

# SUNBURST

The Newsletter for Seniors United Now

Sherwood Business Center – Park Centre Hotel

#37 - 2016 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park, AB T8A3X3

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www.seniorsunitednow.com

Email unitenow@telus.net



**SENIORS UNITED NOW**

The Voice of Seniors in Alberta



**SUN THANKS ALL MEMBERS NEW, OLD, AND  
THOSE SOON TO BE MEMBERS.  
WE ONLY SUCCEED WITH YOUR SUPPORT!**

**SUN IS SEEKING A PROVINCIAL BOARD SECRETARY**

**Please consider putting yourself forward to fill  
this critical position!!**

see page 4 for duties and responsibilities.

## Contents

President	2
Board of Directors	2
Executive Director	3
Membership Coordinator	16

### Chapter News

Edmonton South	4
Edmonton Northeast	5
Sherwood Park / Strathcona County - SPSC	7

### Membership

Cash Raffle Winner	8
Hot Chocolate - Cash Raffle	8
Renewal / Donation Form	15
Are You Due?	16

### Special Interest / Articles

Casino Volunteers	3
Board Secretary	4
Preventing Caregiver Burnout - Peace of Mind Concierge Inc	6
AGM Save the Date	8
No Winter Woes	8
International Volunteer Day	9
Brain Health – Revera	10
Holiday Loneliness	11
Staying Home Successfully – ProActive	
Seniors	12
National Hot Chocolate Day	13

## Presidents Report

I am sure by now that everyone's lawn mower is put into storage, as we enter into the snow shoveling season. Let's all hope for a mild winter.

I noted in my last report that I had corresponded with the Local Authority Pension Plan authorities regarding the insufficient pension cost of living adjustment, as well as, the unfair coordinated pension loan repayments incurred by some pensioners. We did receive a disappointing reply from them, and they are not prepared to increase any amount over the current 60% that they pay, not even a one-time increase. Canada Pension Plan pays 100% of the cost of living. Also, they are not prepared to make any changes to the unfair coordinated pension repayments, currently some pensioners are still required to repay until they die. Unfortunately, some pensioners have not only fully repaid the loan but have had to overpay in some instances over \$100,000. It is hard to understand how they can have a clear conscience on the unfairness of this situation, how sad!

We have received a reply letter from the Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Health Minister, regarding our request to eliminate the cost of the cognitive test that some seniors must pay to a medical practitioner. This test is required by some seniors so that they can retain their motor vehicle driver's license. In Hon. Adriana LaGranges' reply to us, she indicated that this issue is currently under review and I have requested that SUN be notified as soon as a decision is made.

All the correspondence on the above noted topics are available on our SUN website, you will find this under the headings of "NEWS – Communications". <https://www.seniorsunitednow.com/communications.html>

On Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, SUN held a zoom meeting with Jeffery Hodgson, representing the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board. He explained the investment strategies used to maintain a viable and dependable pension plan for all Canadians. CPP is regarded as one of the top pension plans in the world. Jeffery conducted an excellent presentation!

As most of you are aware the UCP is pushing hard to establish a stand-alone Alberta Pension Plan. Some people may view it as a full-bore sales job. Their TV advertisements state that Albertans deserve a secure dependable pension plan. I assume that all Albertans know that CPP already provides a secure and dependable pension plan that benefits all Canadians, including Albertans. Please keep informed and engaged in the Alberta Pension Plan surveys which the UCP and the NDP have made available on the internet. The UCP has scheduled townhall phone in meetings in November and face to face meetings in December. I encourage everyone to keep themselves informed and understand the true consequence of leaving the Canadian Pension Plan.

On the horizon, the new year looks promising, SUN has been assigned a two-day Casino slot in January 2024 and are beginning to organize our April Annual General Meeting activities.

Wishing all of you, a happy December holiday season and good health and prosperity in the new year.

Sincerely,  
Wayne Sorenson, President

### SUN Board of Directors 2023 - 2024

Wayne Sorenson - President   Stan Poznanski - Vice-President   William Holtz - Treasurer   VACANT - Secretary  
Robert Price - Director   Gerald Northam - Director   Carolyn Reed - Director  
Frances Burkitt - Director   Rita DeLongchamp-Osborne - Director

### SUN Staff

Linda Osborne - Executive Director   Lynn Penner - Office Admin   Deborah Wilson - Membership Coordinator

## Executive Director Report

I hope you had a wonderful summer. We have enjoyed a great fall with chapters starting up again and hosting exciting speakers. As our President mentioned, we were able to arrange a zoom meeting with Jeffrey Hodgson from Canada Pension Plan Investments on September 28, 2023. It was a great success with members tuning in from across the province. Mr. Hodgson stressed that it is important to know all the facts regarding the CPP and the proposed Alberta Pension Plan, so you can make the right decision. This decision is not only for us as seniors, but for other generations especially our children and grandchildren.

Following the success of the CPP Investments zoom meeting, we are planning another informational zoom meeting, I hope you will be interested in joining us. Further information will be coming by email soon.

