr. Raj Sherman speaks @ Cornerstone Pentecostal Church - Grandin Mall, St. Albert**  
**Monday April 18/2011**

## SUN Administration Office News

Please assist the administrative office by updating SUN with any changes to your contact information: **Mailing address, phone number, new/cancelled email addresses.**

Our office administrator is available:

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:00AM - 3:00PM

**780-449-1816**



Please note we are occasionally out of the office on business during these hours. It is recommended to phone before coming to the administrative office.

## Sherwood Park-Strathcona County Chapter...

## Quarterly Activity Summary

Our chapter continues to meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 1:30PM  
Join us at the Bethel Lutheran Church for the upcoming meetings.

### November 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 Chapter Meeting

Gordon Voth SUN – President introduced Mr. John MacDonald – SUN Executive Director, who spoke briefly on the rising cost of health care and the ignored “treasure” that Alberta seniors are, he concluded with scheduled upcoming meetings with provincial political leaders and the need for more strong SUN chapters; thereby broadening our visibility in Alberta communities. Guest speaker Caroline Gee of the Alberta Motor Association spoke regarding seniors’ transportation and aging drivers...including AMA programs, the effects of aging, medical conditions and the role of physicians.

### January 18<sup>th</sup> 2011 Chapter Meeting

John MacDonald – SUN Executive Director facilitated and updated attendees on the SUN meetings with Dr. David Swann & Mr. Brian Mason and Ms. Laurie Blakeman. Chapter members broke into small groups to discuss and prioritize the concerns of Strathcona County chapter members. Listed below are the top priorities a full list is available on the SUN website – Strathcona chapter page.

1. Meet with Strathcona county civic leaders to discuss local issues
2. Access to information (lack of transparency from government)
3. Seniors’ benefits : list of benefits & how to access them
4. Universal Benefits : Inclusive approach

### February 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 Chapter Meeting

Guest speaker: Carol Wodak Theme: Politics and the Person  
Ms. Wodak gave an extremely well informed and most interesting presentation. A handout of her information was given to the assembly.



Vice-Chair Doug Baker with SUN Board Members Reg Wood & Richard Tansey

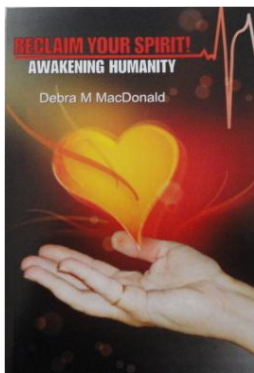
**Mark your calendars NOW!!!**

**Please join us at our upcoming Chapter meetings 1:30 PM @ Bethel Lutheran Church**

**Tuesday March 15/2011 Guest speaker Tim Uppal, MP for Sherwood Park**

**Tuesday April 19/2011 Guest speaker Dr. Raj Sherman, Independent MLA & ER. physician**

**Tuesday May 17/2011 Guest speaker Brian Mason, Leader of the NDP**



## SUN MEMBER & LOCAL AUTHOR

**Debra M. MacDonald**  
Presents her recently published book

**\$20.00**

### ***Reclaim Your Spirit! Awakening Humanity***

Many people simply do not recognize or acknowledge their spiritual side. They tend to be satisfied with the mediocrity of life, unaware that they are capable of so much more. This user-friendly step-by-step process can accommodate any lifestyle.

Create your own desirable world, where peace, contentment, compassion and self-love reside.  
Your Spirit is calling ... Are you ready to answer?

**To order your book or for more information call: 780-940-7990**

Arrangements can be made to deliver books to your local SUN Chapter Meeting.

**10% of all Book Sales SOLD to SUN Members will be donated to Alberta Seniors United Now**

# DR. RAJ SHERMAN on HEALTH CARE IN ALBERTA

Denis Beaudry, Membership Committee Chairman, welcomed and introduced Dr. Raj Sherman as guest speaker on the state of health care in Alberta at McClure United Church on Monday, January 24th.

Dr. Sherman began by saying, because of sacrifices made by present-day seniors, their parents and their grandparents, they deserve adequate health services. He described how, as an immigrant who had come early to Canada, he had trained in the medical field and worked as an Emergency Room doctor for fifteen years after his resident's period at Alberta Hospital. It was Minister Hancock who persuaded him, first to write his policies, and then to stand for election as an MLA.

