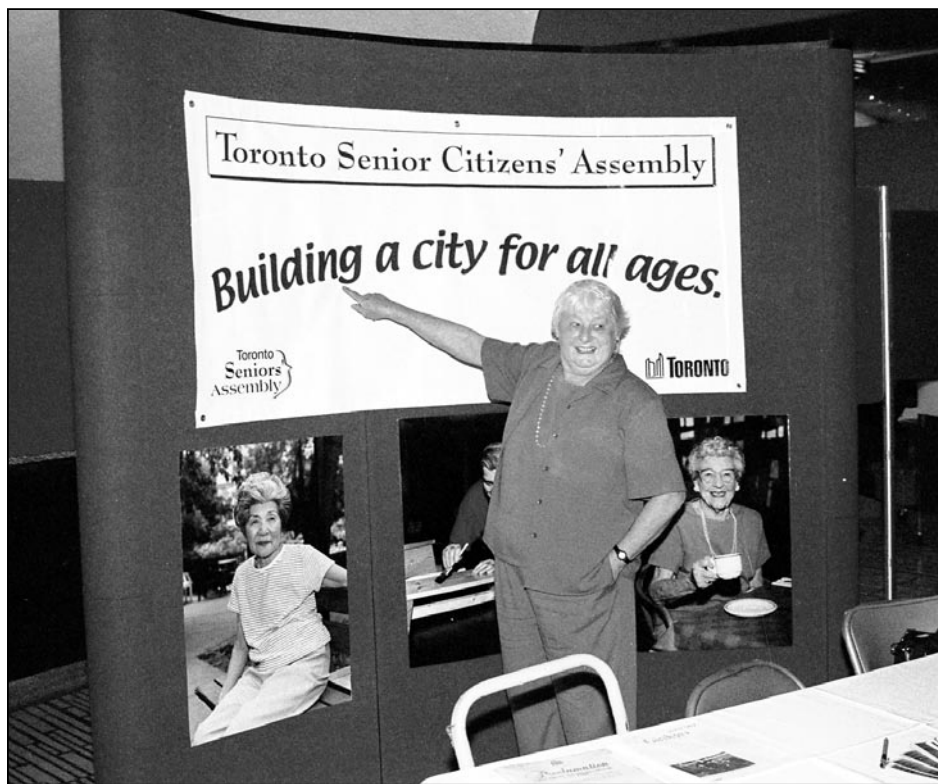


**EDITION ONE****A message from the Seniors' Advocate****Hello to everyone in this holiday season**

We are back with the latest issue of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly newsletter. As you read on, you will find a wide range of informative and interesting material that relates to the lives of seniors, and others, in the City of Toronto. As the Seniors' Advocate for our city, I am going to use this opportunity to take a step back and ask why it is that seniors' issues are not seen as sexy.

Why is it that our Prime Minister does not identify himself as a senior citizen? Or our former Minister of Finance, or our Mayor? The reason is surely that they see it as a disadvantage to be identified as seniors. They are worried that they will be perceived by the voters as too old, too frail, too out of touch if they acknowledge publicly what all informed voters already know, their age. Obviously they don't think of themselves as too old, too frail and so on.

Rather than put themselves forward as proof that the widespread stereotype of seniors as unable to make a contribution to society is unfounded, they pass



up the opportunity to call attention and celebrate the fact that age is no barrier to extraordinary achievement. Many years ago, Franklin Roosevelt governed the United States from a wheelchair, but rather than use the opportunity to advance the cause of persons with disabilities, he chose to assume that people were not ready to re-examine their pre-conceived views about disabilities. Leadership is about moving forward, and challenging preconceptions, not working to the lowest common denominator.

When Jean Chrétien addresses the G-8 about international trade barriers, or when he addresses the United Nations about debt forgiveness in Africa, he is doing so as a senior, and not in spite of being a senior. As for sexy, I think I'll take Sean Connery!

Have a wonderful holiday season!

*Anne Johnston.*

Councillor Anne Johnston  
Seniors' Advocate

## What's in a name?

You will notice that this newsletter is called "Edition One" — a name that is only good for one issue. So the hunt is on for the perfect name for a publication that is designed to keep you up-to-date and tuned

in to what's happening at the Toronto Seniors' Assembly.

If you have an idea for a newsletter name, fill it out on the comment form listed on the back page of this newsletter, and the assembly will pick the

best one for the next edition. It's your newsletter, and we are working hard to make sure that every article, every story — and even the name — reflect the issues and the directions members of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly wish to take.

## Executive Committee update

On March 20, 2002, the Toronto Seniors' assembly held its very first meeting with an extensive agenda to cover. A workplan had to be developed to address issues that had arisen at a strategy meeting that had been recently held. The goal of the Executive Committee was to look at the issues brought up in the strategy session, develop a workplan and try to resolve many of the important areas by

prioritizing each item in its area of importance. Since then, the Executive Committee has endeavoured to bring forth

some of the recommendations that had been put to them. Over the short period that the committee has been in existence, it has already completed a number of programs. Examples include creating a profile/promotion kit with a one-page marketing/information sheet that was handed out at Seniors in the



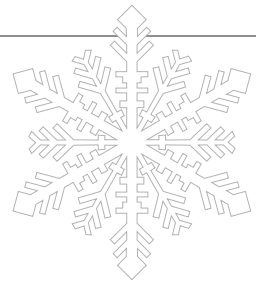
Square in June, and creating a banner to promote the slogan "Building a city for all ages."