On September 29<sup>th</sup> an op-ed appeared in the Edmonton Journal and Calgary Herald "Seniors' group steadfast in opposing the APP". The article stated the Alberta members of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) and Seniors United Now (SUN) have three principal objections to the Premier's plan to break up the CPP. First, it's a dangerous risk, second, it is impractical and third, it is an invitation to political interference. To review the complete article, go to our website under News/communications 2023. <https://www.seniorsunitednow.com/communications.html>

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, SUN was invited to attend a press conference with Alberta Federation of Labour presenting their critical report on the Alberta Pension Plan. The report was: Big Risks, No Rewards: Debunking the Alberta Government's Plan to secede from the Canada Pension Plan and was presented by the AFL President Gil McGowan.

The complete report is located on AFL website.

[Big-Risks-No-Rewards-pension-report-15NOV23.pdf \(afl.org\)](#)

As well, I attended the Public Interest Alberta CPP Townhall on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. The discussion was to learn how to protect our retirement security. SUN feels that it is important to attend these functions to keep us informed of what people are saying regarding the UCP Alberta Pension Plan.

The Pharmacare Working Group, which SUN is associated with, has been very active. We have been collecting signatures and sending letters to Liberal MPs, held a Pharmacare Townhall on September 7<sup>th</sup> in Edmonton and did a door to door with handouts for Pharmacare in Edmonton Centre – Liberal MP Randy Boissonault's constituency.

To add your voice, visit the following sites:

<https://www.healthcoalition.ca/add-your-name-free-prescription-medicine-for-everyone>

<https://www.friendsofmedicare.org/abpharmacare>

Our President Wayne Sorenson and I attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Kingsway Legion in Edmonton and laid a wreath on behalf of our SUN members. The ceremony was well done, and it was an honor to lay the wreath. See pictures on page14

Respectfully yours,

Linda Osborne

[sunexdir@telus.net](mailto:sunexdir@telus.net)

780-920-3058



## Casino volunteers needed

Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup> & Monday January 22, 2024, Century Casino on Fort Road in Edmonton.

We are still looking for a **few volunteers** for the event days.

Chip Runner 9:30AM - 6:45PM    Cashier 7:00PM - 3:30AM    Countroom(6 spots) 11:00PM - 3:30AM

please volunteer online <https://www.seniorsunitednow.com/volunteer.html>

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

Every Member, and all Volunteers are an essential piece of the puzzle. Individual volunteers & all members play an important role in the ongoing success of SUN. It's true, many hands make light work and we're incredibly grateful for the many volunteer hands we do have, but more are always needed and wanted!!!

## South Edmonton Chapter

## A message to our chapter members

The South Edmonton Chapter Meetings are held at the Whitemud Crossing Public Library in the Program Room 4211 -106 St. Registration at 1:30 pm and program starts at 2 pm. We appreciate greatly the use and support of the library facilities during the past year. We thank McDonalds at 23 Avenue and 110 St. for the complimentary coffee and muffins provided for each meeting, first by manager Reagan Ketchum and new manager Ely Tories.

Thanks to Cynthia for picking up the coffee and snacks. Thanks also to other members of the executive: Sushila, Bert, Gloria, Mimi, and Ratma. Sushila contacted the guest speakers and others contributed by phoning, bringing in supplies, and helping to set up. At the beginning of each meeting, we are now making a land acknowledgement statement. Also, we have set up a Publicity Committee to let more people know about our monthly presentations. This will cover senior organizations, senior homes, and businesses in South Edmonton. who will receive information about SUN and notices about our meetings at Whitemud Crossing Library.



### WHAT HAPPENED...

**September 15, 2023** Terry Geib, Board Chair of the Cooperative Memorial Society, spoke on the topic, "A Funeral Planning Co-op – Saving Albertans Money and Grief". It was a very thorough and well-organized presentation with two other speakers and another person to handle the power point. Handouts were available for our members. 35 people attended the session.

**October 20, 2023** Jolyn Hall, Owner of Edmonton 55, 55 + Housing Navigator, spoke on "Understanding Housing Options for Seniors". She spoke about seniors making educated decisions about choices, the different options available, advantages and disadvantages of these choices.

**November 17, 2023** TOPIC: Utilities - How to Reduce Costs Understanding Heat & Power Choices Guest Speaker: Irena Struk - Team Lead, Consumer Education and Awareness - Utilities Consumer Advocate - Government of Alberta  
This was a short, informative presentation (about 50 minutes) that included a question period, so we did not have a break. Most people had refreshments and conversation before or after the presentation. Much information was presented, including many statistics, which can be confusing. However, contact information was given for anyone to investigate further among the various choices. Besides the regulated company there are 48 private contract companies involved.

### WHAT'S UPCOMING...

**January 19, 2024** Carrie Ellinger - Community Safety Liaison - City of Edmonton will speak on the topic "Personal Safety".

**February 16, 2024 & March 15, 2024** - Topics to be announced.

Chair: Robert Price

780-250-7164 [rogp@shaw.ca](mailto:rogp@shaw.ca)

## SUN IS SEEKING A PROVINCIAL BOARD SECRETARY

The Provincial Board is seeking an individual to assume the vital role of Board Secretary. The Provincial Board meets monthly, usually on the first Wednesday of the month, excepting, July & August. Meetings are held on-line via the zoom platform.

The secretary is a member of the SUN executive team, acting as a signing officer of the Society, they keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the Society, records minutes at meetings, formats minutes into a word document, forwards the minutes electronically to the SUN administration office.

Please contact the SUN Executive Director Linda Osborne to express your interest or for further details.