Health care, Dr. Sherman said, was today's number one issue, affecting children as well as their senior parents. More and more in Emergency, patients are being told to take a number, sit down, and wait quietly for medical service. Front-line staff like him, he said, had been warning of "potential catastrophic collapse" for years. Emergency rooms are the gateways to health provision. Sixty-four percent of medical staff are demoralized, and only twenty-five percent of doctors say that they are happy. Worse still, staff who protest at the situation are accused of making political points.

The government must be held responsible for funding adequate health services, and it is not doing so, Dr. Sherman declared. When taken severely ill, he asked, can we get immediate attention? Some of us are not even able to get registered with a family doctor.

Severely ill seniors have been called "bed-blockers" because they have had to stay in acute care because there is no other place for them to go. Many homeless seniors are waiting for adequate health services, which are not presently available. The Alberta health care system, he charged, is broken. He felt that the government is working on building public trust until the next election, and then when they get a renewed mandate, will move towards privatization and private insurance, which is basically the 3<sup>rd</sup> Way that the Premier promised was D.O.A. He warned senior voters to be very cautious at the next election!

We need to focus on sufficient funding for public health care, he said, and the education of sufficient doctors, nurses and other staff. The government is nickel-and-diming seniors where long-term care is concerned. Action is needed now, not five years from now, when it will be too late! If doctors don't stand up for their patients and staff, he demanded, who will?

The solution to the problem, said Dr. Sherman, is to centralize and decrease the administrative function while increasing the delivery of services. The entire healthcare system problem is manifested in the wait times to get into an emergency or acute care bed. There are not enough community beds or home care supports, so those patients are sent "upstairs" to medical and cardiology floors, whose staff is the most experienced and expensive. The care is inappropriate and the seniors' welfare tends to deteriorate. Seniors, he said, need to be at home, with adequate support services or in long term care centers.

Dr. Sherman felt that as a result of changes in the last few years, the existing structure of Alberta Health Services has become very difficult to deal with. We are spending a lot of money on health services, he said, but much of it is being spent in the wrong places. He gave examples where he felt the services were suffering. The highest cause of death among Albertans under the age of 44 is suicide, and sixty thousand children are suffering from a variety of mental illnesses, which is one of the reasons so many kids are dropping out of school. There is need for increased psychiatric services, so why are we closing Alberta Hospital Edmonton before the community is resourced, he asked.

He suggests models of efficient health care delivery systems such as the Netherlands and the UK warrant examination.

Continued on Page 12



*SUN  
Vice-President  
Richard Tansey  
with Dr. Sherman  
and SUN  
Secretary  
Tony Powell*

*SUN members  
and guests  
during Q&A  
session  
Jan 24/2011*



# Senior Healthcare Perspective

## “A Crisis in Healthcare “

The membership of Alberta Seniors United Now (SUN) is becoming very concerned regarding their current access to healthcare services and to the Healthcare systems ability to respond in a timely and efficient manner.

At present, there are over 800 long term patients in active treatment hospitals. They are there because they have failed in the community and have nowhere else to go to receive the health assistance they require. These individuals would prefer to receive continuing health services in the community or at best, in an appropriate continuing care facility. They cannot, as these health delivery services are plugged and do not have the capacity to respond to their needs. These frail seniors therefore remain in an active treatment bed. This is the most expensive alternative. This is not where frail seniors expect to receive care, nor should they.

The healthcare system is completely overflowing with demand and cannot respond appropriately. Seniors should not be classified as “bed blockers” that are plugging up the system. They occupy active treatment beds because they do not have any other options. They require continuing care and must go to the facility that can accept them. This is the fault of the system, not the seniors. It is the system that is broken.

The creation of a single health super board appears to have made things worse. Nothing has been fixed since its creation. It is not more efficient and is not more cost effective. More funds are not flowing to health care. Needs are increasing as Albertans age, yet resources are not flowing to need. This is a sure formula for disaster. In fact, it appears that saving dollars is the objective not properly funding the health care system.