We have made changes in the Assembly's Terms of Reference, which were approved by Seniors' Advocate Anne Johnston. And we have sent letters on behalf of the Assembly to numerous organizations welcoming their input and promoting partnerships with us. Presently, we are preparing to

address the forthcoming budget for 2003 from City Council.

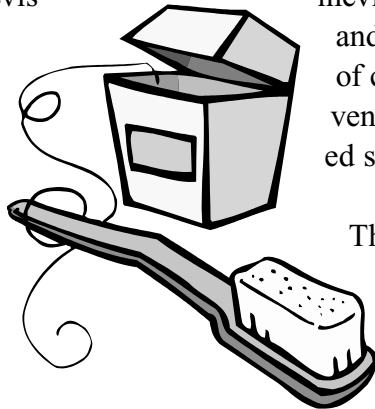
The Executive Committee has a great deal of work ahead of it, and is trying very much to address most of the issues that had been expressed at the Assembly Strategizing meeting. It is an extremely slow process, but although we only meet bi-monthly, we do accomplish a great deal. Please feel free to express to the Assembly any concerns that you may have about issues that affect seniors in Toronto.

– Charles Goeldner



## Speaking out on proposed Public Health cuts

On November 18, 2002, the Toronto Seniors' Assembly presented a deputation to the Board of Health regarding proposed cuts to Toronto Public Health for the 2003 budget. Bea Levis made the presentation, which was prepared with Joyce Lowe, Averil Whalen, Rosa Chan, Norma Wilcox and Margaret Watson.



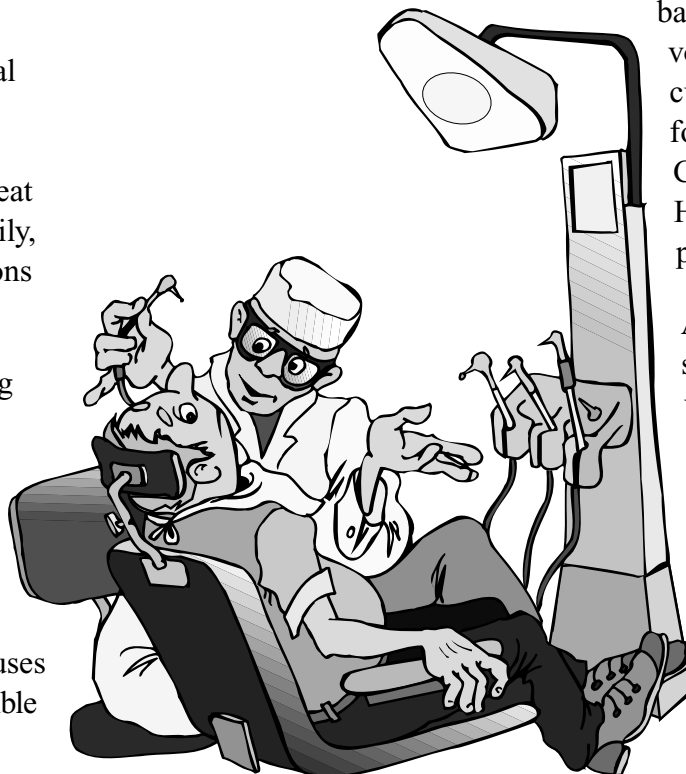
If passed, these cuts will have serious consequences for seniors across Toronto. As we said through our deputation, if these program cuts are approved, seniors "will inevitably end up more ill and require a higher level of costly medical intervention. Truly short-sighted savings!"

The concluding remarks in our deputation included: "The Toronto Seniors' Assembly is asking that services for

seniors be maintained at current levels as a minimum, that it be a priority to invest in prevention

Proposed cuts to the Public Health budget include:

- ◆ Eliminating the Dental Prevention and Treatment Program in Collective Living Centres. Cutting this program (currently available in the South Region, or former City of Toronto) will adversely affect the dental and oral health status of institutionalized seniors. They will not be able to eat properly, socialize as easily, be screened for oral lesions or be relieved of pain.
- ◆ Eliminating programming for vulnerable adults and frail seniors, which will end community programming against elder abuse and eliminate public health response for elderly recluses who are resistant or ineligible for services from other providers.



and education, and that services for a growing seniors' population be planned and budgeted."

We also quoted from Councillor Johnston's recently-released report, "Rebuilding Respect" — "The City must continue to take an advocacy role with senior levels of government in matters pertaining to its citizens' health needs."

