



# SENIORS INFO *Exchange*

Spring/Summer 1994

## On the international scene

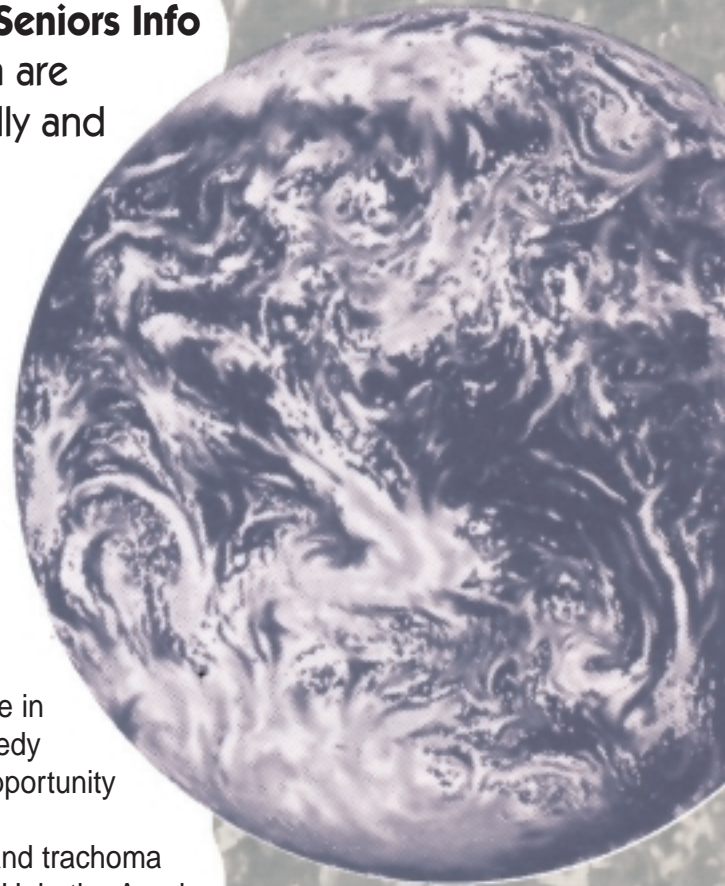
**S**everal international organizations that promote seniors' well-being have their offices or headquarters in Canada. In this issue of **Seniors Info Exchange**, we look at how three of them are making a difference — both internationally and here at home.

### Caring around the world

Since 1975, **Help the Aged (Canada)** has been bringing comfort and support to seniors in Canada and around the world. Staffed by five workers and supported by an army of dedicated volunteers, the charitable organization runs an array of health promotion, skills training, self-help and home care programs.

The reach of Help the Aged (Canada) extends into 13 developing countries. Here is a small sampling of the organization's aid projects:

- In the wake of Hurricane Hugo, Help the Aged (Canada) provided funding to build a community centre in the Caribbean island of Antigua. The centre offers needy seniors meals, shower and laundry facilities and an opportunity to socialize.
- Last year in India, 2100 people received cataract and trachoma operations free of charge at eye camps sponsored by Help the Aged (Canada). Ram Swardop is a 90-year-old shepherd from the village of Ukabar Pur. After three years of being blind, he is once again leading an active life, having had cataracts removed from both eyes.
- In most developing countries, a little goes a long way. A joint project between HelpAge Belize and Help the Aged (Canada) offers



seniors in the small Central American country a revolving loan program to finance modest, income-generating projects that will help improve their quality of life. One of the program's beneficiaries is 87-year-old Vienna Banner. With the help of a small-business loan, she was able to substantially increase output of her locally produced and marketed "Johnny Cakes."

- One of the organization's most successful programs — Adopt-A-Gran — links up Canadian sponsors with individual seniors in developing countries. A \$24 a month sponsorship provides basic necessities, including food, medicine, clothing and shelter — and encourages personal links between the sponsor and the "Gran" being adopted. Since the program first began, 1200 destitute seniors in 12 countries have been adopted by more than 1000 Canadian families.

Help the Aged (Canada) also has a growing slate of projects here at home. With revenues raised through a concerted door-to-door volunteer canvasser campaign, the organization has co-sponsored projects such as "Christmas Wish," which offers visually challenged or blind seniors the opportunity to purchase small daily living aids and appliances.

Other projects include a minibus service for seniors in Halifax, and a partnership with the Shepherds of Good Hope and Union Mission to bring food and clothing to needy seniors in Ottawa. In Williams Lake, British Columbia, a small band of local "saints" receives funding to provide shelter and care for older "street people" who might otherwise die of exposure or malnutrition. There are similar Help the Aged (Canada) shelters in Halifax, Edmonton and Ottawa.

For more information, contact:

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### A vision for the future

"Add life to the years that have been added to life by assuring all older persons: independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity." International Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons (International Federation of Ageing)



The **International Federation of Ageing** (IFA) has a vision for the future. Founded in 1973, the non-profit, non-governmental organization is committed to advancing the well-being of older people around the world. Last year, it moved its headquarters from Washington to Montreal.

One of the ways IFA gets the job done is by linking up more than 100 seniors organizations in 50 nations around the world. Through IFA, these groups — and interested individuals — can exchange ideas and experiences, and share practical solutions to mutual concerns about aging.

IFA's international networks tackle key aging issues. For example, the Global Link on Midlife and Older Women brings together activists, practitioners, planners and researchers to promote the interests of women in their later years. Administered in cooperation with the American Association of Retired Persons, the Link publishes a bi-annual newsletter and organizes meetings at various international venues. Another network — the Exchange on Ageing, the Law and Ethics (EAGLE) — presses for legislative changes to ensure that older people are well served by the law.