[sunexdir@telus.net](mailto:sunexdir@telus.net) 780-920-3058



## Northeast Edmonton Chapter

## Quarterly Activity Summary

We continue to hold our meetings at our new location, Glengarry Community Hall, 13325 – 89 Street, Edmonton. Our volunteers continue to step forward to arrange the seating requirements as well as the after meeting clean up. If you have some computer skills, please step forward as we need a recording secretary. If you can help, contact Wayne Sorenson at 780-964-1142.

At each meeting we host excellent guest speakers who discuss a variety of seniors topics. At the end of each meeting, we have a Save on Foods gift card door prize and a 50/50 draw. Everyone is welcome, bring a friend and enjoy the fellowship, baked goods and tea and coffee. A very special thank you to Save on Foods located at 167 Ave. and 50th street for their donation of tasty treats for our meetings.



### WHATS HAPPENED?

**September 14, 2023** – Registered dietitian Kelly Reinprecht, conducted an excellent presentation on “Healthful Nutrition and Health Navigation”. She stressed that to prevent frailty, seniors should eat more protein and calories, drink more fluid, keep moving, see your doctor, a dietitian, and others as soon as possible if you need help. She also explained and showed types of foods that are good for seniors. Kelly gave an excellent presentation and if you need to contact her, she can be reached at 780-718-4827.

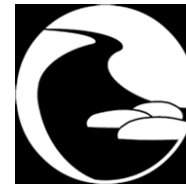
**October 12, 2023** Guest speaker Opel Vuzi is a Regional Air Quality and Health Specialist for Health Canada. His topic was “Wildfire Smoke – What are the health risks for seniors”. He stressed that seniors are at great risk from wildfire smoke which can have long term effects of their lungs. Opel also discussed how to reduce smoke exposure and protect your health. Information pamphlets were also provided at this excellent presentation.

**November 16, 2023** – Topic: Seniors Isolation & Loneliness Mary Benson, Executive Director – ACA. Mary has worked in several different levels of care facilities, from independent living to Dementia Care. She explained items that can cause isolation: an accident/injury, no family or siblings, poor health, and mobility. Some preventative measures can be to join a club, social, or coffee group, consider taking up a new or old hobby.



### WHATS UPCOMING?

**January 11, 2024** - Guest speaker Thalia Hartson, from River Stone Wellness Centre will discuss the topic of “Nurse Practitioners” and the role they play in Alberta’s health care system.



**February 15, 2024** – Tammy Lautner, Registered Social Worker and owner of Peace of Mind Concierge will be our Guest Speaker and will discuss, “Understanding and giving support to someone with dementia”.



Wayne Sorenson – Chair, Northeast Edmonton Chapter  
[wm.s1@telus.net](mailto:wm.s1@telus.net) 780-964-1142



PEACE OF MIND  
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## ATTENTION LIFETIME MEMBERS

**Are you a lifetime member that would prefer to receive the SUNBURST Newsletter via email?**

If that is your preference, please send an email to the SUN office Admin [unitenow@telus.net](mailto:unitenow@telus.net) and SUN would be happy to convert your membership file to E-Communication. As SUN does not need to manage renewal notices for your file this will result in printing & postage savings for SUN.

Annual members are also welcome to receive the Newsletter via email, but due to the administrative costs involved with managing each member’s renewal manually, as opposed to the bulk management done via the hard copy newsletter process it doesn’t result in cost savings for SUN.

## Preventing Caregiver Burnout

'Pull up your bootstraps'! Have you ever heard of this term? I know I have. I was raised with this idea that you just need to keep going and work hard no matter the cost. What I wasn't told was how much that could impact my mental health which, in time, it most certainly did! I am talking about burnout. Specifically directed at caregivers and how it impacts their lives. We hear more and more about the term 'burnout', but what is it really? Burnout is defined in the Webster's dictionary as 'exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration'. Does this sound familiar? Burnout can happen to virtually anyone. No matter gender, race, socio-economic status, age, we are all susceptible to burn out. Here are some signs and symptoms that you may be headed for burn out:

**Anxiety, depression, irritability - Feeling tired and run down - Difficulty sleeping - New or worsening health problems  
Trouble concentrating - Feeling increasingly resentful - Neglecting responsibilities - Cutting back on leisure activities**

Know that there is something you can do to prevent it from happening to you. Take care of yourself first and foremost! "I know, I know, but how, when I am needed to do so many things for others?" There is so much that can be expected of you when your family members need you to be there for them. But who is there for you? If you don't put yourself first, with time you will be no good to any of the people in your life. Remember the flight instructions before you take off on an airplane? Put YOUR oxygen mask on first. The same applies in your life. Put yourself first if you want to be there for others.