The Board heard a number of deputations. The support of other Assembly members at the meeting was appreciated. However, the bad news is that the Board voted to keep the proposed cuts in the budget that goes forward. Not all City Councillors on the Board of Health favour keeping these programs.

Assembly members and any seniors' organization or individual can depute on these items at the meeting of Policy and Finance with Budget Advisory Committee, on February 17 at 9:30 a.m. by calling the City Clerk's Office at 416-392-8032 well before this date.

– Bea Levis

## Progress report cites the good, the bad and the challenges facing Toronto

The report, “Rebuilding Respect: A Progress Report for Seniors,” tells a compelling story of the good things the City is doing to improve the lives of seniors, but it also includes the other side of the coin — the outstanding problems and the challenges the City of Toronto must face if it truly wants to make Toronto a city for all ages.

The progress report reviews the steps the City has taken to respond to the 55 recommendations made by the Seniors’ Task Force in 1999, and sets the stage for the next steps the City has to consider. The report also paints a statistical picture of seniors in Toronto today.

“Rebuilding Respect” cites many examples of successful initiatives by City departments, agencies,

boards and commissions that improve the life of Toronto’s seniors. Examples include an array of cost-effective services for seniors offered by Toronto Public Health, the ongoing implementation of the oversized street sign program, which is making it easier for all citizens to identify streets, enhancements to life-long

learning programs at Toronto Public Library, and the new 2-1-1 phone service that improves seniors’ access to information on community services and resources.

Despite all of the good news stories the progress report includes, it also unearths a troubling side to life for many Toronto seniors. For example, over 12,600 seniors were on the Toronto Social Housing Connections waiting list as of June 2002. Seven out every 10 seniors in Ontario do not have dental insurance. Approximately 6,000 Toronto seniors aged 65 or over are hospitalized each year due to falls. And while investment in prevention initiatives provides a great value for a small cost, such initiatives are not being sufficiently funded, resulting in a need for more costly treatments.





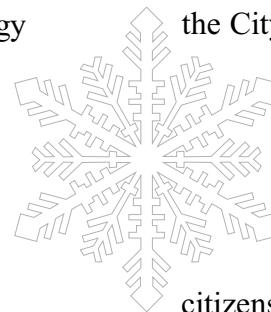
“Whoever called them the golden years was wrong,” said Toronto Seniors’ Advocate Anne Johnston. “I look at all of these really big issues, and I believe they should be called the grey years. There is nothing golden about illness, lack of services, worries over housing or concerns over safety. I really am pleased to see that some significant progress has been made, and that seniors are getting a voice in the City of Toronto. But the ranks of seniors are growing, and their voice needs to grow to make sure that Toronto maintains its commitment to be a city for all ages.”



The progress report outlines a large number of challenges facing the City. For example, City Council is strongly urged to incorporate the needs of seniors as it develops a new Pedestrian Master Plan, and to support a call for a special federal-provincial funding strategy to create affordable housing for seniors. As well, the City is urged to continue to advocate and support health programs that focus on preventing illness and promoting health, rather than on more expensive options that focus on treating the disease only after it has occurred.

The report states that the City needs to continue to act as an advocate with the provincial and federal governments, for the authority, the funds and the ongoing funding commitment to create and maintain critical seniors’ services. At the same time, the City is encouraged to continue to look within, to support and enhance services that are becoming more and more critical as the number of seniors in our city grows.

But the City cannot do this work alone. For the steps to work, for the advocacy to be effective, the City is depending on the continued commitment of the Toronto Seniors’ Assembly, along with many other organizations and citizens that all share a dedication to making Toronto a city for all ages.



## We're looking for correspondents



Do you thrill to the sound of pen meeting paper, or of the mad clicking as you type out a story on your computer? Or do you quake in fear whenever you are asked to write something? Well, it doesn't matter which way you lean when it comes to being a correspondent for this newsletter. We are looking for people who can attend meetings, let us know about events and issues, and generally help us keep connected across the city. If you would like to write an article and submit it, we welcome it. Or if you just want to call someone with information, or send us something in point form, we promise to make you look good in print.

The form on the back page of this newsletter has all of the contact information you will need to submit a story. So put on your correspondent's hats, and send in those stories that your associates across Toronto are just waiting to hear about!



## Introducing the Scarborough Senior Chinese Association

*Over the next few issues of the newsletter, we will be introducing some of the organizations that together help make up the Toronto Seniors' Assembly. Here is the first installment...*

The Scarborough Senior Chinese Association was established in 1979. It is a non-profit organization committed to providing a centre that offers recreational, cultural and educational programs to help Chinese seniors and newcomers in the community. It is a well-known seniors' organization in Scarborough and the Chinese community.

The aims of the Association are:

- ◆ To promote and advance the health, welfare and interests of senior citizens and others in the community.
- ◆ To establish classes for educational, cultural and athletic purposes.
- ◆ To perform community service to further the interests of the community.
- ◆ To provide newcomers with information on Canadian customs and laws.

