



# SASKWATCH

Published by Saskatchewan Branch of Consumers' Association of Canada ISSN 1184-0005

Volume 24 Issue 2

June 2008

## CAC/SK Annual General Meeting



Maura & Al Dwyer



Back Row: Maura Gillis-Cipywnyk , Burna Purkin,  
Ruth Robinson, Arne Paus-Jenssen  
Front Row: Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber, Nancy Knoll,  
Sharon Jordan



Diane Aldridge

The Saskatchewan Branch of the Consumers' Association of Canada had its Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon on May 21st. The regular business of the AGM was attended to including: presentation of audited financial statements; approval of budget for the coming fiscal year; appointment of auditor; and committee reports.

Diane Aldridge, Director of Compliance, Office of Saskatchewan Information & Privacy Commissioner, began the evening with an informative talk and slide presentation on *Navigating the Privacy Jungle*. Check out her article on page six - *I Have Information Rights - Who Knew!?*

Al Dwyer, from Consumer Protection Branch, Saskatchewan Justice, received recognition for his many years as a CAC/SK supporter. Maura Gillis-Cipywnyk presented him with a gift and wished him well in his retirement.

The AGM concluded with nominations and election of the New Board of Directors for 2008/2009. They are: Maura Gillis-Cipywnyk (president), Nancy Knoll (secretary), Arne Paus-Jenssen (treasurer). Members at Large: Jane Finnie, Sharon Jordan and Burna Purkin. Outgoing members: Ruth Robinson, Sandra Stotz, Pat Fallis and Betty Secord will remain as active volunteers.

## In This Issue

<b>Message From Ruth Robinson</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Warnings &amp; Recalls</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A Year In Review</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Stroke Awareness Month</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bits &amp; Pieces</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>You Asked - Consumers' Questions</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>I Have Information Rights - Who Knew? 5</b>		<b>Membership/Subscription</b>	<b>8</b>

*SaskWatch* - June 2008

*Publisher:*

Consumers' Association of Canada,  
Saskatchewan Branch (CAC/SK), Inc.

*Editor:*

Brenda Goldsworthy

*Contributors:*

Ruth Robinson

Diane Aldridge

Maura Gillis-Cipywnyk

Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber

*Production & Design:*

Brenda Goldsworthy, Diane Boyle

**Consumers' Association of  
Canada (Saskatchewan Branch)**

#306 - 220 3rd Avenue South

Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 1M1

Phone: 306.242-4909

Fax: 306.955-5810

Toll free: 1-888-395-5661

Email: office.cacsk@sasktel.net

Website: www.consumersask.com

Office Hours: Tuesday to Thursday  
(8:30 am - 1:30 pm)

*Office Administrator:*

Annemarie Buchmann-Gerber

Consumers' Association of Canada,  
Saskatchewan Branch, active since 1947,  
is a non-profit, volunteer-driven  
association committed to fairness in the  
marketplace and improving the quality of  
life for consumers. Through information  
and education, CAC Saskatchewan assists  
consumers make wise use of personal  
resources and endeavours to represent the  
consumer interest, in marketplace issues,  
with business and governments.

**CAC/SK Board of Directors  
2008-2009**

*President:* Maura Gillis-Cipywnyk

*Treasurer:* Arne Paus-Jenssen

*Secretary:* Nancy Knoll

*Members-at-Large:*

Jane Finnie

Burna Purkin

Sharon Jordan

# Message from Ruth Robinson



CAC/SK is trying to get a couple small groups together, each around a particular consumer issue. Each group would meet informally, look at what CAC is already doing, discuss consumer concerns, learn more about the issues, and try to identify actions which might be taken. We thought that we would start with food. Some issues regarding food might be:

- **Food baskets:** already doing them in Saskatoon. Could this be expanded to other communities?
- **“Made in Canada” on the label:** what does this really mean? Is there a concern and if so, what might we do?
- **Ingredient listing:** is it complete enough?
- **Buying locally:** are the signs in stores adequate?

These are a few points that come to mind. You probably have others. Are you interested?

Suggestions for other small groups and possible issues are:

- **regulation of public utilities:** discussion on the use of utility profits to sponsor events
- **financial matters:** banks, pay day loan establishments, cheque cashing, credit cards
- **consumer education:** in the schools and for adult groups
- **health:** improving the quality of life of people waiting in hospital for long term care

We would like to hear your ideas and comments and, best of all ... would you consider being part of a group? Please call me at 374-8572 and/or the office at 242-4909.