In addition to its network activities, IFA serves on several United Nations subcommittees charged with promoting the aging agenda. It also offers advice to countries and organizations in the process of introducing or expanding services for older persons, provides development assistance to fledgling groups, and sponsors international conferences and seminars on emerging issues. A newsletter and a quarterly journal keep members abreast of IFA activities, and of events and developments in the field.

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## Linking up francophone groups

“La vieillesse est une mauvaise habitude que les gens occupés n’ont pas le temps de prendre.” André Maurois

As André Maurois so aptly observes, old age is a bad habit that busy people don’t have the time to pick up. That’s why the **Association internationale francophone des aînés (AIFA)** places so much importance on encouraging seniors to remain active and involved in their community.

Founded in July 1981 in Quebec, AIFA works internationally to bring together French-speaking seniors, their associations and other groups working with seniors. Every two years at its international conference AIFA adopts its plan action. AIFA also produces **Info-AIFA**, a monthly newsletter which helps keep its members in touch with each other, and **Maturité**, a quarterly bulletin that addresses special issues.

AIFA’s objectives also include promoting increased solidarity and exchange among seniors worldwide, encouraging dialogue between seniors and younger generations, helping seniors adopt positive lifestyles, promoting the use of the French language and an understanding of French-speaking cultures, and encouraging its members to become more aware of other cultures.

The Association’s work highlights three main themes: Maturity, Solidarity, and French Language and Culture. During their professional lives seniors develop a **maturity** that helps them to distinguish the essential from the incidental. AIFA encourages older adults to remain active citizens in society rather than isolating themselves prematurely. The concept of **solidarity** reflects the Association’s belief that seniors worldwide need to work in partnership to safeguard their common interests. Finally, AIFA holds the conviction that **French language and culture** is a common thread linking francophone communities the world over.

The Association’s members include French-speaking communities from across Canada, some American states, and from countries in Europe, Africa and West Indies.

AIFA’s next conference will be held in Quebec City in June 1995. Its focus will be on Francophone seniors and multiculturalism.

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 Fax (418) 646-1305

2

By how much does the seniors population worldwide increase each month?

- a. 200 000 persons
- b. 500 000 persons
- c. 800 000 persons

3

The world's "oldest" country (highest percentage of people over 65) is:

- a. United States
- b. Japan
- c. Sweden

4

If current trends continue, half of Italy's population will be older than what age in 2025?

- a. 37 years
- b. 43 years
- c. 50 years

5

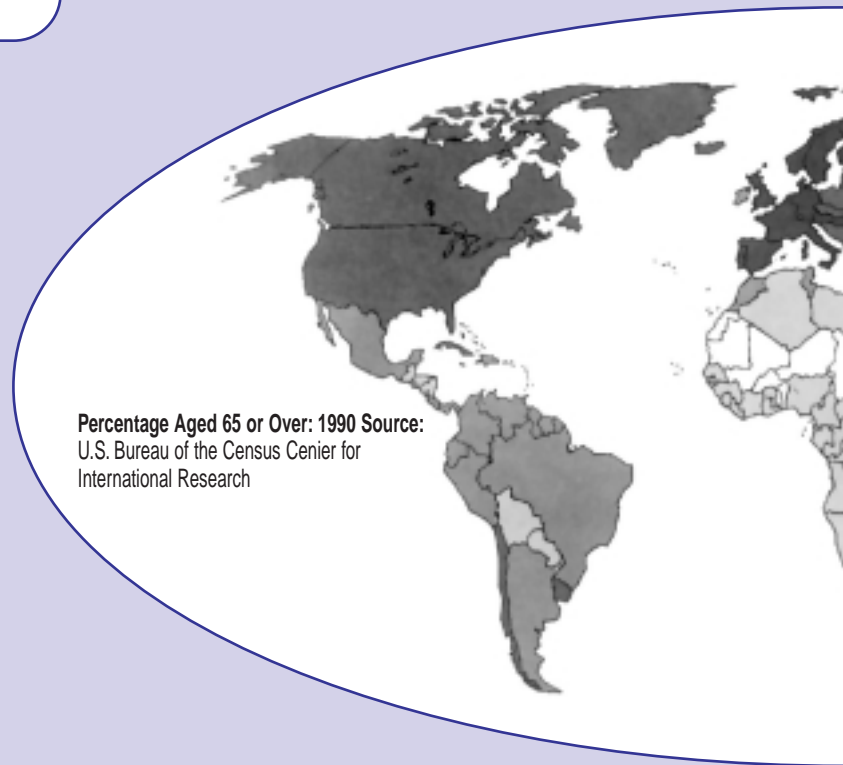
Nearly 40 per cent of the world's population aged 80 and over live in which three countries?

- a. People's Republic of China, the United States, Japan
- b. People's Republic of China, the United States, the former Soviet Union combined
- c. The United States, Japan, India

1

True or false? More than half of the world's people 65 or older live in industrialized nations.

## Test your knowledge



6

Japan has the world's highest life expectancy at birth. What is it (1990)?