The Alberta Health Services Board has taken a series of disastrous decisions in relation to mental-health care, primary health care, long term care and staffing levels that have had a cascade reaction on Alberta’s emergency departments and hospital wards. These decisions adversely affect seniors care in Alberta.

The SUN members are deeply concerned with the current health delivery system. We fail to see any remedies to these problems being put into place. In fact, we see the opposite. The Alberta Government has frozen long term beds at 14,500. Albertans now face a minimum wait of at least two years before new beds can be constructed and brought into the system. This is a serious planning mistake. Health Centres, while completed, are not fully operational or staffed. They are not there to respond to need. This also raises the question of how effectively; AHS is planning for the future. It appears planning is purely cost saving, not patient outcome focused. Health care is the right of all Albertans and it desperately needs positive and creative attention.

There is also an increasing problem with access to the emergency departments of Alberta hospitals. They are full and need exceeds capacity. All Albertans are being subjected to long waits for medical attention and then long waits on an emergency stretcher before a bed becomes available. This situation is particularly acute for frail seniors. It has negative impacts on their health status. Our emergency departments must do better.

Each day, more and more seniors are requesting home care support. It appears, to us seniors, that funding and staffing is not increasing, therefore seniors are slowly failing. It is evident that more funds need to be injected into home care to prevent further deterioration of seniors who in turn will further plug up our emergency departments and our active treatment hospitals. The health care crisis is alarming. Seniors are becoming anxious and fearful that health services will not be available when they need it.

What is needed now is practical action to improve access to home care, long term care, primary health care and emergency response times. We must restore common sense and good judgment to the delivery of health care before the problems get out of hand and require a massive infusion of funds to correct. Extensive reliance on the “For Profit” sector to solve these problems is not a fiscally responsible answer, as neither seniors nor the Alberta tax payer can afford these high priced solutions

The seniors of Alberta strongly urge the government to make health care service delivery your number one priority. You need to proceed immediately to correct the urgent problems you have created. We also ask that you include seniors in all planning processes that are underway to ensure our voice is heard and that our needs are your priority.

## ADULT GUARDIANSHIP and TRUSTEESHIP ACT

The Adult Guardianship & Trusteeship Act was passed in December 2008 and received Royal Assent on October 30/09. This Act addresses the reality that adults have different levels of decision making ability and that an adult's capacity to make decisions may change over time, caused by or result of aging, accident or medical conditions. It is intended to provide decision making options when an adult needs assistance or requires someone to make personal and financial decisions in the event they have lost the capacity to do so themselves. This Act is not to be confused with nor does it replace any Personal Directives or Enduring Power of Attorney previously in place.

Too often adults do not want to even discuss giving up control of their lives and will vigorously defend their right to independence. Unfortunately this attitude continues until they actually do not have the capacity to make the decision which then requires someone else who is approved by the courts to act on their behalf- a very costly, time consuming and stressful process for the family or any other "interested person".

People have the right to make their own decisions whether wise or unwise that others may disagree with. As long as the person understands information about the decision and what is likely to happen as a result, they have the capacity to make the decision. It is when a person is unable to understand the information and/or consequences, that they may be deemed to lack the capacity. Capacity is then determined by a capacity assessment and protective action is put in place by supportive and substitute decision making options ranging from the least to most intrusive measures including supported decision making authority, co-decision making orders for personal matters, specific decision making provisions, temporary guardianship and trusteeship orders and permanent guardianship and trusteeship orders. For descriptions of the various options contact:

The Office of the Public Guardian - 780-427-0017 or visit [www.Seniors.alberta.ca/protection](http://www.Seniors.alberta.ca/protection)

A review of the Act has been completed and while it does appear to protect the adult who has experienced diminished and/or loss of mental capacity, it is not foolproof. There are checks and balances in place to protect the assisted adult if abuse of court orders and/or conditions is suspected however, once a complaint is investigated and classified as unfounded there is no appeal procedure in place. SUN is directing correspondence to the Ministers Office in the hopes of having an appeal procedure being put in place by the time expiry of this Regulation occurs September 30/2019

Reliable sources report cases which seem to reflect a disconnect from the Act and the reality of the situation. The evidence in these cases suggests a disregard for the orders or conditions that are made to protect the vulnerable adult. Where and why is the breakdown occurring?

