

Celebrating Healthy Active Lives

ALCOA Members – Making a Difference for Older Adults





A Note from the
Executive Director

No Need for Winter Blues

The contributors to the winter issue of CHAL, proves the point that we can be active all year, regardless of our age, our geographic location, or the weather conditions outside.

But first we must send out our congratulations to an ALCOA member, Mr. Bill Simpson, from the Elder Active Recreation Association in the Yukon. He was honoured by the Yukon Commissioner, and received the Commissioner's Award for Public Volunteer Service. On behalf of ALCOA we extend our sincere congratulations and our thanks for all your efforts to keep older adults active in your community.

Our stories continue up north, above the Arctic Circle, with their program of Get Active NWT. We know it is never too late to start to be physically active and we have the proof with the 'Boomerinas' and getting back to playing softball.

We have lots of other wonderful stories and programs too. I hope you find this issue of CHAL interesting and that it provides you with some ideas that may work for you in your setting. Please remember that all the authors are happy to share their experiences with you to help you with a program at your facility.

Stay warm and keep active!

Patty Clark
ALCOA National Executive Director



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Contact Information

Active Living Coalition for Older Adults

P.O. Box 143
Shelburne ON
L0N 1S0
Toll Free: 1-800-549-9799
Phone: 519-925-1676
Fax: 519-925-3955
Email: alcoa@ca.inter.net
Web: www.alcoa.ca

Celebrating Healthy Active Lives

Editor: Patricia Clark

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Yukon Commissioner Presents Public Volunteer Service Award

On Friday May 5, 2011, at the ElderActive Recreation Association AGM, Yukon Commissioner Doug Phillips presented a Public Volunteer Service Award to Mr. Bill Simpson for his many years supporting and promoting a healthy lifestyle for Yukon seniors.

Bill Simpson received the 2011 Commissioner's Award for Public Volunteer Service in recognition of his ongoing work with the ElderActive Recreation Association.

The ElderActive Recreation Association, whose motto is "Seniors Helping Seniors to Live Actively in Body, Mind and Spirit", supports active communities for Yukon seniors and has an active membership of 300.

Since 2004, Bill has been involved with the ElderActive Recreation Association, and his contributions include:

- Organizing teams of Yukon seniors attending the Canada 55+ Games every 2 years;
- Serving as the Yukon representative on the Canada Senior Games Board;
- Assisting with fundraising including running weekly Bingos for the past 6 years;
- Community outreach promoting the Canada 55+ Games and encouraging Yukon-wide participation; and
- Helping communities obtain proper sports equipment and training.

The recipient of The Commissioner's Award for Public Volunteer Service is nominated by a



Bill Simpson with Yukon Commissioner Doug Phillips

group of peers who have been directly affected by what the nominee has done. The Awards Committee, which consists of the Commissioner and people from across the Yukon, then determines who will receive the award. The Award for Public Volunteer Service is presented annually to an outstanding individual who has made a significant volunteer contribution to Yukon business, academics, arts, culture or society.

ERA members gathered for the AGM gave a rousing hand of applause in show of great appreciation for all Bill has done. Bill, in his genuinely humble manner, was quick to acknowledge he couldn't have done it all without the tremendous support of his wife, Diana. He then commented, "I am sure someone else deserves this much more than I do"...but those who know of the countless hours Bill has and continues to dedicate were thrilled with this great honour bestowed upon him.

(A Territorial Commissioner is the equivalent to a Provincial Lieutenant Governor.)