The association offers its members guided tours in

Ontario and abroad and provides a variety of classes, including Tai-Chi, Luk-Tung Chuen, Cantonese Singing and Opera, Chinese Painting, Chinese Calligraphy, Crochet and Knitting, Modern Music and Photography.

Since 1991, the Adult Education Program Continuing Education Department of the Toronto Catholic District School Board has co-sponsored ESL classes with the association. Through the years, over 1,000 students have graduated from the program.

The association has actively participated in fundraising activities to support the United Way and many other charitable organizations. The centre is well-run by a group of dedicated volunteers without support of government funding. Its welcoming environment enables Chinese Canadian seniors to maintain ties with each other and reach out to the broader community.

For more information, write to the Scarborough Senior Chinese Association at Unit D1, 27 Milliken Blvd., Scarborough Ontario M1V 1V3, or call 416-292-4640.

**The successes and well-being of our children today must be credited to our seniors...**

The Second Annual Golden Seniors Celebration on September 22, 2002 recognized the significant contributions that many seniors have made to the community, and raised funds to benefit seniors through the United Way of Greater Toronto.

This celebration originated in the Ching Dynasty under Emperor Kong Chi. In the olden days, only royalty and families of the emperor's senior officials celebrated this festive banquet. Today it is an exquisite party for families to pay tribute to their beloved seniors who are the deserving guests of honour at the event.

More than 650 people attended the event this year, including four members of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly. The celebration consisted of a delicious dinner, entertainment and souvenir gifts for everyone attending. It was



inspiring to see many young and dedicated volunteers work so hard to make the event a success.

“One of the remarkable aspects of this initiative is to foster the synergy of our young people to work for the well-being of our seniors,” said Rosa Chan, the Founder of the Golden Senior Celebration.

“It is all too rare in our busy 21st century world for young people to take the time to honour the achievements and accomplishments of the grandparents,” said Anne

Johnston, Seniors' Advocate and Chair of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly.

Our population is aging rapidly. A United Way report last year found seniors are being financially squeezed and losing access to critical home-based support services. Some of our older persons are becoming poorer because of the combination of high rents, lack of affordable housing, increasing user fees for drugs, support services and basic community involvement, and lack of knowledge of available benefits.

“Too often, society places little value on our seniors, stereotyping them as frail and weak. This celebration serves to remind us that there is tremendous energy and ability among seniors and that they deserve our respect and gratitude,” said Francis Lankin, President of United Way of Greater Toronto.

– Rosa Chan



## Celebrating Christmas in the Caribbean

*One goal of this newsletter is to include articles that showcases the many different cultures that make up today's seniors in Toronto. Here is a look at holiday traditions in the Caribbean...*

Christmas in the Caribbean, even though similar to the rest of the world, has its own flavour as a result of the many cultures that make up the islands.

Christmas is a time to celebrate with family and friends, and also to be generous to people with low incomes and the more senior members of society. People make a lot a preparations, both at home and at work. At home, it starts with cleaning up the place, both outside and inside. Walls are painted, the lawn is properly manicured, stones and trees are white washed (a small portion of the trunk at the very bottom). In addition, streets, homes, stores, shops, supermarkets, gas stations, you name it, are beautifully decorated. A few days before Christmas, large white yams, fruits, vegetables, etc. are reaped. An animal is killed, a pig or a goat. The produce and meat are shared with the neighbours or there is an exchange or whatever the person has to offer.

Central to the occasion is the church service. Most traditional churches have carol services and Christmas concerts. At the concerts, youngsters act and re-enact the Christmas story both at school and church.

One of the most telling signs of Christmas in the Caribbean is the food. Fruitcakes and sorrel drinks can be found everywhere.

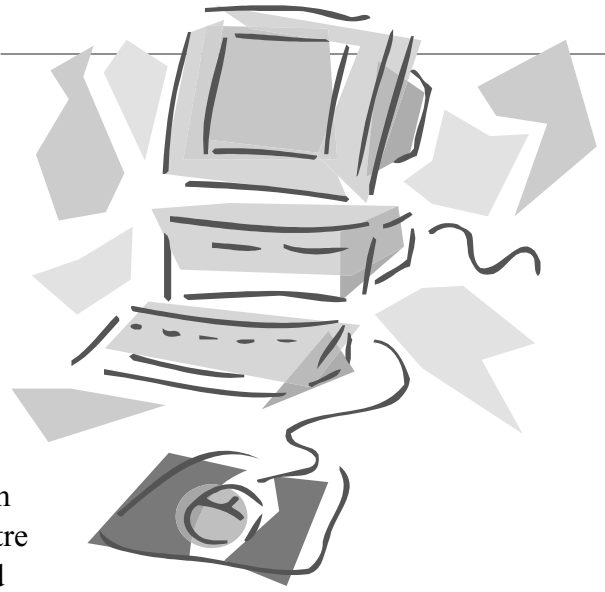
Another prominent feature is the party atmosphere — there are lots and lots of parties.

Christmas Eve is usually an all-night event. In places like Jamaica, there is the Christmas Eve grand market. Vendors spread their wares all over the road and the children are allowed to browse and shop along with their parents.

