

# Golden girls prove it's easy to stay fit and healthy after 50

## Centennial Seniors learn ways of achieving success during annual Seniors' Month celebration

BY GILLIAN BRUNETTE

Edna Levitt and Susan Sommers defy the myth that weight gain and decreased energy is a consequence of growing old.

Both close to 70 years of age (and looking a decade younger), one is training for her third marathon, the other is a fitness trainer for the over-50s.

Levitt and Sommers were the guest presenters at last Friday's Centennial Seniors celebration event, which is held annually in June — Seniors' Month.

In keeping with this year's theme Discover the Possibilities, those attending the celebration were treated to an entertaining, inspirational and educational couple of hours.

Introducing the two women, Centennial Seniors president Jim Gould remarked, "You are about to meet two of the most fit grannys I have seen in a very long time. They inspire women and men over 50 to start and maintain a fitness program."

First at the podium was Sommers, who drew a laugh from the audience by saying, "I bet you were expecting Suzanne Somers." She added that while the two do have some things in common — both are blonde, both have family in California — she is the one about to embark on a third marathon.

Sommers hails from New Jersey originally and consequently everything she does is fast, she said. "I never wanted to be bored or boring and I multi-task everything."

Short, a little bit overweight but harboring a competitive streak (her own words), Sommers began walking/jogging short distances, increasing them to five and then 10 kilometres. She went on to run her first marathon in 2005, another in 2007 and is attempting a third in 2009. Sommers is quick to admit that she is slow (seven and a half hours to complete the 42 kilometres), but while she's usually at the back of the field, she has never not finished a race. Sommers has turned her marathon experiences into a 10-step program geared to teaching others how to achieve success.

First it is necessary to identify a new opportunity, then research it, she said. "In my case it was marathons. I did a lot of research. I knew I wasn't a winter trainer, so I picked a marathon in the fall."

Above all it's important to be realistic, to listen to your body and work through it, she said. "I had to accept that I was slow and could finish last. I made the commitment to train for six months and set myself short and long-term goals."

To be successful requires the encouragement and support of others. Staying focussed is another important step, Sommers said. "In my case I started going to bed early. In bed at 9 p.m. and up at 5 a.m. I had to change my habits."

Once success has been achieved it's important to celebrate and then set new goals, Sommers said. "Once you have hit a milestone, set a new

one. Enter a competitive activity or show. Think about an active or hobby vacation. Try a new fitness activity or hobby. Finally, what one new step could you take today to achieve (your goal)?"

The audience barely had time to catch a breath when they were introduced to Levitt, a 69-year-old fitness trainer, who exudes as much bounce as a rubber ball.

A Scot who emigrated to Canada 26 years ago, Levitt said she bought her first pair of trainers (running shoes) at the age of 50. "I joined the Y because I heard it had a walking track. After three days I found it so boring that I almost quit."

A chance look through a window showed Levitt an aerobics class in process next door. "I joined them and that's when I started my career as a fitness groupie," she said.

Unlike Sommers, who likes to train alone, Levitt said she needs a class setting to stay motivated and goes to the gym every weekday morning.

Once a "fat person who has lost 30 pounds over the years," Levitt credits that accomplishment to exercise and strength training. "If you don't do some form of exercise after 55 there's going to be lots of aches and pains and reduced energy levels," she said.

Handing out a sheet listing 12 myths and misconceptions about fitness and exercise, Levitt continued: "When I first started working out 18 years ago what I knew about exercise could have been written on the back of a postage stamp. Of all my fitness misconceptions, my favourite is, 'Exercise will turn fat into muscle.'"

It only appears that way, said Levitt. "Fat is fat and muscle is muscle. You can't change fat to muscle, but with strength training together with a reduced fat diet my body is now more muscle and less fat."

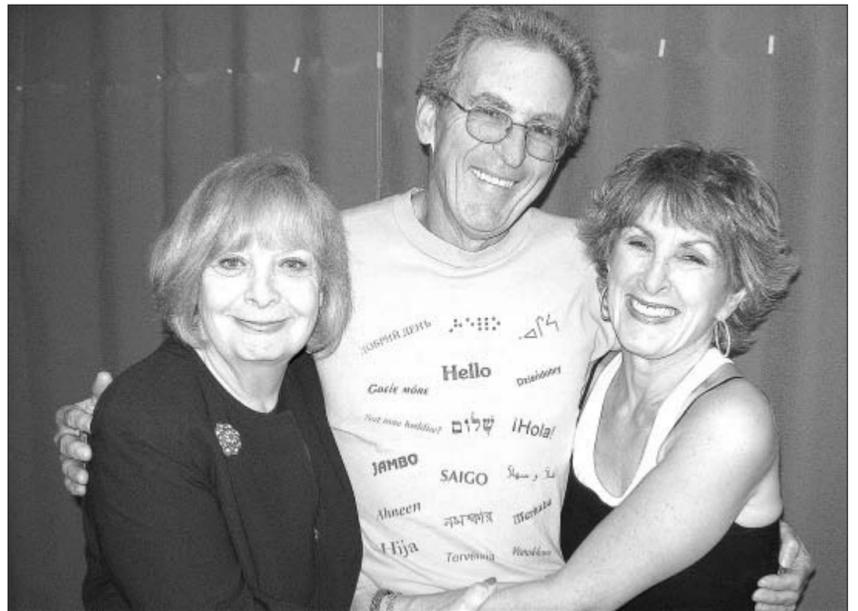
It is also never too late to build muscle, Levitt said. Not only is muscle gain attainable but it's beneficial. Strength training helps increase bone mass to reduce the risk of falling. "I have clients in their 70s who are starting a (fitness) program."