Submitted by: Kim Solomon

Active Elders above the Arctic Circle

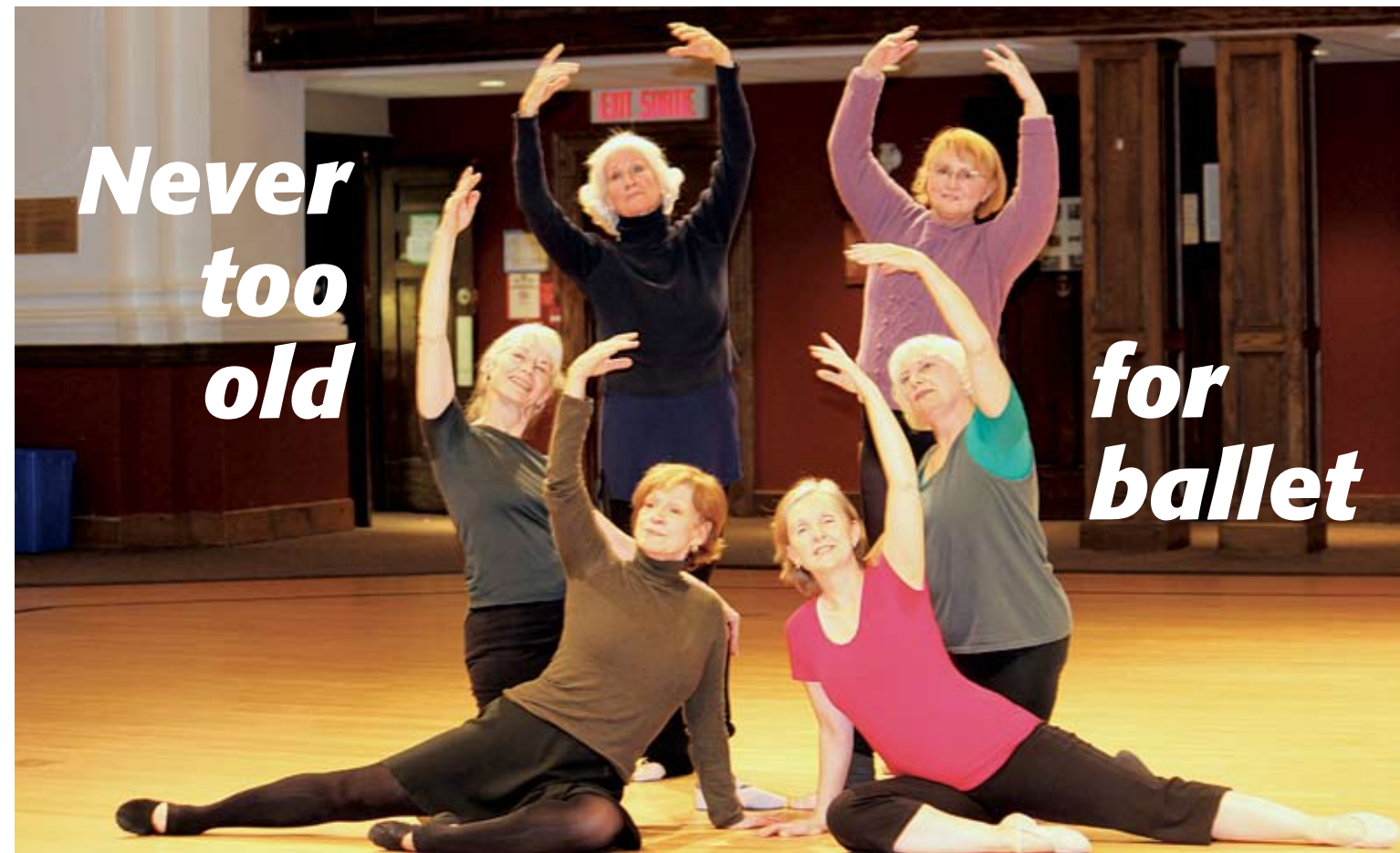


This winter, communities from across the Northwest Territories have been encouraging their Elders to get out of their homes and be more active with the help of the Get Active NWT program. Get Active NWT is a program to get people more physically active and is administered by the NWT Recreation and Parks Association. Community organizations were encouraged to apply for \$750 to organize and deliver three community-oriented physical activity events. This year, six community groups applied to organize events for their Elders. Events were planned in Sachs Harbour, the most northerly community of the NWT, as well as Aklavik, Paulatuk, Fort Simpson, Whati and Nahanni Butte. Events ranged from an Elders checkers tournament to the introduction of Elders-in-Motion exercises. NWT communities are dark and cold in the winter and just getting Elders out of their homes is quite a task. "They are always at home and they sometimes have no one to talk to and I got them together. You should have seen and heard them, just lots of talking." states Doreen Nitsiza of Whati.

In addition to promoting active healthy lifestyles through the Get Active NWT program the NWT Recreation and Parks Association has also helped motivate elders to stay active through the Mackenzie River Nordic Walking Challenge. The challenge to "walk" the length of the Mackenzie River (a distance of 1658 kilometres) took place during January and February, the two coldest and darkest months of winter. 46 teams from 18 communities took part in the challenge. Emma Harper the recreation coordinator in Hay River runs a seniors walking program three times a week for one hour and stated that "During the walking challenge many of the seniors have been recording their walking times outside of the program. The nordic walking challenge has been a great motivator to get many of the participants to do some extra walking and come to the drop in program every week."