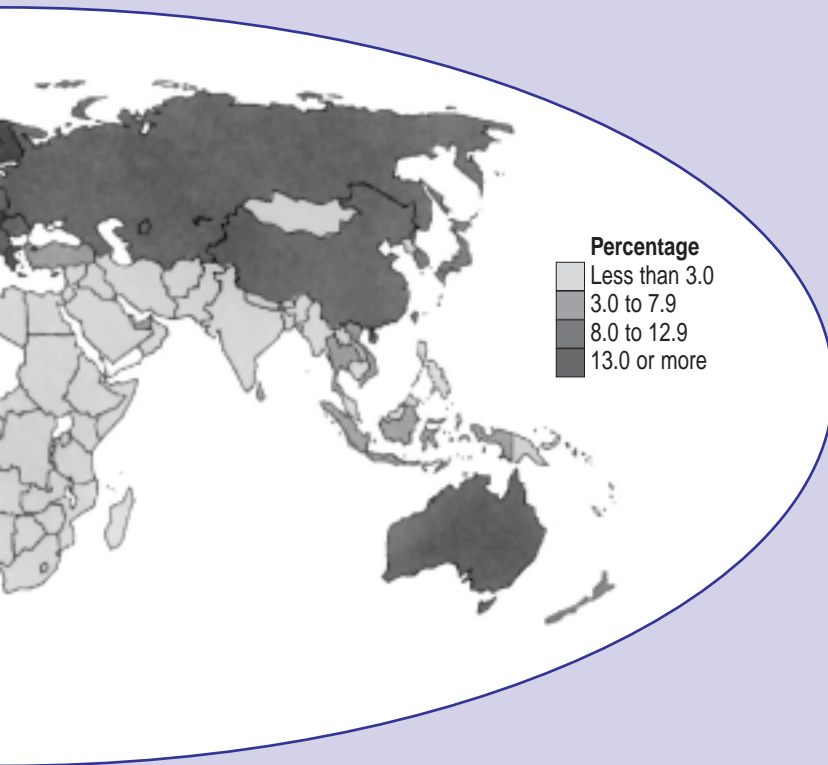
- a. 79 years
- b. 82 years
- c. 85 years

7

Life expectancy at birth is 30 years lower than Japan's in which of the following countries (1990)?

- a. Colombia
- b. Pakistan
- c. Malawi

How much do you know about world demographics on aging? Try these questions — then check your answers against those on page 21.



8

True or false? In developing nations older people tend to be concentrated rural areas.

9

True or false? There are more older women than older men in developing nations.

10

which of the following countries has the highest percentage of older people living alone?

- a. Japan
- b. Sweden
- c. Greece

11

Which of the following countries has the highest percentage of low-income older women living alone (i.e., incomes below 50 per cent of the median national household income)?

- a. Netherlands
- b. Canada
- c. United States

## An international plan of action

Canada isn't the only country with an aging population. By the year 2025, the number of seniors worldwide is expected to increase to 1.2 billion - or 14 per cent of the total population. If current trends continue, almost three quarters of the world's older inhabitants will live in developing countries.

Rapid global aging has enormous economic and social implications. Recognizing this, in 1982 the **United Nations (UN) World Assembly on Ageing** introduced the **International Plan of Action on Ageing**. Endorsed by the UN General Assembly the same year, the Plan has helped to keep aging issues high on the international agenda for more than a decade.

The Plan's 62 recommendations are aimed at:

- increasing national and international understanding about the economic, social and cultural effects of an aging population;

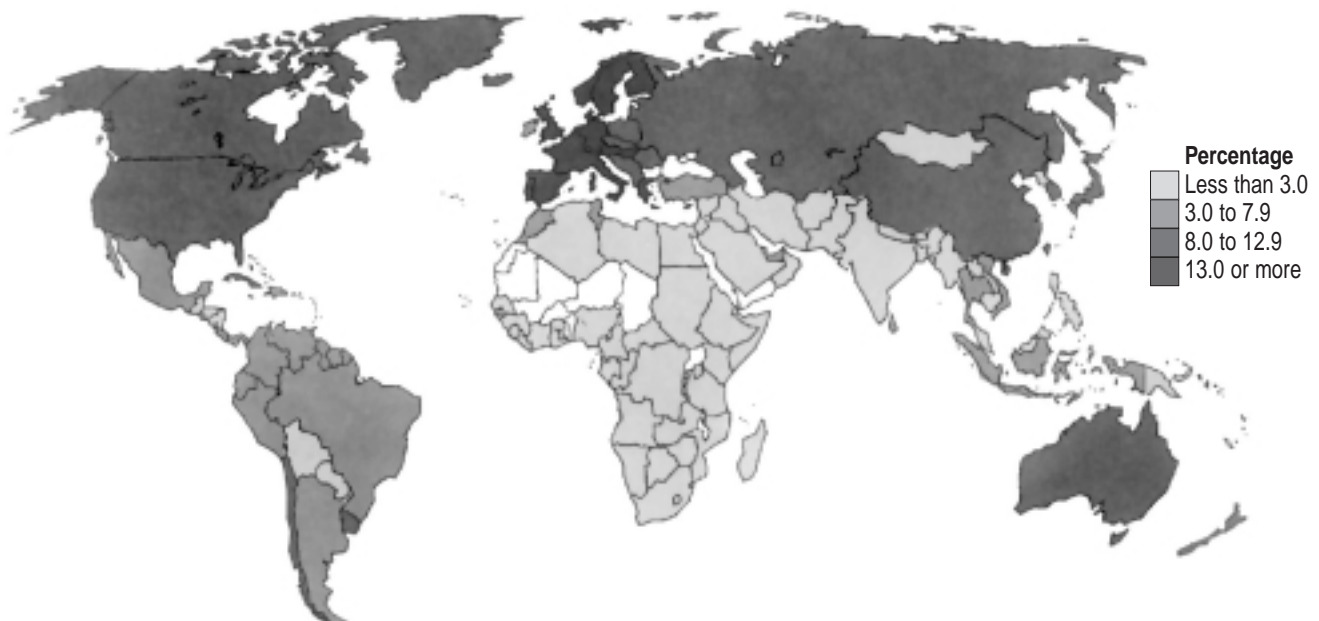
- promoting awareness about humanitarian and developmental issues related to aging;
- stimulating policies and programs that guarantee seniors social and economic security; and
- encouraging education, training and research initiatives and promoting an international exchange of skills and knowledge.

