



Vital Aging Network
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February 2005 Bulletin

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February 8 VAN FORUM...

Adventure Travel and Vital Aging?

Presenters:

Michelle Gran, Global Volunteers
Jim Klobuchar, Jim Klobuchar's Adventures
Judith Niemi, Women in Wilderness
Dick Owen, Wilderness Inquiry

Facilitator: Kate Brady, travel leader

Time and Place: Tuesday, February 8 from 10 AM to Noon, at REI (sporting goods store) in Bloomington.

What sort of adventurous travel inspires your dreams: Do you want to help others, or explore pristine wilderness areas? What barriers do you see to your participation? How can they be overcome? Join providers of adventure travel, longtime participants, novice travelers, and VAN for February's discussion forum on Adventure Travel and Vital Aging.

Dick Owen will talk about his experiences with Wilderness Inquiry, a non-profit organization that offers active adventures for people of all ages, backgrounds and ability levels. Judith Niemi is the founder of Women in Wilderness, one of the oldest women's adventure travel companies around. While women of all ages are welcome, most are in mid-life and beyond. Jim Klobuchar, a longtime *Star Tribune* columnist leads trips worldwide for physical activists as well as more leisurely travelers. Michele Gran from Global Volunteers will relay her experiences in travel as well!

Directions: The meeting will be held at REI's meeting room in Bloomington, 750 W American Blvd. It is at the southwest corner of the intersection of I-494 and Lyndale Ave, east of 35W. From I-494, take the Lyndale Ave exit. Take Lyndale heading south and both the first and second right turns will lead to the large glass fronted-building.

There is a large parking lot in front of the building. As you approach the front of the building, the sidewalk will branch. Take the left branch to the exit door. There, an REI employee will meet you and direct you to the meeting room.

Questions? Need a ride? Call VAN at 612-626-5555. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge for VAN's monthly forums.

SPOTLIGHT ON...NEW LEADERSHIP GROUP MEMBERS

VAN is pleased to announce six new members to its Leadership Group. The 20-member Leadership Group guides VAN's work, which promotes self-determination, community involvement and personal enrichment for and with older adults through education and advocacy. The six new members – all life-long learners and community builders – are:

Dr. Pauline Christensen – Pauline currently coordinates Elderhostel and the Learning in Retirement Institute at Winona State University. As President-elect and conference chair of the Minnesota Association for Continuing and Adult Education, she collaborated with VAN on the 2003 Know and Grow Conference. Pauline, along with David Fleugel, adds particular perspective to VAN on out state and rural vital aging.

Dennis Cavanaugh – Dennis brings tremendous experience to VAN as a local policymaker and corporate leader. He served on the Village of Saint Anthony City Council and as CEO of Soo Line Railroad. He is currently spearheading Vital Force Team focused on maintaining a high quality of life for elders of Saint Anthony Village.

Dr. Nancy Eustis – Nancy is a professor and director of graduate studies at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute. She is particularly interested in use by older adults of "independent living" principles advocated by many working age adults with long-term disabilities. Nancy is senior author of *Long-Term Care for the Elderly: A Policy Perspective* and co-editor of *Seeking Common Ground: Aging and Disabilities*.

David Fleugel – David oversees operations of the Center for Small Towns at the University of Minnesota – Morris. He recently helped conceive, plan and host the "Futures Festival: Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies for Older Adults and Communities," which occurred at the University of Minnesota – Morris last fall.

Andy Halper – Andy is national education director at CharHouse Learning, which developed the famous FISH! Philosophy culled from Pike Street Fish Market. Andy, who has helped plan two VAN Summits, says "Aging is inevitable – the way we age isn't!" He will be leading a VAN meeting on March 8th entitled FISH! For Lifelong Learning.

Mark Skeie – Mark and his wife were recently featured in a *USA Today* feature entitled "Retirement isn't Just a Date, it's a New Life." Mark is a

former global manager with 3M and serves on the Board of the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging. He graduated from VAN's Leadership Advocacy program last May and is developing a pre-retirement course for people still in the workplace.