## Before Making Purchases Contact Us

The Saskatchewan Consumers' Association operates a consumer help office that serves all of Saskatchewan. If you want to check into a product prior to purchasing, if you experience problems in the marketplace, or if you need information on your rights and responsibilities, contact us at: 306.242-4909, Toll free: 1-888-395-5661, Fax: 305.955-5810, Email: office.cacsk@sasktel.net

*SaskWatch* is available on line. Check out our web at:

**www.consumersask.com.**

# Saskatchewan Consumers' Association

## A Year In Review

- Provincial legislation - *The Payday Loans Act* - was passed to protect consumers using the Payday Loan industry. Regulations will be drafted within the new fiscal year.
- The province's *Gift Card Legislation* has been passed with regulations to be developed over the next few months.
- *The Prairie Summit on Consumer Issues*, held last September, provided an opportunity to bring together representatives from Manitoba and Alberta consumer groups, plus members of CAC/SK. Issues such as buying locally, public utilities rate regulation, alternative financial markets, buying green, identity theft, and other privacy concerns were discussed.
- We made presentations at the *Rate Review Hearings* for Sask Power and SaskEnergy and submitted a position paper in response to the *Forrest Report on the Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel*. We also met with Sask-Tel regarding rural service rates.
- We hosted a Public Forum on *Understanding Consumers Contracts* as part of our new initiative to reach out to other communities in Saskatchewan. We hope to do presentations in other Saskatchewan cities that have expressed interest. We may try to reintroduce *Food Baskets* in these cities, as well.

- Our booth at the October *Spotlight on Seniors* event in Saskatoon has become an annual event and generates a good response.



- We attended the Annual General Meeting of the *Consumers' Association of Canada*, in Vancouver, in March of this year.
- In May of this year we met with the new *Minister of Justice, the Honourable Don Morgan*, to update him on the association activities. He was very well informed about the association and supportive of our initiatives. We had an excellent discussion and exchange of ideas and look forward to continuing this dialogue.
- To redesign, update, and oversee production of *SaskWatch*,

Brenda Goldsworthy was hired as editor. She, together with Diane Boyle, long time *SaskWatch* volunteer, will continue to produce our quarterly newsletter. Watch for exciting new changes!

- We hope to have a *new logo* created and to update our promotional material, within the next few months.
- Utilization of our website - [www.consumersask.com](http://www.consumersask.com) - is averaging over 700 hits per month. Once we introduce interactive components on the site there should be more opportunity for consumers to express their concerns.
- CAC/SK volunteers attended many more meetings throughout the year participating in discussions on issues impacting the consumer, including:
  - New Home Warranty Programme*
  - Public Disclosure of Restaurant Inspections*
  - Funeral Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan*
  - Saskatoon Airport Authority Customer Service and Marketing Committee*

For further information, please contact the office and we can give you more details or send you our Annual Report.

***Is Your Child Safe?*** is a publication from Health Canada containing safety information on products that may pose a danger to children under six years of age. It includes information on: bunk beds, car seats, clothing, cribs, playpens, safety gates, strollers, toys and much more. To order this booklet call: 1-800-O-Canada (1.800.622-6232). For more information and to view Consumer Product Recalls, visit: [www.healthycanadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca). For inquiries and complaints about consumer products, contact: toll-free: 1-866-662-0666 or in Saskatchewan: 306.975-4502.

### **Ozone Generators May be Dangerous**

An ozone generator is a machine that plugs into the wall (or runs on batteries) and puts ozone into the air. *"Ozone generators are sold as home air cleaners. But beware! This kind of air cleaner puts a harmful gas called ozone into the air you breathe. Ozone can cause headaches, sore throats and coughs. Ozone can hurt your lungs,"* says Health Canada. *"If you have an ozone generator in your home, stop using it."* The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) no longer approves ozone generators for use in homes. If you want to know more about the quality of air in your home, contact CMHC at 1.800.668-2642. For more info, contact the Product Safety Bureau, Health Canada, at: 306.975-4502.

### **Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods**

*The Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods* booklet lists 19 different nutrients in 1,000 of the most commonly consumed foods in Canada. This booklet, published by Health Canada, has just been updated and is now free of charge. The new version emphasizes mixed dishes rather than just individual ingredients. You can use this quick and easy reference to help make informed food choices through an understanding of the nutrient content of the foods you eat. To order contact: 613.954-5995 / 1.866.225-0709 / email: [publications@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:publications@hc-sc.gc.ca). Indicate the publication number when ordering: HC Pub.: 4771; Cat.: H164-49/2008E; ISBN: 978-0-662-46512-6.