More education is required to encourage those adults with capacity that it is in their interest to understand and to make a Personal Directive and an Enduring Power of Attorney, appointing 2 or more agents they trust.

Richard Tansey,  
SUN – Vice-President

### We want to communicate better with you.

Do you have an email address?

Please share it with SUN and be sure to add us to your address book.

We do not share email addresses,

Email addresses are used only for communication of SUN and senior issues.

If you don't have an email address perhaps a friend or family member would act as a contact for you.

*A little girl went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes. Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way 6 blocks to the Drug Store. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention, but he was too busy at this moment. Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!*

*'And what do you want?' the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone of voice. 'I'm talking to my brother from Chicago whom I haven't seen in ages,' he said without waiting for a reply to his question. 'Well, I want to talk to you about my brother,' Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. 'He's really, really sick....and I want to buy a miracle.' 'I beg your pardon?' said the pharmacist. 'His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?' 'We don't sell miracles here, little girl. I'm sorry but I can't help you,' the pharmacist said, softening a little. 'Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs.'*

*The pharmacist's brother was a well dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, 'What kind of a miracle does your brother need?' 'I don't know,' Tess replied with her eyes welling up. I just know he's really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money.' 'How much do you have?' asked the man from Chicago. 'One dollar and eleven cents,' Tess answered barely audible. 'And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to.' 'Well, what a coincidence,' smiled the man. 'A dollar and eleven cents---the exact price of a miracle for little brothers.'*

*He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said 'Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the miracle you need.' That well-dressed man was a Doctor, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed free of charge and it wasn't long until Andrew was home again and doing well.*

*Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place. 'That surgery,' her Mom whispered. was a real miracle.. I wonder how much it would have cost? Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost...one dollar and eleven cents...plus the faith of a little child.*

*In our lives, we never know how many miracles we will need.*

What a touching story, enough to bring tears to your eyes, and a lump in your throat!

Then I began to think, there is something very desperately wrong with this story. No one should have to "buy a miracle" to treat a sick person! But, unfortunately, there are some countries in the world, and our neighbor to the South is one, where you need a "miracle" if you are sick, poor and don't have insurance or a valid credit card. And our government seems hell bent on emulating that system.

The more I reflected on the story, the more I became grateful that here in Alberta we have "miracles" happening every day in our hospitals. We do not need the generosity or philanthropy of our Doctors to perform so called "miracles". Everyone needing medical attention, be they rich or poor receives the same care and attention. Now all we need to do is make sure those "miracles" continue!

We must not let people like our previous Minister of Health, with nary a word or hint during the election, suddenly decide that the system of Regional Health Boards was not working, amalgamated them into one Super Board. The result was millions of dollars in severance pay to the various terminated directors, money that could have been used to improve some aspect of the health care system.

Then who does he appoint to the 15 member Super Board? I'll tell you who. Insurance executives, financial advisors, lawyers, oil company executives, land developers TSX Venture President and wealth manager, one token Doctor and two engineering executives.

I allege that these people are not the ones we need to manage a multibillion dollar operation like our health care system. This reminded me of a comment I once heard that "The camel must have designed by a committee". Our health care is equivalent to building a multibillion dollar refinery or a bitumen extraction and upgrading plant of the size of Syncrude, Suncor or any one of the several new plants currently under construction. these projects require a project manager with the experience and knowledge to see the whole picture, which is exactly the sort of management our Health Care System needs. If not, the daily "miracles" I spoke of earlier will stop happening.

One last item with respect to our previous Minister of Health. He made a mess of that job, and he seems to be headed in the same direction with his new portfolio - Energy. I read that he has assembled a panel of experts, all from the energy companies to advise him on how to handle the portfolio. To me this looks like hiring a Fox to look after the chickens in the chicken coop.

Mathew Romanow, Edmonton

## March is Fraud awareness Month

Every crime has three elements.

There is a victim, a perpetrator and a place. If you change or remove one of the three then no crime can take place.