Finally, the big event, Christmas dinner, this is family time. The preparation of foods would have started from Christmas Eve, with mouth-watering foods from a variety of different food groups. The feast culminates on Christmas, with a good glass of egg punch to top everything off.

— Amy Nelson





## Surfing for seniors at Elder Connections

Four years ago, Doris Pozel, a board member of Elder Connections, a senior organization, got permission from the board to begin teaching seniors how to use a computer. Elder Connections promotes the full involvement and participation of older persons in society.

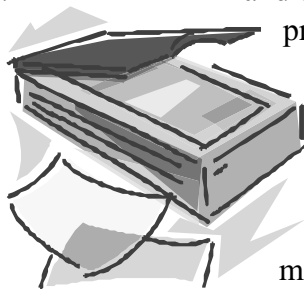
Elder Connections' primary goals are to reduce the isolation of seniors, promote healthy aging, increase community links and social interaction. It achieves these goals through a multifaceted approach to programming. Computer training courses, educational forums on issues of relevance to seniors, and social and recreational activities all contribute to empowering and improving the overall well-being of seniors. The computer training courses have proven to be of great interest to seniors.

Six women attended the first weekly computer class in a computer room loaned by a learning centre located at Yonge and St. Clair. Soon, the very surprised seniors were surfing the Internet, and were sending e-mails to relatives and friends both at home and abroad. They were also doing a good job of distributing flyers printed by Elder Connections advertising the courses, and were succeeding in convincing fellow seniors that there was no truth in the commonly held belief that they were too old to become computer literate.

As the demand for enrolment increased, more volunteer tutors had to be found and new venues located for additional classes. A grant from the Trillium Foundation and an offer of a classroom by the Loyola Arrupe Centre on Bloor St. have provided the Elder Connections computer training program with its biggest opportunity for expansion so far. Classes are now being held on a regular bases six days a week, Monday to Saturday.

Students can also learn word processing. A "know your computer" course that familiarizes them with the different parts of the computer and the functions is also proving to be very popular. Seven former students are now tutors. So great has been the demand for enrolment that there is a two-month waiting list.

One of the results of the program is that Elder Connections now has more computer literate volunteers. Elder Connections is not in a position to provide individual assistance to students who have bought their own computers for home use and are experiencing difficulties in handling them, but there are practice sessions after classes on afternoons when a tutor is available to privately help as needed.



Irma Gutsch, past student, tutor and an avid Internet surfer, said that as a person who spent many years at home looking after her family, the program provided her with an opportunity to do something she would not have done otherwise. Her children bought her a computer for her 60th birthday.

Another student is using the Internet to re-establish contact with former classmates, some of whom are now living in different parts of the world. He is hoping to travel to Australia to visit one of them. Others have become interested in genealogy, or are searching for new recipes to add variety to family meals. A 77-year-old has set up his own Web site.

Classes are conducted in a relaxed atmosphere. "We want students to have fun while becoming comfortable with the technology," says Doris, who is herself a senior.

For more information or to register, call Elder Connections at 416-760-0744.

— Janet Date-Bernard

## Affordable housing: it's the least we deserve

The Older Women's Network (OWN) was founded in 1987 to empower older women to overcome inequalities in the home, workplace and society through:

- ◆ public discussion on issues relating to justice and security for older women
- ◆ action to realize appropriate policies in these areas
- ◆ inclusion of older women in the planning of healthcare programs, community support programs, income support programs and affordable housing.

One of our most outstanding achievements — which recognized the need of senior women for affordable housing — was the vision which became a reality with the construction of the Older Women's Network Housing Co-op in summer 1997.

After a nine-year struggle, the Co-op was built, thanks to the commitment and tenacity of a group of seven women, supported by many others — JUST IN TIME! The OWN Housing Co-op is recognized as the last affordable housing project built after Michael Harris came to power.

And now, Toronto senior women and other citizens are all five years older and growing in numbers while we wait for the province to decide when and how they will match and distribute the federal



housing money they have already received. In the meantime, we appreciate the efforts of the City of Toronto to increase the number of units available for seniors BUT construction of any new affordable housing has not yet taken place. Our organization is working with the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations (OCSCO) and People and Organizations in North Toronto (POINT) to that end.

Many senior women are activists. Many senior women are energetic activists. But not many are VERY energetic activists. Seniors need to have those of us who can, speak and work on their behalf.

There are many senior women who may or may not have been in the workforce, nevertheless they may have spent many years unable to accumulate a pension while caring for children or other family members. They now find themselves with pensions that are inadequate to take care of their own basic needs.

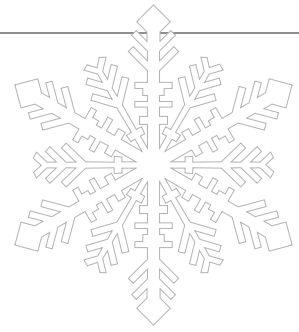
The pride of many senior women has delayed their coming forth in time of personal need. Yet we have observed an increase use by seniors of food banks, often directly related to the higher rents they must now pay. Most have contributed to the growth and development of our city, and/or have served in our armed forces. Surely they are entitled to affordable housing in their final years.