### **Ombudsman Saskatchewan**

Are you having a misunderstanding with a provincial government ministry, agency, board, commission, or Crown corporation? Do you think they are being unfair to you? Just as the Provincial Auditor holds the government accountable in matters of money, the Ombudsman holds the government accountable in matters of fairness. They are unbiased and independent from government. Their staff takes complaints, investigates, negotiates, mediates, educates the public and government about fairness, and performs a host of other tasks. To learn more about the kinds of complaints they take, or how to make a complaint, phone: 306.933-5500 / toll-free: 1.800.667-9787 / web: [www.ombudsman.sk.ca](http://www.ombudsman.sk.ca)

### **Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA)**

offers a variety of services to educate and inform the people of Saskatchewan about laws and the legal system. These services include free legal information, publications and presentations. For further information: 306.653-1868 / email: [plea@plea.org](mailto:plea@plea.org) / web: [www.plea.org](http://www.plea.org)

### **New Seniors' Drug Plan**

Under the new Seniors' Drug Plan, eligible seniors (65 and older), with an individual annual net income of less than \$64,044, will pay only \$15 per prescription for drugs listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary and those approved under Exception Drug Status. You must apply to receive your coverage starting July 1, 2008. The existing Seniors' Drug Plan coverage will remain in place until June 30 only. Questions about the Seniors' Drug Plan, call toll-free: 1.800.667-7581 or in Regina: 787-3317.

### **20 Million Recyclable Milk Containers Thrown Away ...**

and that was just in Saskatchewan, last year! Sarcan is urging people to recycle. For info about recycling depots, drop-off bins, and ways to reduce waste and help save the environment phone: 306.384-5699 / web: [www.sarcan.ca](http://www.sarcan.ca)

# PIECES

## Bits & Pieces

### World Older Adult Abuse Awareness Day

Saskatchewan Council on Aging's June 12th workshop, *Dollars & Sense: Becoming Informed, Protect Yourself*, was presented to a sold out audience. Participants got a lot of useful information, were involved in interactive discussions, and had fun. Discussions and workshops focused on: Financial Abuse of Seniors; Frauds & Scams; Joint Ownership & Debt; Power of Attorney; and Ways to Protect Yourself. More info about SCOA at: [www.scoa.ca](http://www.scoa.ca)

### Tired of Unsolicited Phone Calls / Junk Mail

If you want to sign off from junk mail, phone calls and faxes - and download a letter to give to your postal worker - just go to: [www.reddotcampaign.ca](http://www.reddotcampaign.ca). Also, Canada's Do Not Call Registry is set to launch this September. IOptOut allows Canadians to create and manage a personal do-not-call list that begins where do-not-call legislation ends. Find out more at: [ioptout.ca](http://ioptout.ca) and sign up for your personal Do Not Call List.

### Garage Sale Advisory

Holding a garage sale is a convenient way to recycle second-hand products, but remember you're legally responsible for ensuring that the products you sell are safe and meet safety standards. The *Hazardous Products Act* has safety requirements for certain consumer products, many of which are intended for children. Under the law you cannot import, sell, give away or distribute products that do not meet the requirements of this Act. Contact Consumer Product Safety at: 1.866.662-066. In Saskatchewan phone: 975-4028.

**Saskatchewan Century Club** is a province-wide association of seniors who have reached the age of 90 years or more and are determined to live as full and active a lifestyle as possible. They are pursuing physical activity, mental agility, and social and spiritual creativity. There is no membership fee. You may join by calling toll-free: 1.888.823-2211 / Regina: 359-9956 / Saskatoon: 652-2255.

### What is your Ecological Footprint?

If everyone lived like you, how many Earths would it take to support your lifestyle? Global Footprint Network has a new video and Footprint Calculator - two tools to help us see how our living habits relate to our use of the Earth's resource. It provides people around the world with an interactive, informative tool for exploring and reducing their Footprints. Check it out and take the test at: [www.footprintnetwork.org](http://www.footprintnetwork.org)

### Research Projects Being Funded for Environmentally Friendly Cars

The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Industry, recently announced funding for 54 Canadian research projects that are exploring a wide range of advanced technologies to make future automobiles more efficient, safe and environmentally friendly. "Canadian consumers are looking for new, cutting-edge vehicles that are advanced, efficient and green," said Minister Prentice. "Right here in Canada our researchers are stepping up to deliver, and our government is proud to be investing in these projects that involve more than five hundred Canadian researchers."