Here are some ways that you can do just that and hopefully live a less stressed and more fulfilled life:

- Focus on the things you can control - You can't wish for more hours in the day or force a family member to help out more. Rather than stressing out over things you can't control, focus on how you choose to react to problems.
- Applaud your own efforts - If you're not getting external validation, find ways to acknowledge and reward yourself. Remind yourself of how much you are helping. Try making a list of all the ways your caregiving is making a difference. Refer back to it when you start to feel low.
- Look into respite care - Enlist friends and family who live near you to run errands, bring a hot meal, or watch your loved one so you can take a well-deserved break. Or you can explore out-of-home respite programs such as an adult day program.
- Spread the responsibility - Try to get as many family members involved as possible. Even someone who lives far away can help. You may also want to divide up caregiving tasks.
- Say "yes" when someone offers assistance - Don't be shy about accepting help. Let people feel good about supporting you. It's smart to have a list ready of small tasks that others could easily take care of, such as picking up groceries or driving your loved one to an appointment.
- Maintain your personal relationships - Don't let your friendships get lost in the shuffle of caregiving. These relationships will help sustain you and keep you positive. If it's difficult to leave the house, invite friends over to visit with you over coffee, tea, or dinner.
- Take care of your own health - It's easy to forget about your own health when you're busy with a loved one's care. Don't skip check-ups or medical appointments. You need to be healthy to take good care of your family member.
- Laugh :) - Laughter is an excellent antidote to stress—and a little goes a long way. Read a funny book, watch a comedy, or call a friend who makes you laugh. And whenever you can, try to find the humor in everyday situations.
- Prioritize activities that bring you enjoyment - Make regular time for hobbies that bring you happiness, whether it's reading, working in the garden, listening to music, knitting, playing with the dogs, or watching sports.
- Exercise - Exercise is a powerful stress reliever and mood enhancer. Aim for a minimum of 30 minutes on most days—break it up into three 10-minute sessions if that's easier. When you exercise regularly, you'll also find it boosts your energy level and helps you fight fatigue.
- Seek out professional help to assist you - Hire someone to assist you with your daily tasks, stay with your loved one so you can have a break, provide you with emotional support, advocate for what you need, help you navigate what programs and services are available. (These are all services that we can provide!)
- Join a caregiver support group - these are free and offer the option of in-person or online. The organization links below both offer support groups for caregivers.

There are many things in life that bring us stress and challenge us. Caring for someone can be a challenging and sometimes thankless job. But it can also be a rewarding one. Make it a priority to seek out help, either someone close to you or a professional. You shouldn't go through this caregiver journey alone.

If you are a caregiver and need help, please reach out and let's have a chat. I am here to listen and help. I see you, I hear you and I care.

Written by: Tammy Lautner, RSW Registered Social Worker/Business Owner  
Peace of Mind Concierge Inc. 780-720-3035 info@peacemindconcierge.com



## Sherwood Park / Strathcona County Chapter (SPSC)

## Quarterly Activity Summary

Chapter meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month except July, August, and December. Meetings commence at 1:30pm and are held at Bethel Lutheran Church located at 298 Bethel Drive, Sherwood Park, which is fully accessible. Members and non-members are welcome. Our presenters answer many questions during and after their presentations and are thanked with an appreciation gift. ***A special thank you to the Sherwood Park Real Canadian Superstore for supplying us for cookies for our last meetings and all upcoming meetings in the new year.***

**What's Happening? SUN continues to work for you.**

The SUN Chapter in Sherwood Park and Strathcona County has continued to work hard advocating for a Centralized Seniors Centre in Strathcona County.

**September 19<sup>th</sup>** - meeting gathered about 70 people who were interested in hearing more about what seniors deserve in Strathcona County. The first 40 people who registered were provided with a free luncheon courtesy of the Strathcona County Priorities Committee Grant. The grant also enabled us to pay for advertising in the local paper and a facilitator, Barb Milne, who led us in a workshop that provided us with foundational document providing strategies to advocate for a seniors' facility.

**October 17<sup>th</sup>** - we distributed copies of the findings and strategies from our September 19<sup>th</sup> workshop. We reviewed the important strategies in this document and discussed them focused on implementing the strategies identified in the workshop. The last part of the meeting focused on forming a steering committee that will guide us in taking the next steps. Eleven volunteers put their name on the list, and we look forward to meeting everyone at the next meeting in early November. This committee has taken on the name of Advocacy for Strathcona Seniors Centre (ASSC) and will be under the SUN SPSC Advocacy Committee and report directly to SUN Chapter (SPSC) at regular meetings.

The second part of the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting was a 5-minute Advocacy for a Strathcona Seniors Centre (ASSC) Presentation at 5:00 pm in Strathcona County Chambers. It was both enlightening and discouraging to see the response of the Mayor and Councillors! If you did not get a chance to see it or want to see it again, I urge to follow the link below to the County website. You need to advance the screen time to after 5:00 pm (8:30 screen reference) as the entire day and the day before are recorded on the link. You can find the link on the [www.strathcona.ca](http://www.strathcona.ca) website by going to Upcoming Meetings clicking on the calendar and the October 17 date.

<https://pub-strathcona.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISIStandAlonePlayer.aspx?id=0849c180-9037-40b5-a7bf-c6929eee209f>

Lastly, SPSC SUN chapter has drafted a template letter to send to your councillor advocating for a centralized Seniors Centre in Strathcona County. We encourage you to send this letter to your councillor and the mayor and make your voices heard! If you require a hard copy of the letter template, please each out to the SUN Administration office.

<https://www.seniorsunitednow.com/whatsnew-sherwood-strathcona/app/web/upload/tinyMCE-source/SPSC-Letter-County2023-10.pdf>

**November 21, 2023 "What's Up with Criminal Justice, eh"? Doug Heckbert**

No Meeting recap available – at print time

**WHATS UPCOMING?**

**January 16, 2024** - Topic: Maryanne West, former member of Strathcona County Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) Will review with us her presentation to Strathcona County 2021 on : Why it is vital that Seniors in Strathcona County have a Seniors Centre.

