



Centre on AGING

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Centre on Aging Research Fellowship Recipients

The Centre on Aging is pleased to announce that **Bonnie Hallman**, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Environment & Geography, Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources, and **Jessaca Leinaweaver**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, are the recipients of the Centre's 2006-2007 Research Fellowships. These fellowships provide either release time from some teaching responsibilities to research activities in aging for a one-year period or funding for the research.

Walking with the Animals: Exploring Zoos as Sites for Increasing Health and Well Being Amongst Older Adults

Research on the effects of the built environment on physical and mental health (Frank & Engelke 2005) tends to focus on the "walkability" of streets and neighborhoods (Baum & Palmer, 2002; Frank, Engelke & Schmid 2003). Associations between a built environment that supports moderate levels of physical activity and major health issues have been documented (Frank & Engelke 2001; Northridge, Schlar & Biswas 2003). The importance of various physical properties (street scapes, rest areas, green & treed landscapes) as a means of encouraging both physical activity and informal social interaction at all stages of life is well known. The application of such concepts to the urban zoological park has not been specifically examined,

even though zoos were introduced in the 19th century as part of the public health mandate of early urban planning. Findings from the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) show that only 14% of persons aged 65 & over are sufficiently active to reap any health benefits, and progress in increasing activity levels in seniors appears to be stalled (Division of Aging and Seniors 2002; O'Brien Cousins 2005).



O'Brien Cousins (2000; 2005) argues that many older adults reduce or stop their levels of physical activity due to pervasive

ageism; quite simply too many accept the perception that 'old people' are supposed to be less active in unsupervised settings (i.e., 'my heart couldn't take it', or 'I'll fall or hurt my knee').

According to Dr. Hallman, the challenge is to find innovative means of motivating and supporting opportunities for moderate forms of active living to overcome ageist, sexist, and defeatist attitudes. She will combine the concepts and knowledge from the fields of urban planning, animal geographies, and social gerontology to examine urban zoos as sites for improving the health of older adults. Zoos are seen as safe, family oriented places and provide an opportunity for increased physical activity and social connection with nature.

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Walking with the Animals ...continued

Dr. Hallman will examine the connections between the purpose and design of zoos, physical activity, health and well-being and the aging adult; assess the level and nature of physical activity, social interaction and zoo use by older adults (55+) and their reactions to, and recommendations for, increasing their use of zoos; and outline recommendations for the development of programming in zoos to promote themselves as venues for older adults interested in more active lifestyles.

In-depth interviews will be conducted with older adults from the Zoological Society of Manitoba, individuals from the Centre on Aging Research Database with limited knowledge of the zoo, and exit surveys at zoos in two locations, the Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg and the Sedwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas. Included on the exit surveys will be why visitors came to the zoo, opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and connection to/interaction with nature and animals, as well as self-reported health, activity levels and the concept of healthy aging.

Transnational Aging: Intergenerational Relations in the Andes and Beyond

How do transnational migrants perceive, manage, and shape social responsibilities to the elderly at home while living abroad? How do family members who remain at home come to understand their new, transnationally-inflicted relationships and rights? In her research Dr. Leinaweaver will address the intersection of transnationalization and the development cycle from the point of view of those individuals who remain in Peru while other family members go abroad.

In previous research, she investigated children's movements between caregivers and the social, economic and political meanings of these movements. All members, including even the smallest children are contributing members of the household with both economic and socio-relational roles to play. Individuals are not considered to be a full adult until they have children of their own. Adult children feel deeply responsible to care for elderly relatives.

Dr. Leinaweaver proposes to explore the ways that movements of children allow transnational migrants to meet their caregiving responsibilities as adult children of aging parents. Current research does not explore how child fostering is specifically used to provide care for the elderly and issues of aging and intergenerational relations are seldom addressed. What the aged in Peru fear above everything else is solitude.

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Dr. Leinaweaver with the daughter of one of her research participants (above). This girl's parents run an after-school tutoring and support program for orphans. She and her entire school (a private, Protestant school) wear "ethnic" costumes and march in a parade around the central plaza of Ayacucho. Parades happened every Sunday, after a solemn flag-raising and rendition of the national anthem.

Below, Jessaca volunteered in the local and regional elections in 2002. The voting location was in a public school in an old neighbourhood of Ayacucho, the city where she does most of her research. Voting is required of citizens therefore, individuals must either travel to their hometowns to cast a ballot, or pay a steep fine for failure to vote.



23rd Annual Spring Research Symposium

Monday, May 1, 2006

The Centre on Aging will hold its **23rd Annual Spring Research Symposium** on **Monday, May 1, 2006, 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., at the Brodie Centre, Bannatyne Campus**, University of Manitoba. Sessions include the presentation of research results by University researchers and a discussion of the relevance and application of findings by community respondents. Registrants will have the opportunity to participate in the discussions.