### Did You Know ...

that almost 90% of the energy used to wash clothes goes into heating the water. If every household in Canada switched to cold water, about 1.5 billion kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions would be saved - the equivalent of taking 250,000 cars off the road for one year!

### Compound Word Challenge

*Up and Down Words* is a new way to have fun with compound words. This puzzle is part crossword, part brain teaser, and part spelling bee. If you get stuck, head to the bottom and try working from the ground up. *Up and Down Words* is yet another addition to the oodles of **free word games** available at Merriam-Webster Online at: [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com). Warning: this game can be addictive!

# I Have Information Rights! Who Knew?

by Diane Aldridge

Have you ever wanted or needed to know what information is collected about you or what records (information in any recorded form) are available from a public body in Saskatchewan? Or, have you ever been concerned that employees or officials in those organizations shared information about you that they shouldn't have? If so, you may be interested to know that you have the right to make further inquiry and get answers.

Since November 2003, here in Saskatchewan, we have had a full time Information and Privacy Commissioner (the Commissioner), Mr. Gary Dickson, Q.C. The Commissioner is an independent officer of the legislative assembly.

We have, though, had a series of part time Commissioners since 1992 when the first of three access/privacy laws - The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) - came into force. FOIP applies to government institutions which include Saskatchewan Government Ministries, Crown corporations, agencies, commissions, and boards.

The second of these laws - The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LA FOIP) - applies to local authorities. Local authorities include school and library boards,

regional health authorities, cities and towns, and regional colleges to name a few.

The last of the three laws that our office provides oversight for is The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA). HIPA applies to trustees (regional health authorities, physicians, dentists, pharmacists, etc.) that have custody or control of your personal health information.

All three of these laws provide for your right of access to information and for the protection of your privacy (i.e. information privacy). 'Information rights' are the collective of access and privacy rights. The laws provide the rules for those bodies bound by those laws. The Office of Saskatchewan Information & Privacy Commissioner provides the oversight. It is our role as the watchdog agency to ensure compliance by these bodies to these laws.

If you are dissatisfied with the agencies response to your access request (for more, follow this link: [www.oipc.sk.ca/webdocs/Publicstepstoaccesshandout.pdf](http://www.oipc.sk.ca/webdocs/Publicstepstoaccesshandout.pdf)) or have reason to believe that agency officials or employees have breached your privacy (without the requisite authority, collected, used or disclosed your personal information/personal health information), you may launch a complaint at our office.

In the case of federal government institutions, contact the Federal Information Commissioner of Canada for access-related issues, and the Privacy Commissioner of Canada for privacy concerns. Generally, for the private sector, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada provides oversight with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). The privacy protection afforded individuals in the private sector in Saskatchewan is limited to customer/client information in most cases, not employee personal information. As these are not laws that we are responsible for, if you have additional questions, please contact the applicable federal Commissioners office.

For more information on your rights and our role, visit our website, [www.oipc.sk.ca](http://www.oipc.sk.ca) or call Diane Aldridge, Director of Compliance at (306) 798-1602. All inquiries are kept confidential, of course. If you call, don't worry about not knowing for certain which law applies; just let us know what your concern is, and we will help you "navigate the access/privacy jungle."

*Diane Aldridge  
Director of Compliance  
Office of Saskatchewan  
Information & Privacy Commissioner*

## June is Stroke Awareness Month

Stroke is one of the leading causes of death in Canada. The risk of stroke increases with age, but lifestyle changes can often decrease your chances of having a stroke. Medical conditions such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, obesity and diabetes are potent risk factors. A number of lifestyle factors can also lead to heart disease including

- Smoking
- Physical inactivity
- Being overweight
- Diets rich in saturated fat
- Stress
- Family history of heart disease

### Heart Healthy Tips:

**Don't smoke:** Not smoking or quitting smoking reduces your risk of developing heart disease and may help to increase the "good" cholesterol in your blood. It also reduces your risk of having a heart attack, stroke, and common cancers.

**Eat a wider variety of foods:** According to Canada's Food Guide, as part of a balanced diet, we should eat a variety of foods and choose lower-fat foods more often.

**Get moving:** As little as 60 minutes a day of accumulated physical activity will help keep your heart in shape. Try the *Physical Activity Guide* for some ideas.