To see more details about the Get Active NWT program and the Mackenzie River Nordic Walking Challenge visit www.nwtrpa.org

Submitted by: Sheena Tremblay, NWT Recreation and Parks Association



Several years ago a new class description appeared in the catalogue of the Glebe Community Centre in Ottawa. Advertised with the name "Boomerinas (Boomer Ballerinas)," the Sunday afternoon class was described as follows: "This program is intended for the experienced dancer. Dancers take turns leading barre work, combinations and choreography."

The idea for Boomerinas came from a group of women who had studied ballet when they were younger. Now in their 60's, some had attended class continuously over the years; others had let it go but were missing the music, the movement and the fitness that they had enjoyed in earlier days. Classical ballet is a demanding discipline, and if practice has been neglected, it's very hard to start up again, especially at an older age. The prospect of walking into a commercial studio to join a class of fit (read thin) younger dancers can be quite intimidating. Yet, there is often a deep yearning to reconnect with the familiar exercises of a ballet class with piano accompaniment.

Boomerinas is intended to be a safe place where women who wish to try a real ballet class again feel that they are among friends. Some class members who have a facility for choosing music, preparing exercises and working with the sound system take turns teaching while everyone else does her best, at her own level, to follow along. The atmosphere is very collegial and encouraging. Boomerinas started with a core of women who already knew each other; over the years, several women from the community have become regulars and have expanded the circle of dance friends. We do know that it's not usual for women of our age to be taking ballet, and sometimes ask ourselves "When will we be too old for Boomerinas?" For now, the answer is "Not yet!"

For more information about Boomerinas, contact Janice MacAulay at: macaulay@frp.ca or visit the Glebe Neighbourhood Activities Group website at www.gnag.ca.

Submitted by: Janice MacAulay

Lifelong Learning Builds Independence

Whether it is learning how to use a computer or how to take care of your car, trying new activities has many benefits for older adults. Saskatoon Council on Aging's (SCOA) winter programs are designed for skill development, building independence, and last but not least - having fun.

In partnership with Investors Group Financial Services, SCOA is offering a series of presentations on Financial Management in Retirement. This educational series provides information on topics to consider in retirement years such as estate planning and costs of health care.

On My Own: Women Learning New Life Skills Together is a new component of our lifelong learning programs which are supported by Affinity Credit Union and the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (Saskatoon). *On My Own* workshops give women the tools they need to remain independent and in charge of their own lives, building skills in car care, personal finance, legal management and basic home maintenance. "The program is designed to help people do things on their own," according to Millie Reynolds, a planner of *On My Own*. Older adult women who are caring for spouses, have recently lost spouses, or want to live independently, will benefit from the preparation provided by the workshops. Following the loss of a spouse or partner, women often want to build life skills while men lack social interaction. A complement to *On My Own* workshops, the *Men's Survival Cooking Program* provides opportunities for men to socialize and cook simple nutritious meals. The classes began in 2011 with four sets of classes held throughout the year with another scheduled in 2012.

Completing our program roster, SCOA offers computer classes for older adults and our always popular art classes.

More good news for lifelong learners — research indicates that using the brain in new and stimulating ways may protect against the effects of aging. Lifelong learning supports active and positive aging, which is what SCOA is all about.

The Saskatoon Council on Aging is a non-profit, community-based organization that promotes the dignity, health, and independence of older adults in Saskatoon and area. Visit our website at www.scoa.ca

Submitted by: Virginia Dakinewich, Saskatoon Council on Aging Inc

Community Centre Launches Urban Poling!



Theresa Corman first became curious about urban poling when she won a pair of Urban Poling Nordic walking poles at a conference. She signed up for lessons and quickly "fell in love with the whole concept." Theresa, a fitness leader at the South Gate Centre in Woodstock, Ont., soon became a certified Urban Poling instructor and then started planning a program for her own workplace.

"The response was incredible," says Theresa, recalling the first day of the eight-week session. "We had a limit of 15 participants, and we had a waiting list for that session and quite a few sessions after it."