Opening Keynote:

*Ageism in Medical Care:
Myths and Facts*

Panel members for this presentation include **Norma Drosdowech**, Chair, Manitoba Council on Aging, **Kristel van Ineveld**, MD, FRCPC, Cert.Spec.Comp.Ger.Med., Assistant Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba, and **Ryan Sidorchuk**, Patient Safety Officer, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

Afternoon Keynote:

*Let's Talk About Death and
Dying - Why Not?*

This presentation by **Harvey Chochinov**, MD, PhD, FRCPC, Canada Research Chair in Palliative Care, Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba and CancerCare Manitoba, will open the afternoon sessions.

Morning Concurrent Sessions:

- *Memory and Age: What Changes? What Doesn't?*
Jason Leboe, Psychology, Faculty of Arts
- *Winnipeg's Radical Past: Documenting the Experiences of Ukrainian Manitobans Then and Now*
Julie Guard, Economics/Labour Studies, Faculty of Arts
- *Social Isolation Among Seniors: Contributing Factors and Suggestions for Action*
Barbara Payne, Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, and
Jim Hamilton, Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariate

Afternoon Concurrent Sessions:

- *Alzheimer's Research: From Molecules to Lived Experience*
Frank Schweizer, Chemistry, Faculty of Science and
Wendy Schettler, Alzheimer Manitoba
- *A Good Place to Grow Old: Planning for the Future When Developing Neighbourhoods*
Richard Milgrom, City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, and
Mike Balshaw, Winnipeg South Seniors Village

A **poster session** in the **Brodie Atrium** will highlight ongoing research by faculty members and graduate students and provide an opportunity for one-to-one discussions.

Twenty community organizations and government agencies will set up exhibits in the Brodie Centre Atrium to provide information on their services and programs.

The Symposium is open to all and free of charge. Registration forms will be available on the Centre's web site on March 1, 2006. For those who receive the Centre Newsletter by mail, forms will be sent to you on March 1, 2006. For those who receive it by e-mail, you will be notified as soon as it is on our web site. For further information, visit our web site (www.umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/events.html) or call 474-8754.

Research Colloquium

Herbert Northcott, PhD, Professor, Social Structure and Social Policy, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta will visit the Centre on Aging in March. While at the Centre he will present research entitled:

*The Evolution of the
Aging Discourse: From
Apocalyptic Demography
to the Deconstruction of
Old Age*

Thursday, March 23, 2006
11:30 a.m.
Room 108
St. John's College

Transnational Aging

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Migrants must ensure that their aging parents are not left alone, and leaving their children to be fostered by aging grandparents appears to be one solution. Issues to be investigated include who chooses the children who stay behind, and what are the consequences of leaving both aging parents and young children.

Dr. Leinaweaver will travel to Peru and use both participant observation and direct interviews with families to determine how they view the future of their elders and their migrants responsibilities. Participant observation data will be gathered to ensure that the uniquely Andean setting is preserved. An interview schedule will be developed based on the participant observation data. If possible, returning migrants will be interviewed. Formal interviews will also be conducted with representatives of Peruvian institutions designed to assist the aging population.

According to Dr. Leinaweaver, the research is potentially relevant for social service providers in Winnipeg, as well as other parts of the world. It will lead to a better understanding of the emotions and livelihoods of immigrants as well as provide insight into alternatives to institutionalized care of elderly family members. Findings also contribute to the growing body of literature on transnational families, kinship, and the developmental cycle.

From the Affiliates...

Perceived Control and Health, Self-Rated Health, and Self-Regulation of Health Behaviours



Daniel Bailis, PhD
Associate Professor
Psychology, Faculty of Arts
Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging

Global self-evaluations of health have proven to be sensitive predictors of morbidity, the presence of disease or the relative frequency of its occurrence in a particular area, and mortality, the number of deaths that occur in a given time, group, or from a particular cause. However, researchers have only a limited understanding of how these self-evaluations are reached.

In a recent article in *Social Science and Medicine*, Daniel Bailis, PhD and his colleagues at the University of Manitoba, reported findings from their research in this area. Two interpretations of self-rated health were compared. The first reflects a *spontaneous assessment* of an individual's health status and related practices; the second, an aspect of an individual's *enduring self-concept*, the experiences that they have faced or suffered.

Changes in self-rated health based on older adult's baseline physical and mental health symptoms,

social support they received, leisure activities in which they were involved, whether or not they smoked, and their body mass index were examined over a two year period. The effect of several of these factors on the respondent's self-rated health varied according to whether respondents intended to improve specific health-related behaviours in the future. Findings suggest that not only is self-rated health a spontaneous assessment of one's health status and practices, it may also be regulated by an individual's efforts to achieve their health-related goals.