Twelve years later, there is increasing international momentum to implement the Plan's recommendations. Recent achievements include:

- almost 100 countries have appointed national Coordinating Mechanisms on Ageing, and 20 UN specialized agencies and many international non-governmental organizations are active in the field;
- in 1990, the General Assembly designated October 1 as International Day for the Elderly, in recognition of seniors' actual and potential contribution to development; since 1990, the UN has administered an applied research and training project that

### Percentage Aged 65 or Over: 2025

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Center for International Research



identifies the implications of population aging in developing countries and suggests policy options for enhancing seniors' contributions;



- the International Conference on Ageing (October 15-16, 1992) reinforced participating countries' commitment to finding practical answers to aging concerns.

Progress continues. In 1992, the **UN Programme on Ageing** adopted a revised strategy for implementing the Plan's recommendations. Focusing on practical and measurable goals, the strategy encourages international cooperation and the setting of attainable national targets.

For more information, contact:

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 UN Programme on Ageing  
 DC2 1312  
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 New York, New York 10017  
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 Fax (212) 963-4116

## Canada keeps pace

Canada fully endorses the principles of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, placing a high priority on meeting seniors' needs.

To this end, a number of important research projects have been commissioned by federal departments and agencies. These include **Seniors independence: Whose responsibility?** - a study by the National Advisory Council on Aging of the concepts of independence and autonomy as they apply to seniors - and **The National Survey on Ageing and Independence**. The latter was conducted in the fall of 1991 to measure a range of issues that affect older Canadians' independence and quality of life. The results are helping government and other service providers develop innovative and responsive seniors' programs.

Canada has also undertaken a variety of policy and legislative initiatives consistent with the International Plan. **The Canada Pension Plan, Spouse Allowance Program, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Old Age Security**, and a number of tax credits have contributed to a decline in poverty among older Canadians. In addition, amendments to the **Canada Pension Plan** make some people eligible for payments as early as age 60, while changes brought about by human rights legislation in some provinces have eliminated mandatory retirement at age 65.

## International Symposium on Aging

“There’s no place like home.” This popular saying conjures up images of a familiar and comfortable spot where everyone prefers to be. It’s an image that health professionals and policy-makers are working with to help seniors live independently — out of institutions — for as long as possible.

“There’s No Place Like Home: Making It Work” is the theme of the **First International Symposium on Aging** held in Winnipeg from May 12 to 14, 1994. The host, the **Deer Lodge Foundation for Geriatrics**, is a charitable organization dedicated to promoting excellence in the fields of geriatrics and gerontology. It sponsors research, education and special projects related to gerontology.



The two-day symposium, May 13 and 14, will look at three major topics: innovations in organizing and delivering non-acute care; new ideas in the built environment; and women as care-givers and service consumers. Physicians, policy-makers, service providers and researchers from Canada and other countries discussed innovative ways to reduce the number of seniors in facilities and to help older adults remain in their own homes. A variety of perspectives

on these topics were provided by presenters from across North America and Europe including C. Neil Bull from the University of Missouri, Malcom Johnson from the Open University, United Kingdom, and Wim J.A. Vanden Heuvel from University Hospital Groningen in The Netherlands.

And for interested older adults, the Seniors’ Program — scheduled simultaneously — will include lectures and discussion groups about health-care reform, housing and wellness.

Some participants also attended two pre-symposium sessions on May 12. The Continuing Medical Education Program, designed for health professionals with an interest in geriatrics, explored issues related to caring for ill seniors in the community setting. For its part, the second pre-symposium entitled the Scientific Program focused on research done on related topics, such as women’s careers and eldercare, the role of paramedics and care of seniors, as well as a keynote presentation entitled “The Medical Challenges in Moving from Institutionally-based Care to Community-based Care.”

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## TV shows for and about seniors

By portraying seniors positively and as the individuals that they are in real life, the media can help to destroy many of society's negative stereotypes about aging. Several television programs — some currently on the air, others recently broadcast or scheduled for airing later this year — go a long way in debunking some of the myths. Following is a brief round-up of TV programs that are either geared specifically to a senior audience or feature an episode depicting older adults in a positive light.



### Les Jeunes vieux

An hour-long film broadcast in December 1993 on Les Beaux Dimanches (Radio-Canada), **Les Jeunes vieux** spotlights older Canadians who are living their lives in exceptional ways. These are people who break free of the expectations associated with the “over 55s,” moving beyond the endeavours typical of their age group.

Henri Laborit, the leading man of the film, is a scientific philosopher who is witty, eccentric, charming and almost 80 years old. Equally remarkable is Maggie Kuhn who, although forced to retire at age 65 in 1970, has been a strong political activist for over 20 years. Maggie now directs the

75,000-strong Grey Panthers organization which she founded many years ago in the United States.