**February 17, 2024** - Topic: - To be confirmed

Report respectfully submitted by: Denis Beaudry Chairperson, SPSC Chapter

*Join us! We welcome your wisdom, experience, and enthusiasm!*

## No Winter Woes

### Keep Moving in Winter

Staying independent and doing your daily activities can be challenging during winter with the snow, ice, and cold weather. Adapting the way you walk on icy, snow-covered surfaces can help you prevent falling.

Below are some tips for safely walking in winter:

Take your time and avoid rushing. Wear shoes or boots with a wide, flat heel. Choose footwear with soles that stay flexible in the cold. Make sure footwear has the proper amount of grip - not too much and not too little.

Wear ice grips over your shoes or boots to get better grip. Remove ice grips when indoors because they can be slippery.

If you use a cane, put a retractable ice pick on the end of it. Carry a small bag or container of sand to sprinkle.

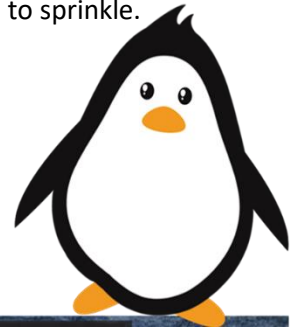
### Do the Penguin Walk!

Bend slightly and walk flat footed, Point your feet out slightly like a penguin,

Keep your centre of gravity over your feet as much as possible, Watch where you are stepping,

Take shorter, shuffle-like steps, Keep your arms at your sides (not in your pockets!),

Concentrate on keeping your balance, Go S-L-O-W-L-Y



### There are also health-related considerations for the winter months:

Social isolation, loneliness and depression may be more common because it can be more difficult to visit with friends and family, exercise, do errands, and attend events in your community.

Talk to friends and family and continue your daily routine including being active, building your strength and challenging your balance.

Do things you enjoy, set your intentions and work toward your goals.

Getting groceries may be more challenging in the winter. Nutrition is an important part of healthy aging so be sure to eat a well-balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, protein, and whole grain foods.

Drink 6-8 cups of fluids throughout the day.

### Our next Cash Raffle is: "Hot Chocolate Day"

January 31, 2024

License #665473



Join our growing list of SUN winners! See page 15 for ticket order form or purchase online: [www.seniorsunitednow.com](http://www.seniorsunitednow.com)

Tickets \$5.00 each 5 Tickets \$10.00 20 tickets \$20.00

Please consider supporting SUN's critical fundraising.

### CASH RAFFLE – Winners "One Hit Wonders"

September 25, 2023

License #646000



Congratulations to SUN members:

A & F Jansen - St.Albert, AB ticket #964

R. Baugh – Red Deer, AB Ticket #686

Thanks to all members for supporting SUN's critical fundraising by purchasing tickets!

## SUN AGM April 24, 2024

### Save the date – mark your calendars and plan to attend our annual general meeting

Santa Maria Goretti Community Center 11050-90 Street NW Edmonton, Alberta

Doors open for Attendance 9:30 am Meeting Commences 10:00 am

Luncheon to follow presentations

Registration information will be provide in the next SUNBURST Edition

Luncheon is included with Registration Fee



**AGM**  
Annual General Meeting



## INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY - December 5

International Volunteer Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 17, 1985.

On International Volunteer Day, we celebrate and recognize volunteerism in all its facets. If your volunteering helps youth, aids in moving towards global peace or sustainable human development it all contributes to building a stronger community somewhere. SUN recognizes all volunteer commitments and applaud hundreds of millions of people who volunteer to make the world a better place.

Your voluntary engagement might sometimes go unnoticed to the world, but your actions count in the communities that have benefited from your hard work, and they certainly count to SENIORS UNITED NOW.

Thank you for taking time to volunteer and join us in celebrating Alberta's amazing spirit of volunteerism.



PEACE OF MIND  
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## HELPING SENIORS & THEIR FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGES OF AGING

- ✔ Do you feel frustrated trying to find what you need within our confusing healthcare system?
- ✔ Are you thinking about moving, but are overwhelmed by all the options available for seniors?
- ✔ Are you caring for a senior loved one and could use some guidance and support?



Tammy Lautner,  
Registered Social Worker/  
Owner

Proudly affiliated with:



**Caregiver Centered Care**  
Supporting Family Caregivers in Healthcare



780.720.3025    [www.peacemindconcierge.com](http://www.peacemindconcierge.com)  
**CUSTOMIZED & FLEXIBLE TO FIT YOUR NEEDS.**

## Worried About Keeping Your Brain Healthy?

*My wife and I are in our sixties. We are healthy now, but we hear so much about the number of people getting dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Is there anything we can do?*

*Signed Worried.*

*Dear Worried:* Brain health has become a major concern as our population ages. According to the Alzheimer's Society, over 747,000 Canadians and forty-four million people world-wide are living with dementia.

At our recent two-day **Understanding Brain Health Symposium**, we partnered with the Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and NWT, and the St. Albert Seniors Association, to host five incredible speakers—all experts in the field of brain health. These speakers consistently identified specific lifestyle factors that function as protective and moderating factors against developing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias as we age.


Specifically, these factors included: maintaining our cardiovascular health, following a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, having purpose, and meaning in our lives, along with making sure we have consistent opportunities to interact and engage meaningfully with others.