**Here are a few preventative tips from the RCMP be aware and reduce the number of fraud victims in our community.**

### Emergency Scam AKA "Grandparent" Scam

Though the "Emergency Scam" (or sometimes referred to as the "Grandparent Scam") has been around for years, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre warns the public to be on alert after noting a marked increase in the number of complaints recently.

In the typical scenario, a grandparent receives a phone call from a con-artist claiming to be one of his or her grandchildren. The caller goes on to say that they are in some kind of trouble and need money immediately. Typically they claim being in a car accident, trouble returning from a foreign country or they need bail money. .

A typical call can go something like this:

**Con-artist: Hi, Grandma Victim: Hi.**

**Con-artist: Do you know who this is?**

**Victim: John? Con-artist: Yeah.**

Victims don't verify the story until after the money has been sent as the caller specifically asks that they do not want other relatives to know what has happened by asking "Can you please help me? I'm in jail (or in the hospital / or in some type of financial need). **But don't tell Dad, he would kill me if he found out, please send the money ASAP. I'm scared**"

Wanting to help their grandchild, the victim sends money by a money transfer company such as Money Gram or Western Union.

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Variations on the scam exist such as an old neighbour, a friend of the family etc. but predominantly the emergency scam is directed toward the Grandparents.

Police advise that if you receive such a call to ask the "grandchild" calling some personal questions, that your grandchild should know the answers to, this will help verify the authenticity of the call. However, if the caller cannot provide the personal information requested police ask that you do not respond or provide any money but to report the call to the local police agency

- \* Be cautious of anyone asking you to send money. Before sending money to anyone, confirm with other family members whether or not a loved one is in trouble and requires assistance.
- \* Watch out for callers promoting prizes or free trips! There is always hidden fees involved and most times after the fees are uncovered, it is more than what the trip would have cost in the first place.
- \* Be suspicious of "no-risk" claims or promises of huge financial gain! There is no such thing as something for nothing!!! If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- \* Be aware of individuals or firms that operate outside of Canada! If they are fraudulent, they cannot be prosecuted. This includes callers from the U.S. promoting within Canada.
- \* Resist the pressure to act immediately! Do not be impulsive! Many homeowners who feel pressured on the phone often feel that they owe the caller a legitimate reason for not accepting information or the invitation to participate in whatever is being presented. You are in control of who you talk to and who you provide information to. If you feel pressured, **SAY NOTHING AND SIMPLY HANG UP YOUR PHONE!**
- \* Do NOT give out personal information over the phone unless you initiate the call! This includes name, address, marital status or personal history. Fraudsters and Con artists have ways of extracting information from victims with casual conversation. Most times victims don't even recall offering the information.
- \* Before investing your money, get a second opinion! Speak with a spouse, a trusted friend, a financial advisor or a lawyer.
- \* Consult with the Better Business Bureau, a financial advisor or your lawyer regarding any large investments! This may save you significant financial grief.
- \* Never give your credit card number out over the phone unless you are **ABSOLUTELY** certain the caller is legitimate!
- \* Be Careful when someone offers to deliver a product to your home! By telling them when it would be convenient, you may be providing them with times when your house will be vacant.

## CASINO VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED



**When: August 13 & 14, 2011(Saturday & Sunday)**  
**Where: Palace Casino (West Edmonton Mall)**

Alberta Seniors United Now (SUN) are holding their third Casino and need you to help us with our volunteer component.

There are various levels of volunteers required from General Manager, Banker, Cashier, chip runner and Count room. We can also accommodate your time availability as there are 3 shifts each day.

**Day Shift 11:00am – 7:00pm**  
**Night Shift 6:30pm – 2:30am**  
**Count Room 9:30pm – 2:45am**

Several volunteers are required for each shift each day. Please call Lynn at the SUN office 780-449-1816 and let her know you're willing to help SUN with this essential fund-raising activity. Volunteers will be required to complete a casino volunteer application that will be mailed to you.

## Volunteer Spotlight

Do you know an individual or group in your community that goes above and beyond for seniors? Share their and/or your volunteer experiences with SUNBURST and help us acknowledge those extra special seniors and senior groups in our communities. Send your stories to the SUN office by mail or email.