### 50/UP

Broadcast Sundays at 11 a.m. on CBC TV, this program looks at seniors' lives from a variety of angles. Nothing is sacred, and viewers have a chance to explore everything from money matters, holidays, flirting and learning about computers to mood disorders, being the parents of gays and prostate cancer.

Individual portraits help to illustrate the variety of activities seniors enjoy. For example, one show featured a 61-year-old woman who models for major magazines. Another focused on a man who has been hosting the same radio show for over 40 years.

### The Time of Your Life

This magazine-style documentary series profiles real-life Canadians who are turning to new pursuits for the second half of their lives. Developed primarily as a motivational tool, **The Time of Your Life** illustrates the many lifestyle, career and health choices open to people as they get older. Watch for it on Global Television, Vision TV and individual stations across Canada.

### M'aimes-tu?

This French-language series was broadcast weekly between September 1993 and March 1994. Now available on cassette, the 26 programs tackle a wide range of subjects for a family audience, including divorce, first love, teenager problems and challenges, and relationships between parents and children.

One special episode (shown on March 29) shows three generations — grandparents, children and grandchildren — getting together to share the experiences and emotions they have in common.

For a list of available cassettes (\$60 each), contact:

Hélène Dumas  
Idéacom international inc.  
1000 Amherst Street  
Room 300  
Montreal, Quebec  
H2L 3K5  
(514) 849-6966  
Fax (514) 849-0776

## The Adventures of Dudley the Dragon

The second season of this popular children's show will be broadcast across Canada this fall. One episode of particular interest to seniors and caregivers is "The Old Mirror." Dudley, the main character, suddenly finds himself much older. He is forced to come to grips with the realities of aging, while trying to maintain his relationship with his young playmate Sally.

This segment illustrates the special relationship that can develop between a senior and a child. It also shows how much seniors contribute to community life, and portrays the kinds of activities seniors enjoy in a positive light.

Starting this fall, **The Adventures of Dudley the Dragon** will be broadcast on local networks across the country. The French version, **Les Aventures d'Arthur le Dragon**, will air on La Chaîne and Canal Famille.



## Spacetrek 2000 update

Not willing or able to devote an hour a day to physical fitness? Well, don't despair — being a modest mover has advantages, too. New research indicates that 30 minutes or more of moderate physical activity most days in a week provides great health benefits, especially for older Canadians.

Walking to the store, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, raking leaves, going for a bike ride, walking the dog, or even pulling weeds are all moderate-intensity activities.

Between May 27 and June 5, 1994, active seniors can maintain their physical fitness and translate those 30 minutes of exercise into points towards **Spacetrek 2000's** voyage from Pluto to Earth.

Spacetrek 2000 is **Canada's Fitweek** project for Canadians

over 55. It encourages older adults to participate in their favourite activities or try new ones.

The imaginary space voyage started in 1990 at Pluto and will travel all the way to the sun, finishing back on Earth in the year 2000.

Last year, almost 75,000 older Canadians participated in all kinds of events (see article in **Seniors Info Exchange**, Spring 1993, p. 4). Spacetrek 2000 Coordinator Susan MacKenzie explains the project's success: "Participants like to be part of a national activity, all moving towards the same goal. And they **really** like the fact that they can participate in their own time and their own space, alone or in groups."



Across Canada, older adults are enthusiastically planning gala events, or keeping track of their exercise stints on their own and with friends. This year, The Boys and Girls Club of Canada will be joining forces with The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation to launch a number of intergenerational endeavours. Nature hikes, planting neighbourhood gardens and kite-flying are some of the activities in the works.

For an information kit about Spacetrek 2000, including hints on organizing events, personal distance charts and a poster "map" of the solar

system, contact:

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Spacetrek 2000 National Coordinator  
National Pensioners and Senior Citizens  
Federation  
3033 Lakeshore Boulevard West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M8V 1K5  
(416) 252-1820  
Fax (416) 251-7042

## From the National Transportation Agency

The National Transportation Agency of Canada has some important information for air travellers with disabilities.

On January 1, 1994, new regulations concerning the **Terms and Conditions of Carriage of Persons with Disabilities on Large Aircraft** came into effect.

This is the first National Transportation Agency regulation aimed at eliminating undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities.

For more information, contact:

Accessible Transportation Directorate  
National Transportation Agency of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0N9  
(819) 997-6828  
TTY (819) 953-9705

(Collect calls will be accepted.)

## Taking a world view

Interested in what's happening on the international seniors' front? Three magazines — two in English and one in French — provide seniors and associations working with older adults with a view of “the big picture.”

The English-language publications are from the International Federation on Ageing (IFA), which strives to connect seniors-related associations in some 50 countries worldwide. IFA is in business to help individuals and organizations share ideas, discuss trends and learn about each other's activities.

The first, **Ageing International**, is published quarterly. It is aimed mainly at health care professionals, and reports on global aging trends, initiatives and research in the field.

The articles, frequently written by academics, run the gamut, from coverage of international conferences and reports on how various nations pay for long-term care, to accounts of what seniors around the world are doing to maintain their independence.

Each issue includes a comprehensive calendar of upcoming international conferences and in-depth reviews of new publications.

The second magazine is **Network News**, published twice a year and aimed at researchers, academics, health professionals and senior women themselves. It looks at aging issues as these relate to older women and their care-givers. Concentrating on women in midlife and beyond, its articles provide international perspectives on aging. Topics explored include the role of women in various societies, and the effect of health care, employment and social security issues on their lives. **Network News**

highlights international initiatives, political issues and projects aimed at improving the life circumstances of older women.

The publication offers readers an interesting window on other countries, including their traditions, viewpoints and unique ways of addressing some of the issues and challenges that affect women.

Reviews of new publications and a calendar of international conferences help to keep readers informed. **Network News** is the newsletter of

**Global Link for Midlife and Older Women (GLOW)**, which was co-founded by IFA

and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Both

publications are available in English only. **Ageing**

**International** costs \$20 a copy for individuals and \$40 for institutions.

There is no charge for **Network News**.

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**Maturité** is the magazine of the Association internationale francophone des aînés (AIFA). Distributed to francophone countries and communities worldwide, **Maturité** covers information of interest to seniors' groups and services. By highlighting individuals and groups who are living life to the fullest, **Maturité** offers its readers a bird's eye view of what their counterparts in other French-speaking countries are doing. It also features articles about the various challenges seniors faces in today's



society. **Maturité's** main audience is AIFA's membership, which includes government and private sector partners who work with seniors.

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 Fax (418) 646-1305

## Helping seniors get around

Keeping independent often means getting help with everyday activities. For example, many seniors rely on volunteer drivers to shop, attend social events or go to doctor's appointments. With a tight economy and the number of seniors growing, volunteers are becoming an increasingly precious commodity.

**Ontario's Office for Seniors' Issues** provides educational tools and resources to assist provincial volunteer agencies recruit and support their volunteer forces. For groups interested in helping seniors get around, the Office has recently published **Volunteer Transportation Service: Coordinator's Manual**.

The guide was developed with input from over 200 organizations, 140 recruitment and training agencies, and dozens of volunteers in urban and rural settings. It is intended to help program coordinators establish policies on safety guidelines, competency criteria and appropriate interviewing and testing procedures for their volunteers.

Recognizing that programs and services often differ from community to community, the manual is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of agencies and programs, and consumers of various types. It guides the reader through the various steps involved in setting up and managing a volunteer driving service, including how to:

- design a volunteer program, determine who is eligible to use it, and schedule the drivers;
- recruit, interview and train volunteers;
- set up a fee structure and reimburse drivers;
- manage risks and insurance needs;
- develop a handbook for volunteer drivers; and
- deal with emergencies and other problems.

The **Volunteer Transportation Service: Coordinator's Manual** is also available in French (**Service de transport bénévole : Manuel de coordination**). To obtain a free copy within Ontario, please write or contact:

Office for Seniors' Issues  
 Ontario Ministry of Citizenship  
 Education Resources Centre  
 76 College Street  
 6th Floor  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M7A 1N3  
 (416) 327-2460  
 Fax (416) 327-2425

For those outside of Ontario, the cost is \$15 plus shipping charges. Contact:

Publications Ontario  
 50 Grosvenor Street  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M7A 1N8  
 (416) 326-5300  
 Fax (416) 326-5317

## About seniors, medicines and alcohol

Using medication wisely and understanding its possible effects and problems is important to seniors' health and well-being. Three resources focusing on the safe use of medications and alcohol by older Canadians are currently available.

### Using medication wisely

In a 1989 study, researchers found that older adults are nearly twice as susceptible to adverse drug reactions as their younger counterparts. This led the **Council on Aging — Ottawa-Carleton** to launch its four-year **Medication Awareness Project (MAP)**. (For information on the project, see article in **Seniors Info Exchange**, Winter 1990-91, p. 12.) The objective was to encourage a responsible approach to medication use among both seniors and the physicians and pharmacists who prescribe and dispense drugs.

One important product of MAP was **Use Medication Wisely: A Resource Kit for Communities Concerned with Seniors' Medication Use**.

The kit explains how the misuse of medication can undermine older adults' independence and be a factor in falls, confusion, misdiagnosis, emergency hospital admissions and institutionalization. It also points to the many possible causes of adverse drug reactions in older adults — for example:

- patients receiving conflicting prescriptions from different doctors;
- the mixing of different drugs in the same prescription;
- lack of adequate supervision of seniors;
- older adults' increased sensitivity to drugs due to normal physiological changes;
- a lack of a clear understanding of the drug regimen;
- improper storage of drugs; and
- the need for better physician training in geriatric prescribing.

To avoid negative drug reactions and medication misuse, **Use Medication Wisely...** advocates a collaborative approach to the issue. It suggests that seniors, their families, physicians, pharmacists and other health care professionals work together to prevent and reduce the risks.



The kit is packed with useful material, including statistics on seniors' problems with medication; step-by-step instructions on how to develop a project plan and budgets; guidelines for recruiting and training peer volunteers; helpful hints and a video for starting a theatre troupe program; speakers' tips and notes on training; advice on project evaluation; and an extensive bibliography.

For a copy of this resource kit in either English or French (**Médicaments, prudence ... Une trousse d'information pour les communautés intéressées à l'usage des médicaments chez les aînés**), send \$25 (which includes taxes and shipping and handling charges) to:

The Council on Aging — Ottawa-Carleton  
 256 King Edward Avenue  
 Suite 300  
 Ottawa, Ontario  
 K1N 7M1  
 (613) 789-3577  
 Fax (613) 789-4406

### Safe drug use for older women

**Action on Women's Addictions — Research & Education** (AWARE) has produced two resource manuals on older women and the safe use of medication. **Drug Wise: A Book For Older Women About Safe Medication Use** and **Drug Wise: A Book About Safe Drug Use For Older Women Who Are Caregivers** are suitable for either group or individual use.

As the introductions explain, older women receive more prescriptions for drugs than any other group in the population. In fact, one startling statistic indicates that more than 35 per cent of older women are taking upwards of five different prescription drugs at the same time.

Both publications discuss problems related to drug use, and give pointers on using drugs safely, feeling better without drugs and getting help when needed. Each book has chapters on the use, overuse and misuse of four types of drugs: tranquilizers and anti-depressants, alcohol, physical health medications, and over-the-counter drugs.

**Drug Wise for Older Women** begins with basic information about the four drug types, explaining why each might be prescribed, its effects on the older woman and some of the difficulties it can cause. Later chapters address potential problems arising from both short-term and long-term drug use, and offer advice on how and where to get help.

As its name implies, **Drug Wise for Caregivers** is aimed at older women who are care-givers. It focuses on safe drug use for both the care-giver and the person being cared for, and suggests ways of helping older adults who become dependent on medications or alcohol. One chapter, "How to Survive Caregiving," offers care-givers practical advice on setting limits and expectations, dealing with their feelings, talking things over with others, and learning to limit the stresses of care-giving.

**Drug Wise for Older Women** and **Drug Wise for Caregivers** are also available in French (**Guide des aînées (médicaments et alcool)** and **Guide des soignantes d'aînées à domicile (médicaments et alcool)**) for \$5 each. Contact:

AWARE  
 P.O. Box 86  
 Kingston, Ontario  
 K7L 4V6  
 (613) 545-0117

### Alternatives to drugs

Ontario's **Addiction Research Foundation** (ARF) has released a new educational package for seniors, entitled **Alternatives: Prevention and Intervention for Alcohol and Drug Problems in Seniors**. The resource is designed to increase awareness of the risks and problems older adults can encounter with alcohol, sleeping pills, tranquilizers and some painkillers.

Loneliness, sadness, boredom, sleep problems and pain are just some of the age-related physical, psychological, social and environmental stresses seniors can face. For relief, some older adults use psychoactive depressants, such as alcohol, tranquilizers or narcotic painkillers. While the drugs and alcohol may help the symptoms, they don't get at the root causes.

“Older people are more sensitive to the effects of drugs and can run into problems when different drugs they are using interact,” says Dr. Virginia Carver, a program consultant with ARF.

**Alternatives** offers seniors and care-givers information on how to prevent problems and what to do if they develop. The kit includes a video, training manuals, overhead materials and hand-outs for two educational presentations.

The first presentation for seniors encourages them to look at the factors that contribute to stress in their lives, the risks of using medication or alcohol to deal with these, and other possible options open to them. The second helps health professionals recognize, aid and support seniors with alcohol- or drug-related problems.

The kit costs \$115 (\$55 for agencies funded by the Ontario government) plus shipping, handling and taxes, and is also available in French (**Options : Prévention et intervention concernant les problèmes d'alcool et de drogue chez les aînés**). Two separate information pamphlets, “The Older Adult and Sleeping Pills, Tranquillizers, Pain Medications,” and “The Older Adult and Alcohol,” can be ordered in batches of 25 for \$30 (or the first 50 free if you are an Ontario agency). Call 1-800-661-1111, or contact:

Addiction Research Foundation  
Marketing Department  
33 Russell Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 2S1  
(416) 595-6059  
Fax (416) 593-4694

## A right to ask

“If you are at all like me, how many times have you arrived home from the doctor’s office with prescription clutched in hand, and yet, have very little or no idea what it’s all about. And when goaded by my spouse as to WHY, I invariably said, ‘I forgot to ask,’ or ‘I didn’t want to bother the doctor.’”

Zelda Freedman realized that seniors often experience this sort of frustration. Her booklet, **Pleased to See You — You Have A Right To Ask**, explains how people can communicate effectively with their doctor, encouraging patients to ask about every facet of their health care.

The old-style doctor-patient relationship implies an unquestioning and compliant patient, reluctant to question the doctor’s authority. In Freedman’s view, this relationship should change.

Her 54-page booklet urges seniors to take control of their own health by learning to communicate with their doctors and by asking questions about decisions that affect their health. She believes that once they begin to view the relationship as a partnership, seniors will start feeling comfortable about asking questions, voicing concerns and even suggesting that a second opinion may be needed.

**Pleased to See You — You Have A Right To Ask** is available in English only for \$5.95, plus shipping and handling charges of \$2.50 for the first copy and \$0.50 for each additional copy, plus GST. For more information or to order, contact:

Canadian Public Health Association  
1565 Carling Avenue  
Suite 400  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Z 8R1  
(613) 725-3769  
Fax (613) 725-9826



## That extra push

The **Institute for Positive Health for Seniors Inc.** is in the business of encouraging older Canadians to lead healthy active lives. Recently it released a report on its educational and motivational workshop series, held in five English-speaking and nine French-speaking communities across Eastern Ontario. In all, more than 275 participants, ranging in age from 49 to 96, attended the sessions.

Entitled **Understanding Aging and Active Living**, the workshop had three basic elements: an information session on aging, a physical assessment and a demonstration of the Active Living program. Evaluation of the workshop was both objective — a repeat physical assessment of participants three months later — and subjective — a questionnaire asking participants and leaders for their opinions on its effectiveness.

The results were very positive. Participants generally liked the content and form of the workshop, describing it as informative, challenging and a helpful motivator in getting them up and moving. As one participant commented, “It showed me that it’s not too late for me to start to be more active.” Many others whose activity level was already above average for their age said they were challenged to become more active.