In other words, as we move into and through our retirement years, having the resources, the support, the connection with others, and the environment that we need to live well and thrive is what is going to be key determinants for our overall health and wellbeing in our later years. As a representative with a local retirement community, I believe that success in aging well is based on how you live your life, not where you live your life.

Whether we live in a house, an apartment, a 50 plus building, with family members, or in a retirement community, who we live with and how we live is what will continue to bring us joy and purpose in the years ahead.

Drop me a line if you have questions!

*Caroline!*

**revera**  6503-170<sup>th</sup> St. NW Edmonton AB 780.244.8969  
RETIREMENT LIVING  
caroline.redington@reveraliving.com

McConachie Gardens



Caroline Redington M.Ed. BA

### WINTER Grand "DAD" Jokes

1. *How do snowmen read their texts?*
2. *What kind of ball doesn't bounce?*
3. *What bites but doesn't have teeth?*
4. *What do you get when you mix a snowman with a vampire?*
5. *What do you call a snowman in August?*
6. *Where do snowmen love to dance?*
7. *What do you call a slow skier?*
8. *What do snowmen eat for lunch?*
9. *What do snowmen win at the Olympics?*
10. *Which one is faster: hot or cold?*
11. *Where do snowmen put their money?*
13. *What did the tree say after a long winter?*



12. *How do snowmen buy birthday presents?*

Answers on page 11

## Why Seniors Experience Holiday Loneliness

While aging can bring wisdom and experience, there are inevitable losses that even the healthiest seniors face. Loved ones and friends fall ill and pass away. Energy and mobility levels often decrease, resulting in feelings of lost independence and opportunities. Neighborhoods change over time, leaving even those well enough to remain in their own homes feeling lonely and disconnected from their communities.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), socially isolated older adults are at higher risk for depression. The focus on family, friends, and togetherness during this time of year can bring melancholy feelings to the forefront for many elders.

Here are some tips to help you avoid the holiday blues:

**Stay connected with loved ones:** stay connected with your loved ones through phone calls, video chats, or even handwritten letters. This can help you feel less lonely and more connected to your family and friends.



**Volunteer:** Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community and feel good about oneself. Volunteer at local charities, hospitals, or schools. This can help you feel more fulfilled and less isolated.

**Get enough sleep:** Getting enough sleep is important for overall health and well-being. Seniors should aim to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

**Stay active:** Exercise is a great way to boost the mood and reduce stress. Go for a walk, do some light stretching, or even take a yoga class.

**Practice self-care:** Take time to do things you enjoy, such as reading a book, listening to music, or taking a warm bath. This can help you relax and reduce stress.

**Seek professional help:** If you are feeling overwhelmed or depressed, seek professional help. A mental health professional can provide support and guidance to help seniors cope with the holiday blues.

### The Benefits of Staying Connected

If being lonely hurts your quality of life, it stands to reason that being socially connected can improve it. Research backs that up. According to the Global Council on Brain Health, a body of scientific evidence suggests social engagement can help maintain thinking skills and slow cognitive decline. Other studies link an active social life with better cardiovascular outcomes and greater immunity to infectious disease, among other health benefits. Social activity keeps you connected. When you belong, you find emotional support and you know that you matter to others. That feeling goes a long way toward a more positive and healthier life.

- WINTER Grand "DAD" Jokes**
1. With an icy stare.
  2. A snowball.
  3. Frost.
  4. Frostbite.
  5. A puddle.
  6. At a snowball.
  7. A slope-poke!
  8. Iceburgers.
  9. Cold medals!
  10. Hot. You can catch a cold.
  11. In snowbanks.
  12. With cold, hard cash.
  13. What a re-leaf!



## Tips and Strategies for Staying Home Successfully as One Ages

In SUNBURST 59 (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2023) we provided an article on *Important Considerations for Seniors Who Want to Stay Home and for Seniors who Want or Need to Move*.

I thought a good follow-up article would be to delve into one of those options a little deeper, and then do the same next month. So, expanding on the goal of staying home successfully as one ages, here are a few more tips and strategies you may want to consider:

### ***The Physical Home Set Up:***

Have a good, honest, look at your space. Is it well set up for aging in place, or might you need to consider some modifications or adaptations? We suggest making changes to improve safety and mobility, early on. You don't want a fall to be the reason for making changes, you want to prevent the fall in the first place. Depending on your budget most homes can be modified to accommodate one's needs.

- Can you safely move around in your home?
- Will stairs (outside and inside) pose a safety risk?
- Do you need to add a ramp or railings to be able to access the house?
- Consider moving the bedroom to the main floor to reduce the need to use the stairs.
- Can you have a shower on the main floor? If not, you may want to renovate so that you can, or, put in an electric stair lift so you can get to a second-floor bathroom or bedroom.
- If laundry machines are in the basement, can they be relocated to the main floor?
- Ensure that clutter is not blocking walking routes and that you don't put items on the stairs.

### ***Accepting Help and Balancing Support:***

If staying home is your goal, you need to be willing to accept getting help in your home. Many people will say they want to stay home but they also don't want people in their home. That is not usually a very reasonable approach. To stay home, over time, seniors will need to let friends, family, or professional caregivers provide some assistance.

- Consider what help your friends and family are able and willing to provide.
- Explore what help can be provided by no-cost AHS home care or volunteer agencies.
- Determine what assistance is still not covered and find professional services to fill the gaps
- Be aware of caregiver burnout, especially with a spouse or adult child.
- Try to be proactive in getting help before a crisis occurs, the goal is to stay safe and healthy.