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### Rocky Mountain Seniors Ski Club

The Rocky Mountain Seniors Ski Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting alpine skiing for seniors (aged 55+) at all ability levels. Based in Edmonton, Alberta, the Club was incorporated in April 2008. Our membership is over 370 people, mostly from the Edmonton area but we also have members from the US and Australia. Membership is pretty well 50/50 male/female and ages range from 55 to mid-80's.

Whether you like to ski leisurely down the easy groomers, attack the double black diamonds, or just join in the many social events, you'll find many others to share your pleasure. Besides regular skiing at Snow Valley, our home hill in Edmonton, the club organizes a total of 8 mid-week tours to various mountain ski resorts in Alberta and B.C. every winter, usually of 4 days duration.

The club stays active during the summer with biking and golf, and also organizes a 1-day canoe trip on the North Saskatchewan River to see Edmonton from a unique vantage point. If biking and golfing all summer aren't enough to get those legs in shape, the club also organizes a pre-ski conditioning program, led by a qualified fitness instructor, prior to the start of the ski season.

If you are a 55+ skier living in the Edmonton area, or anywhere else in the world for that matter, you are welcome to join our club and take advantage of the tremendous rates that we are able to provide for our members on the mountain tours.

For further information on club membership please email:

[info@seniorsski.com](mailto:info@seniorsski.com) OR

Contact our membership coordinator - Art 780-435-8742



## Fundraising Committee

Alberta Seniors United Now Society has worked hard to maintain the lowest possible membership fees. **With no increase in fees since 2005 it is vital that additional revenue be generated.**

### Casinos-

SUN has been approved and is scheduled for our next casino on August 13 & 14 2011 at the Palace Casino in West Edmonton Mall.

### **VOLUNTEER NOW!!!**

**Raffles** – SUN operates two major cash raffles each year. To date SUN has raised over \$18,000 thru the cash raffles.

**Donations** – Received from members that kindly support SUN financially throughout the year.

**Advertising** – Advertising opportunities are available in the Sunburst newsletter for single or multiple editions from business card to full page sizes.

## Ring in the New Year

Cash Raffle winners - Jan 31/2011  
Congratulations to the following members:

Ticket #191- M.Bialas Edmonton  
Ticket #389- J.Chisholm Edmonton  
Ticket #118- B. Collisson St. Albert

Each of these lucky members received a cash prize of \$274.00  
With over 400 tickets sold once again the cash raffle was a success.

Thanks to all those members that purchased tickets, over \$1,200.00 was raised for SUN.



## DR. RAJ SHERMAN on HEALTH CARE IN ALBERTA –pg6

In closing, he declared that Alberta's health system is broken, and the government broke it. Albertans invest more money in the services than any other province, but our results are worse than theirs. The government is not being honest with the public. Why does it take so long to see a family doctor, or a specialist, or a surgeon, or an emergency doctor? We're practicing "hallway medicine", Dr. Sherman said. The problem in emergency departments is not an ER problem; it's a system problem that sits in the ER. The access blockage is caused by admitted patients in the ER, long-term-care patients filling up acute care beds, and lack of primary care.

What is at risk? Alberta's universal health care system, the provincial economy as a result of mistaken spending, and everything else that depends on a healthy population.

The wealth of Albertans, he concluded, depends on the health of Albertans. And this is in serious danger under the present system. He urged seniors to join together and make their views known to the government.

The overflow audience of more than two hundred and fifty responded to Dr. Sherman's presentation with tremendous applause.

After the presentation, Director Denis Beaudry and his volunteers accepted applications for membership in the new Chapter, and the task of organizing its Board was begun. Applications will continue to be received and accepted from all interested senior citizens.

## Mark your Calendar...

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 27/2011



Don't miss out on this annual provincial meeting, Speak one on one with the SUN board members and cast your vote for new board members.

**Santa Maria Goretti Community Centre**  
11050 - 90 St Edmonton, AB  
Doors open @ 9:00AM for registration  
Meeting Commences @ 10:00 AM

**Keynote Speaker**  
**Mr. David O'Brien**

**VP Alberta Health Services – Seniors Health**

Join the SUN board of directors for an informative morning and a light luncheon.

Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to meet with other seniors that are concerned about the future for seniors in Alberta.