Rental units have been converted to condominiums. Apartments where seniors have resided for many, many years have been renovated, allowing rents to be raised well beyond the level that fixed income seniors can afford. Our organization has members in their 70s working because they cannot survive on their government pension without subsidized housing.

Many senior women need supportive housing with programs to help them stay at home — homecare and home support.

The Older Women's Network urges the City of Toronto through the Community Services Committee to continue, and even increase their efforts to create affordable and humane housing for all Toronto seniors.

– *Excerpts from a deputation by Ruth Brown on behalf of the Older Women's Network at the Community Services Committee meeting on November 7, 2002.*



## The GLBT corner

### A call for stories

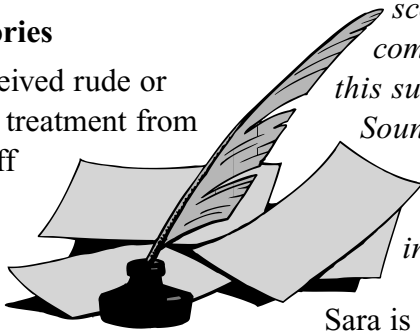
Have you received rude or inappropriate treatment from a medical staff person? Have you been treated well or badly by home care staff?

We need to hear from you.

During the summer, the Older GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered) program hosted a series of community sounding meetings among the various rainbow communities. One issue that came up in every group is the fear queer and trans people have of discrimination and abuse. They fear these things if they require someone to come into their homes to provide nursing or personal care or if they have to move to a care facility (nursing home, home for the aged or retirement home). In these situations, many queer and trans people fear they may have to return to the closet and hide their identities.

To test the validity of these fears and to build a case for advocacy for change, we need to hear about the experiences queer and trans people have had receiving home care or care in a facility. We will ensure anonymity.

For more information, contact Dick Moore by phone at 416-392-6878 ext. 118 or by e-mail at [seniors@the519.org](mailto:seniors@the519.org).



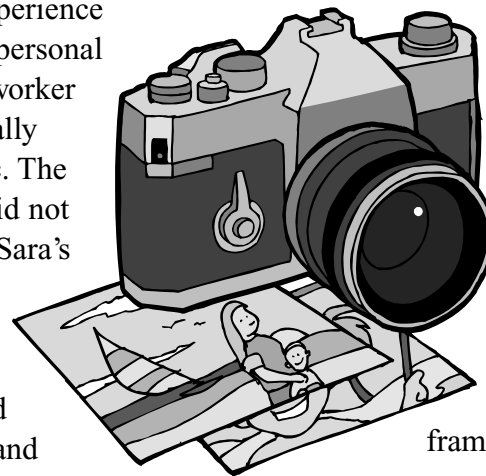
*The following is a fictionalized scenario based on anecdotal comments of participants in this summer's Community Soundings. Names and circumstances have been changed to protect individuals' anonymity.*

Sara is a male-to-female transsexual who transitioned in her 40s. She worked in retail and retired five years ago. Following surgery for a gall bladder attack, she needed a nurse to come in to look after the incision that had become infected. Because she was debilitated, she needed a personal support worker to come in to assist with bathing and hair care.

Sara's experience with the personal support worker was initially traumatic. The worker did not know of Sara's gender status and expressed surprise and discomfort.

### Calling all shutterbugs and creative writers

The Older GLBT program is planning two exciting programs for the new year, focusing on photography and creative writing. Participants will work with professional artists to shape and develop the program to meet their own interests and community needs.



One idea has to do with capturing the images of older GLBT people for display at a show at The 519 during Pride 2003. Another has to do with producing an anthology of short works by older GLBT writers.

The artists who will be involved with the project are Noreen Shanahan and Jennifer La Fontaine. Noreen is a published author, editor whom many know from the exciting memoir writing workshops series, "Rampant with

Memory." Jennifer is a gifted photographer who has shown extensively.

She works with residents in Central Neighbourhood House, teaching camera and processing skills within a community economic development framework.

The 519 program will begin in the new year. If you have always wanted to write or to take better pictures, or if you are already experienced in either area but want to hone your skills, please contact Dick Moore for more information and to reserve a space. You can reach Dick at 416-392-6878 ext. 118 or by e-mail at [seniors@the519.org](mailto:seniors@the519.org).

## Update on the Elder Abuse Working Group

The Toronto Seniors' Assembly has established a Working Group to focus on Elder Abuse. This is in response to the action taken by Mayor Mel Lastman in partnership with Toronto residents declaring June 2002 "Elder Abuse Awareness Month." The Toronto Seniors' Assembly recognized this as a priority program. The Toronto Police Services has assigned an officer to serve as the Elder Abuse Co-ordinator.