**Our team of Elder Care Planning advisors are happy to help create a safe home and sustainable care plan. Feel free to give us a call or email. 403-809-1971 and [info@proactiveseniors.ca](mailto:info@proactiveseniors.ca)**



## National Hot Chocolate Day

January 31<sup>st</sup>

Few beverages are as deep-rooted in culture of collective childhood quite like hot chocolate. This drink reminds us of raining days, skiing, tobogganing, or even a quiet day watching the snowfall. It's thick, silky, toasty, and usually smothered in whipped cream—no other drink brings warmth to our lives and tastebuds quite like hot chocolate. Cozy up with your favorite mug because on January 31, we celebrate National Hot Chocolate Day, a day devoted to our favorite chocolate beverage.



### Why We Love National Hot Chocolate Day

1. **It's the perfect winter drink** - When it's cold outside, staying cozy by the fire with a mug of hot chocolate between our hands is one of our favorite winter traditions. And let's be real – when all you need is a little snuggle and warmth, this drink warms your whole body and tastes luxurious too!
2. **It's good for you** - Chocolate contains many vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and biochemical compounds—all of which help give our body a satisfying health boost. Hot chocolate even increases the microcirculation in your skin. Who knew a hot chocolate obsession could be so good for our health?
3. **It boosts your mood** - When we drink hot chocolate, its chemical compounds signal the brain to release endorphins and serotonin, which elicit our feelings of calmness. These neurotransmitters work to reduce pain and stress, keeping us worry-free and happy! Hot chocolate is clearly happiness in a cup.

### History of Hot Chocolate

The first chocolate drink is believed to have been created by the Maya around 2,500–3,000 years ago, and a cocoa drink was an essential part of Aztec culture by 1400 AD, by which they referred to as *xocolātl*. The drink became popular in Europe after being introduced from Mexico in the New World and has undergone multiple changes since then. Until the 19th century, hot chocolate was used medicinally to treat ailments such as liver and stomach diseases. Hot chocolate is consumed throughout the world and comes in multiple variations, including the spiced chocolate *para mesa* of Latin America, the very thick *cioccolata calda* served in Italy and *chocolate a la taza* served in Spain, and the thinner hot cocoa consumed in North America.



Archaeologists have found evidence that Mayan chocolate consumption occurred as early as 500 BC, and there is speculation that chocolate predates even the Mayans. To make the chocolate drink, which was served cold, the Maya ground cocoa seeds into a paste and mixed it with water, cornmeal, chili peppers, and other ingredients. They then poured the drink back and forth from a cup to a pot until a thick foam developed. Chocolate was available to Maya of all social classes, although the wealthy drank chocolate from "large, spouted vessels" that were often buried with elites. Because sugar was yet to come to the Americas, *xocolātl* was said to be an acquired taste. What the Spaniards then called *xocolātl* was said to be a drink consisting of a chocolate base flavored with vanilla and other spices that was served cold. The drink tasted spicy and bitter as opposed to sweetened modern hot chocolate. As to when *xocolātl* was first served hot, sources conflict on when and by whom.

Within Mesoamerica many drinks were made from cacao beans, and further enhanced by flowers like vanilla to add flavor. This was a tribute to the Aztecs. The Aztecs, or Mexica, required conquered people to provide them with chocolate. Cups, gourds, cacao beans, as well as other things. Cacao became used as a currency throughout Mesoamerica. The Aztecs used chocolate to show high status: it was a bad omen for someone low or common to drink chocolate. Europeans' first recorded contact with chocolate was not until 1502 on Columbus's fourth voyage. After defeating Montezuma's warriors and demanding that the Aztec nobles' hand over their valuables, Cortés returned to Spain in 1528, bringing cocoa beans and chocolate drink making equipment with them. At this time, chocolate still only existed in the bitter drink invented by the Mayas. Sweet hot chocolate and bar chocolate were yet to be invented. After its introduction to Europe, the drink slowly gained popularity. The Imperial Court of Emperor Charles V soon adopted the drink, and what was then only known as "chocolate" became a fashionable drink popular with the Spanish upper class. Additionally, cocoa was given as a dowry when members of the Spanish royal family married other European aristocrats. At the time, chocolate was very expensive in Europe because the cocoa beans only grew in South America.

Hot chocolate was first brought to North America as early as the 17th century by the Dutch, but the first-time colonists began selling hot chocolate was around 1755. Hot chocolate mixed with espresso or coffee under the name of *caffè mocha* is sold in coffee shops around the United States and elsewhere. This name comes from the town Mocha, Yemen, where a specific blend of coffee with the same name is grown. In the United States and Canada, the drink is popular in instant form, made with hot water or milk from a packet containing mostly cocoa powder, sugar, and dry milk. This is the thinner of the two main variations. It is very sweet and may be topped with marshmallows, whipped cream, or a piece of solid chocolate.