Eric Schubert – Eric is director of communications for Shoreview-based Ecumen, which is Minnesota's largest non-profit provider of housing and services for older adults. He is a former Humphrey Institute Policy Fellow and *Pioneer Press* Community Columnist. Eric is energized by VAN and its focus on building a better Minnesota.

MN CAAN KICK OFF EVENT A SUCCESS!

“There is a fountain of youth; it is in your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to life...” -Sophia Loren

This is an appropriate quote to explain the energy on a cold January day. One hundred people from across the state braved the -12 degree weather on January 15 to participate in Creativity, Arts & Aging: A Town Hall Meeting and Celebration. The all-day event, which formally launched the Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network (MN CAAN) – a VAN offshoot – was held at the Bloomington Center for the Arts.

After pre-opening activities that included a concert by the Bloomingstones, a senior choir, and nametag-making with extravagant and fun materials provided by Sojourn Adult Day Services, the main program began with two artistic performances.

America's Troubadour Larry Long performed with an Eden Prairie 4th grade class with whom he had worked with to write a song about the life of Joan Schadewald, a community elder they had interviewed. Joan spoke of her great pleasure in what the children had done and how they had helped her remember more of her own story. She said that she would “trust this group of children with her future.”

The Kairos Dance Theatre performed three dances with dancers from age 3 to 90, including one which conveyed the stories of some of the elders at Southwest Senior Center adult day program.

Stuart Kandell, founder and director of Stagebridge, the oldest senior theatre in the country and also the co-leader of the Center for Creative Aging West, was the featured speaker. He described the exciting preliminary results of research by George Washington University scholar Dr. Gene Cohen, which shows that participation in high quality arts activities has significant health benefits including lower depression rates, lower pain levels, and reduced doctor visits, among others. He also described the work of the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), which has been involved with this research, and explained how MN CAAN is one of a growing number of networks around the nation affiliated with NCCA.

Eight afternoon presenters gave roundtable talks and demonstrations on their arts activities for older adults. They included the Runestone Rockettes of Alexandria; two adult day center directors (Sally Hebson from Sojourn and Maria Ricke from Southwest DayElders) showing art project ideas; Peggy Thompson (Catholic Eldercare) speaking on spirituality and art; Florence Dacey talking about intergenerational writing and other programs in the Marshall area; Susan Arminton and Carla Vogel describing their Talking Suitcases program with Intermedia Arts; Stuart Kandell providing senior theatre program ideas; and Katie Linderelser and Christian Nielsen (Ridgeview Hospice) demonstrating music therapy approaches.

Morning roundtable discussions on how to bring public attention to the arts ended with each table presenting in creatively dramatic form their report to the whole group. Afternoon discussions drew ideas on how to build on the learning of the day and develop further the MN CAAN. A circle dance and song ended the day in celebration.

Major supporters for the event were Catholic Eldercare, VAN, City of Bloomington, UCare Minnesota, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, AARP Minnesota, East Side Arts Council, and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

All in all a true success!

More information about MN CAAN can be obtained by email from MNCAAN@yahoo.com.

DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

Let us know if you have events in your community for vital agers...email van@umn.edu



February 8 @ 10:00 – 12:00 Noon

VAN Monthly Forum: Adventure Travel and Vital Aging

A exciting trip is planned for you – join VAN as we learn about adventure travel and vital aging from individuals representing various travel organizations. Learn about ways you can participate in adventure travel. Location: REI Central Facility, Bloomington

February 24 @ 7:30 AM

February Mind Opener: Preparing for the “Silver Boom”

This Multi-Generational Mind-Opener discussion will focus on what the “silver boom” will mean for Minnesota and what we need to do to thrive – not merely survive – as our region’s population faces an age shift never before witnessed. Join Jan Hively, Senior Advisor VAN, and Kathryn Roberts, President & CEO Ecumen, in this discussion.

Location: Four Points Sheraton (Hamline & 94, Saint Paul)

Register: <http://www.citizensleague.net/html/mind-openers.html> or 651-293-0575

VAN connects older adults with education to promote and support their self-sufficiency, community participation, and personal enrichment. VAN is supported by the University of Minnesota’s College of Continuing Education. See the VAN Web site at www.van.umn.edu