Getting started is always a challenge and Levitt offered up a few tips. "Decide on some type of exercise and assign a time each day, then make it twice a day. If you are watching television, do an exercise every time a commercial comes on. That's half an hour (of exercise) every two hours."

Levitt then produced a selection of rubber 'resistance' bands that can be used as exercise/strength training aids at home. Inviting members of the audience to join her, she showed a selection of exercises using the bands to help strengthen back, chest, leg and arm muscles and improve posture.

"I've shown you a number of simple exercises and you don't ever have to get off a chair to do them. A few minutes every day will make a huge difference," said Levitt, then added with a laugh, "I hope all of you will dash out and buy these bands."

Three resistance bands of varying tensions come in a packet with instructions and sell for about \$12.99, Levitt said.



**AGELESS:** Fifty-plus fitness guru Edna Levitt, right, and inspirational speaker Susan Sommers, share a laugh with Centennial Seniors president Jim Gould during the seniors' annual celebration event held last Friday.



**THE LONG STRETCH:** Senior fitness guru Edna Levitt shows Beryl Frow some stretching exercises with resistance bands. Fitness was a hot topic during the Centennial Seniors' annual celebration event held last Friday.



## Greening Huntsville THANK YOU

The Town of Huntsville wishes to extend a huge thank you to all volunteers, sponsors and supporters of the Greening Huntsville Program ~ Adventures in the Art of Living Greener.

We wish to thank the following individuals and apologize to anyone that we have missed:

**Roadside Team Captains:**

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- Betty Morrison (Jr.)
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- Donna Rudd (Lioness Club)
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Thank you to all volunteers that picked up litter along the roadsides!

Thanks to our Sponsors



Take Pride In Your Community!

## PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD



1012 Dwight Beach Road, RR#1  
Dwight, Ontario POA 1H0  
phone: 705-635-2272 fax: 705-635-2132  
Hours of operation: Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**TOWNSHIP OF LAKE OF BAYS**

TENDER NO. 2008-009

**Rental of Two Tandem Combination Plow/Sander Trucks with Operators**

The Public Works Department is tendering for the Rental of Two Tandem Combination Plow/Sander Trucks with Operators for the 2008/2009/2010/2011/2012/2013 winter season. Sealed tenders plainly marked as to the contents will be received by the undersigned until

**1:00 P.M. on Wednesday July 23rd, 2008**

Further information may be obtained by contacting:  
**Tom Brown, Director of Public Works**

Township of Lake of Bays  
1012 Dwight Beach Road, Dwight, ON POA 1H0  
(705) 635-2851 OR (705) 635-2272

Tender packages are available at the Municipal Office or on the Municipal web site at [www.lakeofbays.on.ca](http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca)  
Tenders will be opened at 1:05 p.m. on July 23rd, 2008 in the Municipal Office committee room and approved at the regular Council meeting on August 12th, 2008



**Your comments are invited on Method of Selecting the Chair of Muskoka District Council**

The Council of the District Municipality of Muskoka is reviewing the method by which the Chair of District Council is selected. A background report prepared by Muskoka's Solicitor describing both the existing process and possible options is available at [www.lakeofbays.on.ca](http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca), [www.muskoka.on.ca](http://www.muskoka.on.ca) or obtained by contacting [clees@muskoka.on.ca](mailto:clees@muskoka.on.ca) or at (705) 645-2100 ext. 239.

**Public input is welcomed**

For more information on how to participate, please visit the above-noted websites.

**Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at 7 pm.**

At the Dwight Dock

The 1st Annual **"Music by the Lake"**

With **"The Muskoka Concert Band"**

under the direction of Neil Barlow

**Bring your Lawn Chair and enjoy!!**

Presented by the Huntsville Festival of the Arts

In case of Rain, the concert will move to the Dwight Community Centre located beside the Township offices on Dwight Beach Road



**TOWNSHIP OF LAKE OF BAYS**

TENDER NO. 2008-10

**Purchase of Two Tandem Plow/Sander Trucks**

The Public Works Department is tendering for the Purchase of Two Tandem Plow/Sander Trucks. Sealed tenders plainly marked as to the contents will be received by the undersigned until

**1:00 P.M. on Friday August 1st, 2008**

Further information may be obtained by contacting:  
**Lauri Romanko, CRS**

**Public Works Supervisor - Roads**

Township of Lake of Bays,  
1012 Dwight Beach Road, Dwight, ON, POA 1H0  
(705) 635-2851 OR (705) 635-2272

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Tenders will be opened at 1:05 p.m. on August 1st, 2008 in the Municipal Office committee room and approved at the regular meeting of Council on Tuesday August 12th, 2008

**UPCOMING JULY MEETINGS**

**Monday, July 7th, 2008**

Mill Construction Committee meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Baysville Library

**Tuesday, July 8th, 2008**

Finance & Corporate Services Committee meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m.

Council meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, July 22nd, 2008**

Council (Planning Matters) meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m.

Heritage Advisory Committee meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m.

**Monday, July 28th, 2008**

Parks, Recreation & Trails Advisory Committee meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m.

**Meetings will be held in the Municipal Council Chambers**

**MEETING CANCELLATION NOTICES**  
**COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

July 14th, 2008 at 1:00 p.m.

- Cancelled

August 18th, 2008 at 1:00 p.m.

- Cancelled

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on September 15th, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers.

Visit us at [www.lakeofbays.on.ca](http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca)