

October 2009

Up Front-Bill Poole



Our Scots Bay Seniors group got started in April of 2008. I had heard about the Positive Aging funding available

through the Department of Seniors, and a small group of us applied for and received funding to start a seniors' group. The overall aim of the program was to maximize independence for seniors by allowing them to remain in their homes as long as they wish, to take advantage of assistance available and to participate in social activities in the community. Since its startup, Scots Bay seniors have been a great success—we tried to take a two week break this past summer, but the local seniors wouldn't allow it! Since its start-up, the group has been meeting 50 weeks of the year.

Scots Bay is a somewhat isolated community on the Fundy Shore near Cape Split: wholly dependent on one's means of travel. The nearest store is in Canning, 22 kilometers away, and the nearest gas station is even further (35 kilometers) in Kentville or New Minas. Seniors in our small community "over the mountain" tend to stay close to home. For some, transportation is a barrier. Bringing opportunities and

activities into our community was an important first step. We've had several successes, and a few disappointments, like running up against insurance issues when trying for a volunteer driver program, and not getting the literacy funds we applied for recently.

The seniors' group meets every week, offering a variety of activities. Monthly we have a "Lunch and Learn" organized by Cochrane's Pharmacy, which is always sure to bring our numbers up! Our numbers also increase in summer with the annual migration of cottagers participating. Guest speakers are arranged and other activities and outings are planned. A recent partnership with Cochrane's Pharmacy will allow us to offer foot clinics at a subsidized rate, in addition to other sessions on health issues. This is important for seniors who can't get out to the larger centres, or who can't afford the \$30 to \$40 for foot care services. Help with grass cutting in summer, snow plowing in winter and minor home repairs are some of the other services the group offers.

There are many isolated seniors and communities in Nova Scotia who rely on seniors' groups like ours and the efforts of volunteers. With the lure of the internet and the fast pace of life today, it is sometimes difficult to slow down and focus on needs close to home. People are living longer and healthier lives today, and there is soon to be a whole new crop of emerging seniors with

ideas and energy. I can speak from personal experience about the rewards of putting this energy into my community.

Bill Poole joined the Community Links Board in June 2009. Originally from Montreal, he has called Scots Bay his “Home Port” since 1995.

Engaging Seniors through People’s Schools - Sandra Murphy



Sandra (right) with presenter Irene Rose “The ABC’s of Policy Engagement” at People’s School 2008 in Debert

Plans are well underway for a Community Links Mini People’s School which will be held at the Tatamagouche Centre in Tatamagouche on November 20th, 2009. The North Shore Community

Health Board is an active partner in the event. A particular focus for the day will be Transportation and Supportive Communities and, as with other similar events, training will be given in Leadership and Public Policy Engagement.

One of the goals under the Community Links’ 2008-2011 Strategic Plan is to “support the engagement of Nova Scotia’s Seniors in healthy public policy”. In fact Community Links has been contributing to this goal since 2003 and every year has tried to undertake at least one initiative which contributes to this effort.

In 2008 Community Links revisited a previous method of involving seniors by reinstating a popular approach from the past. A People’s School was held at Debert for

approximately 80 seniors from around the province for two days of learning and skills development in an informal and fun format. The event focused on the provincial *Strategy for Positive Aging*, looking at what had been achieved since its introduction in December 2005, and how seniors could contribute to its implementation and monitoring.

Building on this event, but also with the understanding that we needed to reach more seniors, in the winter of 2009 Community Links held two very successful Mini-Peoples’ Schools in Shelburne and Kingston. Each event attracted between 40 and 50 local seniors and engaged numerous local partners in the planning and running of the day. Again the event focused on informing participants about what was happening for seniors as a result of the *Strategy for Positive Aging* and helped build skills for their local involvement in seniors’ issues. Feedback from these events was very positive and because of this the Board and staff of Community Links is committed to continue this initiative.

In February Community Links hopes to hold a fourth Mini People’s School in the Strait area of the province. A local planning committee will be pulled together in the near future. If your organization is interested in a Mini People’s School in your region, and is willing to help organize, please give us a call at 902-422-0914 or e-mail Sandra Murphy at communitylinks@hfx.eastlink.ca.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Beyond the Card Party: Seniors Clubs and Organizations in 2009

Besides individuals aged 55+, there are two main types of groups that make up Community Links membership: seniors' clubs and organizations on the one hand, and on the other hand, organizations that serve the needs of seniors, like VON, Senior Safety, regional agencies, and Community Health Boards.

In his Up Front article, Bill Poole talks about how the Scots Bay seniors ' group provides social gatherings as well as educational programs and health services such as foot clinics in its small community on the Fundy Shore. While each seniors' group is unique, most groups now follow a similar pattern: working to meet the social as well as the health and recreational needs of seniors in the community. In our increasingly complex world, many seniors clubs have been challenged to respond to a wider variety of wants and needs, and many of them are meeting that challenge!

The large (over 200 members) **55+ Club** in New Glasgow for example, combines health and fun by offering Tai Chi, line dancing, cribbage, dances, and corn boils as well as monthly guest speakers. In contrast, the small but mighty **Shamrock Club** of Canso reaches out to seniors in rural communities of Guysborough County offering a visiting program for those who cannot get out to socialize. **Valley Caregivers Support Group** has an even more dedicated purpose-to offer support to those providing care for a friend or family member. Meanwhile, the seniors of **Lake Loon/Cherry Brook** near Dartmouth are helping with sustainability and food security by organizing community gardens.

Many members of these seniors groups are also members of numerous other community organizations. This provides for a dynamic way to exchange information, provide services, and work together to solve local issues. Two excellent examples of this are two of Community Links' Past Presidents: Prem Dhir (Multicultural Association of Colchester County) and Carol Welch (Island Super Seniors). These two seniors wear multiple hats in their communities. Both are active in their area Preventing Falls Together Coalitions. Carol is very active in the local Historical Society, and in many other initiatives in her small island community of Westport, Brier Island. Prem is a member of the Human Rights Commission, and among other things, offers computer training and tax preparation to seniors in the community of Truro. As the saying goes "If you want something done, ask a busy person!"



Busy people and
Past Presidents
Carol Welch and
Prem Dhir at our
AGM in June.

It is clear that seniors clubs are not just for the benefit of seniors. Besides the many volunteer hours they put into their communities, many seniors' clubs raise thousands of dollars each year for causes like the IWK, Christmas Daddies, and many more local causes.

Our member organizations also face several challenges. For example, many of our senior clubs mention dwindling membership as a concern. Attracting the new generation of "baby boom" seniors may require some changes. With help from partners in the community, these challenges will be met!

Welcome to our new Board Members

Community Links' new board members attended their first board meeting and orientation session on October 4 and 5.

The new members are:

Wayne Burley

District 4 Colchester/East Hants

Elizabeth Henri

District 7 Strait Area

Emerson Jessome,

District 8 Cape Breton

Bill Poole

District 3 Annapolis-Kings



Seniors and Gambling

Community Links, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation,

Department of Seniors and RCMP Community Policing Services is coordinating a project aimed at discovering the gambling habits and attitudes of Nova Scotia's seniors. An informal survey conducted in Summer 2009 revealed some of the following ideas about seniors and gambling:

- The most popular gambling activities for seniors are bingo, scratch tickets, and lottery tickets.
- The main reasons for playing include social interaction and the possible financial gain.
- It is believed that people gamble more after retirement because they have more free time. Over 40% thought that seniors would gamble less if more recreation activities were available.
- Over 75% of respondents had heard of promotions aimed at getting seniors to

gamble, with local bus trips to casinos being the most popular method.

- Almost 90% of respondents knew of the Problem Gambling Help Line (toll free 1-888-347-8888), but only 27.5% believed that seniors were aware of it as well. The Help Line is run by Health Promotion and Protection and offers professional counselling for those who feel they may have a gambling problem.

Focus groups with seniors are being held this fall for a first hand perspective on the issue. For more information on the project, please contact Sandra Murphy, Executive Director of Community Links at communitylinks@hfx.eastlink.ca or 902-454-8141.



55+ Games 2009: Chebucto Links has Gold Medal Winners!!

On September 24-27, NS 55+ Games were held in Yarmouth, NS. Through fundraising efforts, Chebucto Links (a long time member of Community Links, providing programs for seniors in Central Halifax) supported 10 members to participate in the games. Joy McKay, Program Director and Volunteer Manager at Chebucto Links accompanied the group as "Team Manager". Joy is also HRM representative on the Board of Directors for the NS 55+ Games and said "our group had an awesome time in Yarmouth!" Chebucto Links members participated in Scrabble, Cribbage and Bridge Tournaments. The highlight for the group was when team members Frances Beed and Mary O'Hearn won the Gold Medal in the Cribbage Tournament. Congratulations to them and all the participants at the Games!



Preventing Falls Together

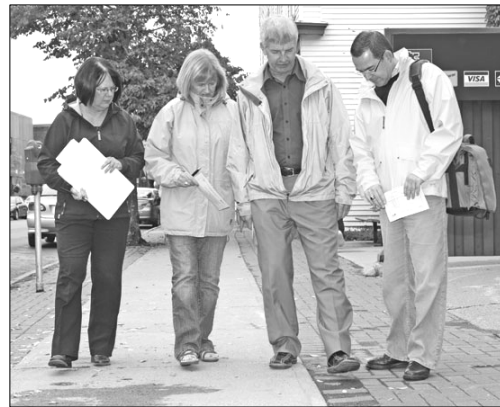
~a program of Community Links

Falls Prevention Week 2009 November 22-28 Celebrate With Us!

This November, Falls Prevention Week will be observed from November 22 to 28, 2009. Our Preventing Falls Together Coalitions are planning a variety of activities, but we hope everyone will take the opportunity to become involved. Following are some ideas for how individuals and groups can help spread the falls prevention message during Falls Prevention Week, or at any time of the year!

- Do a falls prevention check of your home. Look for loose carpeting, clutter (especially on stairs), poor lighting, and other household hazards that might cause a fall.
- Organize a Falls Prevention walkabout. Walk around your neighbourhood with a friend or a whole group, noting (and perhaps photographing) hazards that might lead to falls. Then talk to your municipality about having these hazards fixed.
- Invite a guest speaker to your group's November meeting to talk about falls prevention.
- Hold a lunch and learn session at your workplace-offer a few tips about how to make the workplace safer from falls.

- Have a brainstorming session with your group to see how you can use falls prevention strategies at your activities and events.
- Ask your Municipality to declare Falls Prevention week in your community
- Ask your local library to do a Falls Prevention Week display.



Recently, a Falls Prevention Walkabout was held in the Town of Antigonish with Preventing Falls Together Coalition members and municipal representatives. Photo by Heather MacAdam. The Casket

- Help a senior in your life replace loose scatter mats, install a grab bar in the bathroom, place nightlights in the house, and generally fix any falls hazards that you can identify

Need help? Lots of resources about falls prevention are available on our website: www.preventingfallstogether.ca, or contact a PFT staff person in your area. Contacts are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Coalition Update

Wondering what your local Preventing Falls Together Coalition is up to this fall? On October 29 and 30, Coalition members from around the province will meet at Holiday Inn Truro for *Preventing Falls Together for Age Friendly Communities: Conference 2009*. Meanwhile, each Coalition is carrying out its own plans for making our communities more age friendly and fall safe. Here's a brief rundown in alphabetical order on just a few of the activities on the go.

Annapolis Kings is gearing up to participate in the *Fall Proof Your Hair Salon* project and will reinstate the popular Falls Prevention Christmas Wish List.

Antigonish has focused on walkabouts of Main Street with municipal council members to identify falls hazards. Completing a falls prevention checklist of the county municipal building is next on the agenda.

Cape Breton Regional Municipality has Plans to expand its popular grit bag project. This year, reusable, refillable grit bags are on the order list, with more partners involved in distributing the bags.

Colchester East Hants, in collaboration with CEH community health boards, will have community members dining in style with their *Fall Proof Yourself* placemats for use at community and church suppers throughout the area.

Cumberland knows the importance of physical activity in preventing falls. This Coalition is conducting a physical activity survey of seniors clubs in conjunction with a number of community partners.

Digby and Area has also produced a Falls Prevention placemat, and continues working with local business owners with its *Fall Proof Your Place of Business* project.

Guysborough is where the grit bags all started, and Coalition members are continuing this seasonal venture as well as promoting the Home Support Exercise Program in the Community.

Halifax Regional Municipality is focused on footwear, and has developed a footwear report card to draw attention to the relationship between improper footwear and falls.

Lunenburg will revisit the popular *Fall Proof Your Place of Worship* project this fall, and is continuing to provide talks in the community.

Pictou County Coalition continues to develop its falls reporting hot-line. Meanwhile, member Joe Van Buskirk has done a complete falls hazard walkabout of the town of Stellarton and prepared a report for Council.

Queens will conduct a survey asking *How Age Friendly is Your Community*. They will also be producing *Falls Prevention Wish List* in poster form for display throughout the community.

West Hants-Cobequid, last but not least, continues its close partnership with Senior Safety to offer falls prevention checks and talks for a number of community organizations.

To get involved with a Preventing Falls Coalition in your area, contact the appropriate staff person listed on the last page of this newsletter

Coalition Profile:

Betty Currie and Hope Bridgewater



If you live in the community of Wentworth, Nova Scotia, and if you want to lead an active life, opportunities abound. Whether you dance away a Sunday afternoon at the recreation center, climb to the top of High Head, attend a meeting of the Wentworth Pioneers or a local church group, ski or walk a local trail, you will find seniors participating actively, every step of the way.

Two such seniors are Betty Curry and Hope Bridgewater. Both are active in the Wentworth Pioneer Heritage Seniors Club, attend the Cumberland County Preventing Falls Together coalition meetings and organize community functions as they see fit. Both are members of the Cumberland County Seniors Council. Betty is president of the Wentworth Recreation Center, which is busy this time of year with Fall Leaves Weekend and their annual Christmas craft fair in November, both huge events attracting hundreds of people.

Betty is a retired public school teacher and Hope is a retired librarian. They have been lifelong friends and always ready for a challenge, especially when it comes to promoting health and preventing disease among the senior population. They are so proud of their community and “Chilkoot” Bob, an 85+ year old who leads hikes to the top of High Head in the Wentworth area mountains, and octogenarian Joe Patriquin,

who still laces up his skates. They encourage seniors to live active lives by participating in their community. They have taken a look at the churches in the Wentworth valley and helped advocate for more falls prevention measures.

While Betty has been organist of her church for 63 years, Hope tackles church from another angle. She is updating histories of the clergy in Wentworth from 1871, and is active director in the local CAP site. Hope and Betty are both members of the Wentworth Community Development Council.

As well as being active in many community pursuits, Hope is a fan of books by mail from the Cumberland County regional library and she does some freelance writing for weekly community newspapers.

Ageism is discrimination, says Hope, and her mission is to ensure every senior is seen and heard and doesn't become invisible.

As Wentworth gears up for events in the 2011 Canada Winter Games, both are encouraged that improvements to recreational facilities will leave a lasting legacy for everyone in the community to enjoy.

If the Shoe Fits- It might Prevent a Fall!



Falls and long term foot problems can often be prevented by choosing the correct footwear for everyday wear, walking, sports. Below are some footwear facts and advice from the experts about how to stay on your feet in comfort.



Women develop bunions and other shoe related foot problems five times more often than men.



High heels pitch the body forward, affecting balance and gait, placing stress on the ankle, and increasing the risk of falls.



A narrow toe box can cause calluses, bunions, nerve damage, and a host of other long term problems.



Footwear that slips on easily also slips off easily-and can cause a fall.



Going about in sock feet greatly increases the risk of falling. Wearing supportive shoes or slippers reduces the risk.

Tips for choosing the right shoes:

- What is your arch type? Feet with high arches tend to need extra cushioning, while those with flattened arches often need shoes with lots of support.
- Go by fit, not size. Shoe sizes are not standard.
- Feet change size and shape over time, and one foot may be longer or wider than the other. Have your feet measured and fit the largest foot first.
- The shape of the shoe should match the shape of the foot. If the foot looks wide, then the shoe should have a wide toe box.
- Hold the shoe in both hands at opposite ends, and bring your hands together. Ideally, the shoe should only bend at the ball of the foot, which matches the movement of the foot.

- Lace-up shoes provide the flexibility to give a snug fit. If laces are difficult, choose a good quality Velcro closure.
- Shoes with a removable insole are a good choice, since the insole can be replaced to provide good cushioning.

Thanks to Certified Pedorthist David Putnam of Foot Solutions for his expert input to this article.

Medication Review: Another Falls Prevention Tool

A Medication Reviews Service is now available to Nova Scotia seniors. The service is provided by community pharmacies and gives the pharmacist and patient the chance to work together to avoid health problems and potential falls that can come from interactions of medications.

The service is available to all seniors. It is provided at a reduced rate to those registered with the Nova Scotia Seniors' Pharmacare Program (certain criteria must met for Pharmacare coverage).

The service starts with an appointment with your pharmacist, who reviews all of your medications, including those that are over-the-counter, as well as your medical history. Further information may be requested from your doctor. After the analysis, your pharmacist will meet with you again to explain any recommendations they may have.

To arrange for a medication review or for more information, contact your local pharmacy. For general information about the Nova Scotia Seniors' Pharmacare Program, call toll-free at 1-800-305-5026.

Seniors: Some Facts and Figures

The Nova Scotia Department of Seniors recently released a report called *Seniors' Statistical Profile 2009*. The report reveals some interesting facts about Nova Scotia's aging population—and it is aging! The projection is that our population age 65 plus will increase from current 15.4 % to over 21% by the year 2020.

Other interesting facts include:

- Seniors are very generous! 95% of senior households give to charity. On average, seniors over the age of 65 donated \$2354 to charity in 2006, almost double the Nova Scotia average.
- In spite of income security programs for seniors, 11% of Nova Scotia seniors were living below the low income cut off (LICO) in 2006. Two-thirds of seniors in economic hardship were women living alone.
- Lunenburg is the town with the largest percentage of seniors at 29%.
- 24 % of Nova Scotians in the 70-79 age group have diabetes.
- Only 7% of Nova Scotians over age 65 are daily smokers, compared to 13% in the 55-64 age range.
- After English and French, the next most common languages spoken by Nova Scotia seniors are German, Dutch and Italian.
- The number of seniors who are still working in paid employment has risen by 60% between 2001 and 2006.
- About 43% of seniors own pets, which is less than the Nova Scotia average of 64%.

The full statistical report and lots of other information for seniors can be obtained from the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors by calling 1-800-670-0065

Protecting Your Savings



In these times of recession, some seniors may worry about whether their savings and investments are safe. What happens if your bank goes bankrupt?

The Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC) insures that individual deposits up to \$100,000 are protected in the event of a bank failure. There is no need to register with the CDIC. If you have deposited money in a major Canadian financial institution your deposit is covered. The service is free, as the program is financed by the member institutions.

Seniors who may rely on their savings accounts need to be aware of the CDIC and the protection it provides. Deposits eligible for insurance with the CDIC include:

- savings and chequing accounts;
- term deposits, such as guaranteed investment certificates (GICs), with a maturity of less than five years; and

The insured deposits up to \$100,000 must be paid in Canada, in Canadian currency.

However, the CDIC doesn't cover everything. For example, the CDIC does not insure:

- foreign currency deposits;
- Treasury bills; and
- investments in mortgages, stocks or mutual funds.

Talk to your bank or financial advisor to find out which of your savings are protected, and which are not. This will help you make good decisions about how to balance your investments.

For more information about CDIC and a full list of participating member institutions, please visit www.cdic.ca or call toll-free 1-800-461-2342.

Harvest Time

Many of us who have community and home vegetable gardens in Nova Scotia have been busy harvesting this fall. Here is an interesting recipe that combines winter squash with two of Nova Scotia's best loved fruits:



Baked Squash with Blueberries

3 acorn squash
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries

1/2 tart apple, peeled and diced
6 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
6 teaspoons butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Cut squash in half lengthwise and remove fibers and seeds.

In a medium bowl, mix together blueberries, diced apple, brown sugar, and butter. Fill squash halves with blueberry mixture.

Place in an ungreased casserole dish; add 1/2 cup water around the squash. Cover and bake 50 to 60 minutes. remove cover and bake another 10 minutes or until squash is tender. Remove from oven and serve immediately. Makes 6 Servings.

Squash tips:

- When water is used in cooking the squash, the quantity of water should be kept small to avoid losing flavor and nutrients.
- Once a squash is cooked (by steaming or baking), the flesh of the squash can be stored frozen until needed.

On the lighter side:

In the spirit of the phrase "laughter is the best medicine", here are some lesser known definitions of medical terms.



ANTIBODY against everyone

ARTERY the study of fine paintings

BACTERIA back door to a cafeteria

BANDAGES The Rolling Stones

BARIUM what you do when CPR fails

BENIGN what you be after you be eight

BOTULISM tendency to make mistakes

CAESAREAN SECTION a district in Rome

CARDIOLOGY advanced study of poker playing

CAT SCAN searching for a lost kitty

CAUTERIZE made eye contact with her

DILATE to live longer

MINOR OPERATION somebody else's

NITRATE lower than day rate

NODE was aware of

PARALYZE two far-fetched stories

POST-OPERATIVE a letter carrier

TIBIA country in North Africa

URINE opposite of "you're out"

Source-the Internet



Notes and Notices

Peoples Schools 2009

Get connected with your community by attending the third Community Links mini-Peoples School planned for November 20, 2009 at the Tatamagouche Centre in Tatamagouche, NS. Focus for the day will be *Transportation and Supportive Communities*, along with workshops on *Leadership and Policy Development*. Call 422-0914 for more information, or email communitylinks@hfx.eastlink.ca

New Horizons for Seniors

New Horizons has issued a call for proposals for Capital Assistance Funding Grants of up to \$25,000 for upgrading community facilities and equipment related to existing programs and activities for seniors. Deadline for proposals is **November 6, 2009**. For more information, call toll free 1-800-277-9914 (Press 0 to speak to an agent.)

Refresh Your Driving Skills

If you are age 65+ and hold a valid Nova Scotia drivers license, you are eligible for a free driving skills refresher course offered through the Nova Scotia Government Retired Employees Association (NSGREA). The course is called *the Older Person Safe Driving Program* and it involves six hours of classroom instruction over a two day period. Your driving record will not be affected by taking this course. For more information, call 1-800-677-8666 or visit www.nsgrea.ca.

Mentors Needed

Are you interested in providing your expertise to small rural charities in Nova Scotia? The **Atlantic Charities Learning Exchange** project is looking for individuals who are familiar with (or interested in becoming more familiar with) the *Registered Charities Information Return* and sharing their knowledge with small rural charities. If you are interested in this worthwhile volunteer opportunity, please contact Brenda.Mackinnon2@ns.sympatico.ca or call 902-863-5040

How Canada Performs: A Report Card on Canada

Produced by the Conference Board of Canada, this report assesses Canada's quality of life compared to peer countries. There is an overall report card and individual ones measuring performance in six categories. The reports on Economy, Society and Health have been released. The other three topics, Education and Skills, Innovation, and Environment are coming soon. To learn more, visit:

<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/HC/P/default.aspx>

☹️ **One finding from the Report Card:** *Canada generates more waste per capita than any other country in the Conference Board ranking.*

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