Elder abuse is defined as any harm done to an older person and that is violent or abusive. Elder abuse is often a crime. A family member, friend, neighbour, landlord, staff in residential facilities or long-term health care facilities, or anyone the older person relies on for basic needs may be the perpetrator.

Abuse can be physical, emotional/psychological, financial or neglect.

The Elder Abuse Working Group has met three times since October 2002 and is defining its mandate in line with the mandate of the Seniors' Assembly:

1. To be a citizen advisory body to Toronto's Seniors' Advocate, advising on seniors' issues
2. To consult with respective communities on City issues affecting seniors, and to bring forward community issues to the attention of the Seniors' Advocate/City
3. To provide expert advice, representing respective community perspectives on City issues affecting seniors
4. To increase its capacity to effectively address seniors' issues in Toronto and to partner with the City in advocating to the senior levels of government.

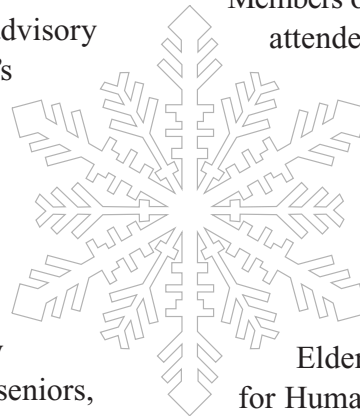
In 1999, a process was undertaken by the City's Grant's Program, which provided funding for an elder

abuse project. In 2002, this has resulted in eight projects being undertaken serving vulnerable, at-risk groups within seniors' communities. Funding amounting to \$84,650 was provided for these projects.

Members of the committee recently attended an Ontario Elder Abuse Conference in Toronto on "Sharing Solutions: Defining the Future." It was sponsored by The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, the Institute for Human Development, Life Course and Ageing, University of Toronto, Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, and Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General.

The conference provided an opportunity to hear about programs that have been in existence in local, national and international communities that address this problem. It is estimated that at least four percent of the population are victims of elder abuse in our society today. This means that 10,000 seniors are potential victims in Toronto. The Working Group will aim at applying the mandate of the Assembly as it develops programs to reduce elder abuse and improve the quality of life for seniors in Toronto and in our society.

– Howard Watson



**Did you know...**

That Charles Goeldner and other representatives from the Elder Abuse Working Group attended a community safety display at Scarborough Town Centre in November 2002?

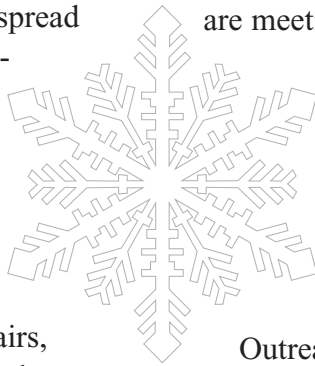
Or that Margaret Watson was a guest speaker at a luncheon meeting of People and Organizations in North Toronto on November 13? Margaret provided an introduction to the Seniors' Assembly and also talked about the Assembly's activities, mandate and successes.

Community events like this offer Seniors' Assembly members an excellent opportunity to spread the word and let the community know what the Assembly is doing. If you are interested in speaking on behalf of the Assembly at local group meetings or displays or community fairs, one-page handouts about the Assembly are available. Just call Jessica Gurley at 416-392-8616 and let her know how many copies you need.



**The committees are up and running**

The following committees of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly are meeting regularly and producing many exciting results:



- ◆ Executive Committee
- ◆ Health Committee
- ◆ Communication, Promotion and Outreach Committee
- ◆ Elder Abuse Working Group.

Watch for updates and highlights of these committees in future editions of this newsletter.



**Important dates for the Toronto Seniors' Assembly**

Mark your calendars. Our Seniors' Advocate and the Toronto Seniors' Assembly Executive encourage as many seniors as possible to attend these meetings and show our support through our presence.

The Seniors' Assembly will be deputing at each meeting.

**Tuesday, January 7, 2003**  
Economic Development and Parks Committee

**Wednesday, January 8, 2003**  
Works Committee

**Thursday, January 9, 2003**  
Community Services Committee

**Monday, February 17, 2003**  
Policy and Finance with Budget Advisory Committee

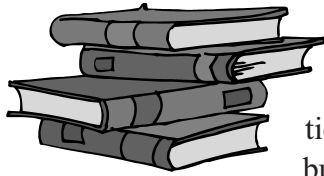
All meetings will be held at City Hall, Committee Room 1, at 9:30 a.m. For more information, contact Jessica Gurley at 416-392-8616.





## Toronto Public Library services for seniors – 2003 budget

The members of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly will be pleased to learn that concerns and needs of Toronto seniors are being recognized and included in the 2003 proposed budget of Toronto Public Library.



The last item allows for one additional session per month at each of 11 Learning Centres (call 416-338-0338 for locations), for a total additional budget for seniors of \$347,925. The staff at Access Services are to be commended for their diligent efforts on our behalf.

Also listed in the proposed library budget is the award of the Proposal for Security Guard services. While the cost is high, \$1,278,759, this service directly affects the comfort and safety of seniors who use the public libraries. I was dismayed to learn that two of the major reasons for security services are drugs and gang control. But we do appreciate the library system for responding to this need.