Nordic walking was unknown in Woodstock at the time, so the Centre promoted the new program with an article in its own newsletter and in the local newspaper. "We also chatted it up in all the fitness classes, word got around and people quickly became interested," says Theresa. A big kick-off class was held in early January when New Year's resolutions were still top of mind.

Why has urban poling been such a hit? According to Theresa, "Urban poling is a wonderful program that can be incorporated into anyone's fitness regime." The 50-plus crowd is particularly attracted to poling because it's more challenging than walking, but doesn't stress the joints the way that running can. The upper body exercise (ideal for bone strengthening) and the four-on-the-floor stability it provides are also big selling features.

Today, three years after its launch, South Gate Centre has expanded its urban poling program and now offers beginner/intermediate and advanced level classes in a local park and on nearby trails. Theresa uses keen participants with excellent technique to help her manage the large classes and teaches the faster walkers to loop back to keep the group together.

The Centre also runs an indoor class using Urban Poling Activator poles (limited to 10 people and designed for those who need assistance with balance). And to promote the program on an ongoing and high-profile basis, "we've created a group called Chicks with Sticks that enters charity walks to give back to the community," says Theresa.

The Centre purchased 20 pairs of poles to launch its program (saving 40% off the retail price) and has re-ordered numerous times. "We lend poles to participants in the beginner/intermediate groups, and they have an option to buy if they enjoy the program. People must have their own poles for the advanced classes."

For more information, contact Mandy Shintani at: www.urbanpoling.com, or Theresa Corman at: theresacorman@yahoo.ca

submitted by Barb Gormley



Staying in the Game

do our best to win but don't really care if we lose. We enjoy teasing each other and telling tales from past games and tournaments. Men do not really enjoy joining fitness classes but many do enjoy team sports so this is great way to keep active and healthy in their retirement. Some of these players also play pickup hockey in the winter so I joined their team the first winter and have continued to play for the past three seasons. I would encourage others who are planning to retire to find an activity that they enjoy and get involved as soon as possible. I am sure that they will enjoy the camaraderie and form new friendships as I did."

The Wrinkled Warriors Senior Slo-Pitch team is one team in a league of 7 (soon growing to 8) in the Simcoe County area which shows it is never too late to get in the game. Their 2011 season was another productive one, celebrating over 15 years of play. The Wrinkled Warriors are one of 7, now 8, teams who practice and play slo pitch ball twice weekly from May to October in the Barrie area. With 21 signed players they averaged about 15 or 16 players per game (too many for effective play) and finished second in their league standings. This league expands throughout the Simcoe County and Muskoka/Central Ontario areas from Huntsville in the north to Wasaga Beach in the west and Orillia to Innisfil's Sandy Cove Acres just south of Barrie, Ontario. The league has been offering slo pitch to those over 55 years of age for over 15 years. Players range in age from late 50's to 80, proving that age is no barrier to a lifetime of sport participation. The league has extended the enjoyment of the game well past the years that many players once turned in their uniforms for the simpler act of sitting and watching from the sidelines.

"Prior to joining I had only met one person on this team so it has been a great experience for meeting new people my age," notes co-convenor, Paul Hunter. "The team is a mixture of players age 57 to 81 years, who all enjoy the game and love to play. Some have difficulty running but we allow substitute runners so this policy allows them continue to play for many more years. We

Sport is a lifelong pursuit and this league offers a niche where other leagues have not.

"From my point of view it's a chance to keep playing a game I love with people more or less my own age in a friendly but competitive setting," says Ian MacDonald, Convenor. "Playing with some of the guys who played into their 80's gives me hope that I may also be so fortunate to do the same thing."

But make no mistake; the level of play has not diminished competition. The 2011 season provided the Wrinkled Warriors with 28 games during the entire 14 week schedule (down from 16 weeks in previous seasons) and no rain outs. It was the first time the league went with an unbalanced schedule with the addition of their seventh team. Therefore a second Barrie team will be added for the 2012 season. Several new players have been recruited through targeted advertising and planning is underway for the creation of 2 balanced Barrie teams, each team blending "new" with seasoned players. All players in the league are looking forward to an interesting and competitive 2012 season.

For more information on this slo pitch program, please contact Heather Kenehan, Recreation Programmer, City of Barrie, Leisure, Transit & Facilities Department, 70 Collier Street, P.O. Box 400, Barrie ON, L4M 4T5. Tel: 705-739-4220 ext. 4773, Fax: 705-737-6939 and email address: hkenehan@barrie.ca.