**Avoid fad or miracle diets:** Eating well and staying physically active will help you to control your weight.

**Have regular medical check-ups that include measurement of your blood cholesterol level.** You can also be tested for diabetes, one of the major risk factors for heart disease.

Be sure and ask your doctor if you have any concerns about your heart health. For more information on symptoms and health effects of stroke and how to minimize your risk, consult *It's Your Health* fact sheet on stroke at: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

(from Health Canada website)

## Warnings & Recalls

For a listing of all recalls, and complete information about them, including: recall date, product name, full product description, hazard identified, corrective action, and images of the recalled products, go to: [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls). Here is a partial list of May and June recalls.

**Tinker Bell™ Wand:** (excessive levels of lead)

**Pirates of the Caribbean™ Sleeping Bags:** (zipper pull contains excessive levels of lead)

**Little Tikes Chit 'N Chat Toy Cell Phone:** (hinge cover can detach, posing a choking hazard to young children)

**Magnetic Blocks:** (flexible magnetic strips glued to the foam blocks can detach, posing a choking hazard to young children)

**Boy's Long-sleeved Camouflage Pyjama Sets:** (screen print on shirt contains excess levels of lead)

**Children's Animal Tracking Explorer Kit:** (white powder in the bag marked "plaster of paris" is actually calcium hydroxide, which poses a risk of skin and eye irritation to children using the product)

**Mini Chef Complete Toy Kitchen:** (four pegs supporting the oven shelf and four pegs supporting the refrigerator shelf can pull out of the wood, posing a choking hazard to children. Additionally, the toy kitchen can tip over, posing a risk of serious injury)

**Wendy Bellissimo Hidden Hills Collection Cribs:** (space between the spindles on some cribs can fail to meet federal standards and can pose an entrapment hazard to infants)

**Broil King Gas Grills,** includes the Signet, Sovereign and Sovereign XL series gas grills: (bottom of the cook box that contains the burners can melt or crack as a result of a grease fire posing a fire and burn hazard)

**DEWALT Table Saws:** (pivot bracket on saw can separate which can misalign the blade and the fence and cause kick back posing a laceration hazard)

# You Asked

**Question:** *What is the grace period for returning a purchased product?*

**Answer:** Always ask what the return policy is before completing your purchase. When you make a purchase, you are entering into a contract and can only get an exchange, or a rebate, if the product is faulty or not living up to expectations. For door-to-door sales transactions, there is a "cooling-off period" of 10 days that allows you to change your mind. To cancel the contract, you must send a cancellation notice to the seller via fax, registered mail, or in person. You can also cancel the contract if the direct sale was solicited from outside Saskatchewan. There are extended cancellation rights of up to one year if the direct seller was not licensed, or the goods or service are not provided within 30 days of the specified date. Following cancellation, the direct seller must refund any money or trade-ins within 15 days. See Saskatchewan Justice, Consumer Protection Act Part II: <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/cpb>. For further info contact CAC/SK office at 306.242-4909 / toll free: 1.888.395-5661 or email: [office.cacsk@sasktel.net](mailto:office.cacsk@sasktel.net)

**Question:** *Are the Playtex baby bottles I bought five months ago, safe?*

**Answer:** According to Health Canada: if polycarbonate baby bottles contain bisphenol A, you can continue to use them but there are steps you can take to reduce your baby's exposure to bisphenol A. Do not put boiling water in them, as very hot water causes bisphenol A to migrate out of the bottle at a much higher rate. Water should be boiled and allowed to cool to lukewarm in a non-polycarbonate container before transferring to baby bottles. The number 7 (with a PC beside it) on the bottom of the bottle indicates it is a polycarbonate. Health Canada is saying, "if no new, relevant and compelling information comes forward during the public consultation period, it is our intention to ban the importation, sale and advertising of polycarbonate baby bottles." Alternatives include buying glass bottles or bottles marked bisphenol A free. For further info go to Health Canada's webpage and follow bisphenol: <http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/en/index.html> or call the CAC/SK office.

## Membership / Subscription

- I'd like a one-year CAC/SK membership (includes a one-year subscription to *SaskWatch*) \$25.00
- I'd like a one-year subscription to *SaskWatch* (4 issues) \$10.00
- I'd like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total enclosed: (make cheques payable to CAC/SK) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to become a CAC Saskatchewan volunteer. I am interested in volunteering in the following areas: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Renewal Notice:** Your membership expiry date is on the top line of your address label. We value you as a member and want to serve you in the interest of a fair marketplace. We look forward to serving you in the future and hope you will renew your membership.