The budget items requested to enhance seniors' services are as follows:

- a) 5,000 large-print books for \$130,000
- b) 2,000 books on cassettes for \$100,000
- c) an additional Home Library Service staff member plus a delivery van (including gas and maintenance) for \$85,400
- d) additional Internet training for seniors for \$32,525.



At the budget meeting we observed that seniors serve on the Toronto Library Board and therefore are included in the decision-making process. We are very pleased.

P.S. What are our chances of getting a human voice to phone us when reserved books become available?

– Ruth Brown

## Circle your calendar!

### Toronto Seniors' Assembly Forum on Human Rights

Wednesday, April 2, 2003  
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street East

The Toronto Seniors' Assembly is pleased to announce this upcoming forum, which will feature guest speakers and offer many opportunities to network and compare experiences/ approaches to dealing with human rights issues.

The day's featured speaker is Keith Norton, Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Admission: free!

Watch for more details!

## Safe drug use: a guide for seniors

### You should:

- ◆ Tell your doctor and your pharmacist about ALL medicines you are taking. This means prescription and over-the-counter treatments.
- ◆ Tell your doctor and your pharmacist if you have an allergy to any drug.
- ◆ Make sure you know how and when to take a drug BEFORE you start taking it.
- ◆ Make sure you know for how long you will need to take a drug BEFORE you start taking it.
- ◆ Use a medication card to keep track of all the drugs you take.
- ◆ Ask your pharmacist to help you to find a way to make sure you take your medicines when you are supposed to take them.
- ◆ Call your doctor and your pharmacist if you have any side effects.
- ◆ Keep your pills in the same bottle they came in.
- ◆ Ask your doctor about treatments other than medicine.

### You should NOT:

- ◆ Take more or less of a drug than what your doctor tells you to take.
- ◆ Stop taking a drug before you check with your doctor, even if you feel better.
- ◆ Drink alcohol while you are taking a drug, unless your doctor tells you it is alright.
- ◆ Take drugs that were prescribed for someone else.
- ◆ Give your drugs to someone else.
- ◆ Move your drugs from the bottle they came in to a new bottle.
- ◆ Keep old or expired medicines in your home.
- ◆ Keep medicines in the bathroom. Heat and moisture may damage them.

Medication includes prescription, non-prescription or over-the-counter medicines such as cold remedies, laxatives, pain pills, vitamins, herbal, homeopathic and home remedies.

Source: © *Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) 2000*



## Save Our City Forum

**Place:** St. Lawrence Centre

**Date:** May 22, 2003

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. to  
12:30 p.m.

**Panel:** High Level Experts

### Reason:

Our cities are underfunded and declining in all areas. We must learn how? Why? About what we can/must do to make the Province and Feds adequately fund cities.

It's urgent and important that you attend!

**For more information, contact the Alliance of Seniors to Protect Canada's Social Programs at 416-635-8819.**

## Toronto Seniors' Assembly 2003 meeting schedule

**Thursday, January 23, 2003**  
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Toronto City Hall  
Committee Room #2

Please call Jessica Gurley at 416-392-8616 at least two weeks before each meeting to confirm your attendance, or e-mail her at [jgurley@toronto.ca](mailto:jgurley@toronto.ca).

**Thursday, April 10, 2003**  
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Toronto City Hall  
Committee Room #1

**Wednesday, June 18, 2003**

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Metro Hall, 55 John Street  
Council Chambers

**Thursday, September 25, 2003**

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Toronto City Hall  
Committee Room #1



## Tell us what you think

We would like your comments, opinions and ideas on how to make this newsletter valuable to you, our readers. We invite you to drop us a line using the form below.

### Please mail this form to:

Toronto Seniors' Assembly  
c/o Jessica Gurley, Toronto Social  
Development and Administration  
11th Floor, Metro Hall  
55 John Street, Toronto ON  
M5V 3C6  
Or fax the form to us  
at 416-392-8492.

### Edition One, Volume 1 No. 1

This newsletter is published two times per year to inform, educate and advocate for seniors, and to showcase the activities of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly and its members. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Toronto Seniors' Assembly or its members. Articles will be reviewed by an editorial committee, and may be edited.

### Editorial team:

Rosa Chan  
Ruth Brown  
Doris Pozel  
Amy Nelson  
Margaret Watson (ex-officio)  
Charles Goeldner (ex-officio)

**Submission deadline  
for next  
newsletter:**




**Friday, April 5, 2003**

**Editorial and Design Assistance:**  
Community Outreach Support Unit  
Toronto Social Development and  
Administration

Printed in Toronto, Canada  
December 2002

©City of Toronto, December 2002 <sup>(07)</sup>

Articles may be reproduced  
with permission.

 Printed on recycled paper

02-891

## Newsletter Comment Form

Yes! I have a great idea for a future newsletter article:

---

---

---

My comment is...

---

---

---

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

---