November 11, 2023 Remembrance Day Ceremony - Kingsway Legion in Edmonton



### *Season's Greetings*

*Christmas brings family and friends together; it helps us appreciate the love in our lives we can often take for granted.*

*May the true meaning of the holiday season fill your heart and home with many blessings.*

*Seniors United Now Board of Directors & Staff*



Hot Chocolate Day

Name(s):

Address:

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ For Office USE: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Individual Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ Tickets \$5.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (40 available)

5 tickets \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Sets \$10.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (60 sets available)

20 tickets \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Sets \$20.00 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (110 sets available)

Draw Date : January 31, 2024

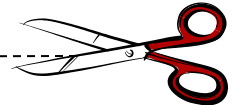
License #665473



Please make your cheque payable to SUN

RAFFLE RULES

- 1) Raffle tickets must not be sold to a person under the age of 18 years. Purchasers must be Alberta residents.
2) The purchase price of each ticket shall be: \$5.00 each OR 5 tickets \$10.00 OR 20 tickets \$20.00
3) To be eligible for draws, the ticket order and purchase amount must be received in SUN office by 10:00am, January 31, 2024
4) The prize payout shall be as follows:
1st prize 30% of the gross ticket sale revenue
2nd prize 20% of the gross ticket sale revenue
5) The draw(s) shall be made at the SUN office: #37 2016 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park, AB T8A3X3 prior to 3pm, January 31, 2024
6) The winning ticket buyers shall be notified by telephone; their names will be publicized in the next newsletter & on the SUN website. The winning ticket buyers will be awarded the prize via cheque drawn on SUN.
7) In the event of any concern or dispute regarding this raffle, please contact Lynn Penner at the SUN administration office. 780-449-1816
8) Raffle tickets are official when payment is received & numbers issued by the sun raffle chairman.
9) Your Ticket numbers are available by contacting the SUN office



SUN MEMBERSHIP Renewal / Donation Oct - December 2023

Individual: [ ] \$25 per year [ ] \$50 2 years Lifetime: [ ] \$200
Joint: [ ] \$40 per year [ ] \$80 2 years Lifetime: [ ] \$300

Thank-You for your prompt renewal. Renewals & donations may also be made by Etransfer to unitenow@telus.net or online via our website

Donation in addition to membership dues
[ ] \$5 [ ] \$10 [ ] \$15 [ ] \$20 [ ] \$25 [ ] other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Raffle \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please make cheque payable to Seniors United Now

Signed Cheque(s) enclosed Chq# \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ (see Back Page) Joint Member (if applicable) Membership # \_\_\_\_\_
[ ] YES - replace my membership card [ ] YES - replace my membership card

(Please attach a stamped self-addressed stamped envelope if you are requesting a replacement card)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (used for SUN demographics only) Year of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (used for SUN demographics only)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_
(If different from mailing label on reverse)

Renew your membership online! SUN uses the PayPal system, for secure online renewals & donations
Etransfer may also be used for membership payments and donations. unitenow@telus.net

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (send me electronic SUN information)

(Please print clearly)

[ ] YES - I am interested in volunteering, please contact me.

**Message from your Membership Coordinator**

Membership revenue is critical to enable SUN to fund the programs and materials we provide for our members. It is a very important aspect of running our advocacy program. If we are to continue to be the Voice of Seniors in Alberta, we need you to renew your memberships, invite your friends to our Chapter meetings, support our 50/50 tickets and of course volunteer and support our events.

We have a Facebook page which is being used to recruit new members. If you have a facebook page search Seniors United Now and join our page, invite your friends. We post Chapter Meetings, AGM information, guest speakers and newsletter updates. Consider finding and liking our page.

If you have any ideas on how to increase our membership, I would be open to hearing from you. You can reach me by email at [suncoord@telus.net](mailto:suncoord@telus.net). Chapters need your support to keep running so consider volunteering at their meetings. Membership has its rewards with benefits of new friendships, information and support.

I look forward to working for you, and with you, for a better SUN.  
Deborah Wilson  
Membership Coordinator



*Deb at McConachie Gardens Shop the Halls Not the Malls Christmas Market November 22, 2023*

**CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH**

C Z M H P U A B A D C F Y E O  
 X M X E C J A T D T U K A B O  
 G Y G I R X O Z U O B U U F B  
 S K S C S R Y R U F S J T S P  
 M R N H O L Y D A Y L R L Z N  
 N E O R N A M E N T E E P H T  
 L E V I T S E F W E I K O O C  
 E D K S T O C K I N G K F L E  
 A N G T B W R M S T H G I L E  
 P I Y M W J Y N C Q D I I Y U  
 W E N A C Y D N A C X F V L M  
 P R E S E N T T R M U L H L H  
 H N S T T T N W F V E Z Z O S  
 N E J N C A S M S X U N C J T  
 Q B Y M S N R T Z V A I T K U

CHRISTMAS  
CANDY CANE  
SANTA  
SLEIGH  
REINDEER  
ORNAMENT  
ELF  
STAR  
PRESENT  
MERRY

LIGHTS  
FESTIVE  
HOLLY  
TREE  
ORNAMENT  
HOLYDAY  
COOKIE  
JOLLY  
SCARF  
STOCKING



**Rules of Sudoku**

There are three Sudoku rules: Firstly, each row must contain the numbers 1-9 exactly once each. Secondly, each column must contain the numbers 1-9 exactly once each. Lastly, each 3x3 box must contain the numbers 1-9 exactly once each. That's it!

	7			2			4	6
	6						8	9
2				8			7	1
	8	4			9	7		
7	1							5
				1	3		4	8
6	9	7				2		
	5	8						6
4	3				8			7

Thank-you for being a SUN member, your membership status is available by contact the SUN Administration office [unitenow@telus.net](mailto:unitenow@telus.net)