The report includes conclusions and recommendations for future projects, appendices describing the various workshop segments, schedules and formats, and the evaluation report.

Available in English (**Understanding Aging and Active Living**) and French (**Comprendre le**

**vieillessement et la vie active**), the report costs \$10 plus shipping and handling charges. Contact:

Yolande Hachez  
Project Administrative Coordinator  
Institute for Positive Health for Seniors Inc.  
43 Bruyère Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 5C8  
(613) 560-6318  
Fax (613) 562-6321

## Live it up!

Live it up! Use it or lose it! Following these suggestions can make life a lot more interesting and help you live longer. What’s more, experts now believe an active, healthy lifestyle can postpone many of the so-called “inevitable” problems of aging.



Many seniors view getting older as an opportunity to live life to the fullest. With this in mind, **ParticipACTION** and **Merck-Frosst Canada Inc.** have developed a health promotion kit that takes a balanced approach and recognizes that mental, physical and social well-being can’t be separated.

**Live it Up! A Guide to Healthy Active Living in the Senior Years** is for leaders working with older adults. It illustrates how active living can help people grow old with their sense of self-esteem and their spirit of adventure intact.

The package includes materials developed in cooperation with experts in the field, and are aimed at both health professionals and seniors. Seven overview articles help leaders address such topics, as communicating with seniors, active living, healthy

eating, medication use, and social and mental well-being. As well, there are camera-ready articles for seniors on each of the topics and suggested sources for more information.

The kit is available, free of charge, in English and French (**À votre santé! Le guide d'un mode de vie sain et actif pour le troisième âge**) from:

ParticipACTION  
P.O. Box 64  
40 Dundas Street West  
Suite 220  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 2C2  
(416) 954-1212  
Fax (416) 954-4949

## Focusing on families

It's the International Year of the Family (IYF), so here's a reminder about two tried and true publications for and about families.

**Transition** is a resource for policy-makers, teachers, social services professionals, journalists and the public at large. Published four times a year by the **Vanier Institute of the Family**, this bilingual magazine promotes the well-being of Canadian families.

Its focus is on a variety of social and economic aspects affecting families, including work and the family, employment in the 1990s, how today's children will fare tomorrow, child care, fatherhood, and definitions of the family.

Articles also cover government debates and current reports, with many articles contributed by specialists or journalists. Each issue provides a listing of upcoming family-related conferences across Canada.

To become a member of the Vanier Institute of the Family and receive **Transition**, send \$25 for

individuals, \$15 for Associate members, and \$60 for organizations to:

Vanier Institute of the Family  
120 Holland Avenue  
Suite 300  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Y 0X6  
Fax (613) 722-4007

**Let's Talk Families** is a quarterly newsletter produced by **Family Service Canada**, which provides information on current issues concerning families. It is directed at non-government organizations, family-service and children's agencies, social planning councils, as well as government departments and individuals concerned with the family.

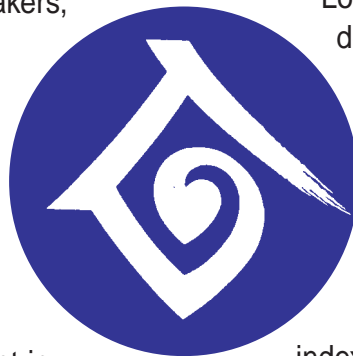
Regular features include an editorial section which discusses current trends in the Canadian family and the social network that surrounds it, and "The Hill" column which examines legislation that affects families.

Longer articles look at specific issues in more depth — for example, in the next few issues a feature column will provide pointers about marketing and its importance to non-profit organizations. The "Marketing 101" series walks readers through the various steps of developing and setting up a marketing strategy.

In each issue, readers will also find an index of resources and materials and a calendar of forthcoming conferences across Canada.

**Let's Talk Families** is available free of charge. For a copy, contact:

Family Service Canada  
220 Laurier Avenue East  
Suite 600  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5Z9  
(613) 230-9960  
Fax (613) 230-5884



## Answers to quiz

1.False. In 1990, 45 per cent (144 million) of the world's people 65 and over lived in industrialized nations, 55 per cent (176 million) lived in developing nations. In 2025, the proportion in developing nations is projected to increase to 68 per cent (277 million).

2.c. By about 800 000 persons. A majority of the growth is in developing countries.

3.c. In 1992, 18 per cent of Sweden's population was 65 or older, compared to about 13 per cent in the United States and Japan.

4.c. 50 years.

5.b. Another 27 per cent live in Europe, and 18 per cent live in Asian countries other than China.

6.a. 79 years.

7.c. Malawi.

8.True. About two in three older people live in rural areas compared to about one in four in industrialized countries.

9.True overall, but there are exceptions such as India, Bangladesh, and Egypt.

10.a. Japan (10 per cent). Sweden's is the highest, at 40 per cent. Data are from the 1980s. In developing countries, most older people live with others.

11.c. United States (35 per cent in 1986).

(Based on a quiz published in **An Aging World II**, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993.)

### Start planning now!

Canadians will soon have the perfect opportunity to focus on seniors' important role in the family. June is **Seniors Month** across the country, and during **International Year of the Family 1994**, what better way to honour older Canadians than by acknowledging their many contributions to family life? If you want to get involved and have something special in mind, or if you just need to find out what events are on in your area, contact your provincial or territorial ministry of health or social services for information.