Dr. Bailis also focuses his research program on perceived control and health, self-rated health, and self-regulation of health behaviours. His research findings provide evidence of a link between the way individual's perceive their health even if it is not based on fact or evidence, and their physical health outcomes, including longevity in older life.

According to Bailis, social psychology's most important contribution to psychology as a whole is the growing recognition that positive views of one's health play a valuable role in motivational and mental health.

Dr. Bailis is conducting a series of experiments to determine how an individual chooses to pursue health when other activities and goals are involved. If the time and effort involved in the pursuit of health appear to be too high and draining resources from other activities, then continuing in an effort to achieve those goals could result in self-criticism and negative moods. Dr. Bailis plans to examine this consequence in detail.

From the Affiliates...

Physical Activity and the Determinants of Cardiovascular Health in Aging Women



Jo-Ann Sawatzky, RN, BN, PhD
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Nursing
Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging

Although cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in North American women, most research in this area has focused on men. Findings are often generalized to women and the unique aspects of women's cardiovascular health risks are overlooked. Heart disease in the aging female, who is often less educated, unemployed, and living below the poverty line, has not been addressed.

The relationship between physical activity and cardiovascular health in aging women was the subject of Jo-Ann Sawatzky's dissertation research (Community Health Sciences, 1999). This research evolved from her earlier work related to women's health, including stress in critical care nurses, and the effects of physical activity on risk factors for cardiovascular disease in women. Dr. Sawatzky recently completed

a follow-up study of the women who were participants in her dissertation research.

Findings from her research on physical activity and cardiovascular health, as reported in the *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, show that as they age, women who are more active and exercise on a regular basis are healthier than those who do not. These individuals tend to belong to a health and fitness facility, have higher socio-economic status and were more likely to report positive health status.

In order to improve cardiovascular health in all women, physical activity should be promoted at both the individual level and the community level. Education programs should include physical activity as a means for an improved healthy lifestyle. Access to information and the opportunity to participate in programs directed at improving cardiovascular health must be made available to everyone.

Dr. Sawatzky is the Principal Investigator of the of the Manitoba Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) Surgery Research Project. Data analysis for this prospective cohort study is currently underway. She is also involved in a project testing the effectiveness of telehealth lines in the chronic disease management of congestive heart failure. She remains active in clinical nursing practice to ensure that her graduate students experience current practice examples.

In Memoriam

Paul A. Fortier

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Paul Fortier, PhD, Distinguished Professor, University of Manitoba, and Research Affiliate, Centre on Aging on October 15, 2005. Dr. Fortier was a strong supporter of the Centre on Aging and actively involved in Centre events. As Chair of the Management Committee of the Undergraduate Interfaculty Option on Aging, he served on the Centre's Advisory Board and Executive Committee. He also served on the Scholarship Adjudication Committee.

Dr. Fortier was a world-renowned scholar with a particular contribution to the role of computers in the Humanities. He received a Research Fellowship (1996-97) from the Centre on Aging for a project entitled *Images of Aging in an Industrial Society*. The project built on his expertise and techniques developed for the study of themes in individuals literary texts. Dr. Fortier systematically studied images of aging found in the vast (1700 text) American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language (ARTFL) database of mainly literary French texts published between 1789 and 1964.

In support of this wide-ranging research on aging, Paul attracted \$285,000 in research grants from the Canada Council/SSHRC, the Alzheimer Society, the UM/SSHRC, all of which were administered through the Centre on Aging.

Research Forum 2006

Building Your CV

Thursday, March 9, 2006
Marshall McLuhan Hall
2nd Floor, University Centre

11:30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.

Panel Presentation: 11:30 a.m.

Judith Chipperfield, PhD
Physical Education and Recreation
Studies/Psychology/Arts

Brenda Austin-Smith, PhD
English/Film Studies/Arts

Frank Schweizer, PhD
Chemistry/Science

Lunch: 12:30 p.m.

Poster Session: 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

RESEARCH FORUM 2006 will open with a panel of researchers representing the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Basic Sciences discussing the importance of various methods of dissemination of research results in order to build a CV. Some of the questions that they will be addressing will be related to poster presentations and what are the next steps. Are posters typically transformed into journal articles, do they inform continuing research or thesis/dissertation research, or do they simply stand alone?

Lunch will be followed by a poster session in which graduate students will receive feedback from faculty members and prizes will be awarded.

Centre on Aging

2006-2007 Student Awards

- To encourage and stimulate student interest in research activity in aging

Three awards are available:

- Centre on Aging Betty Havens Memorial Graduate Fellowship (\$4,000.00)
- Jack MacDonell Scholarship for Research on Aging (\$4,000.00)
- Esther and Samuel Milmot Scholarship (\$500.00)

Eligibility

- For the **Centre on Aging Betty Havens Memorial Graduate Fellowship and Jack MacDonell Scholarship for Research in Aging**: Full-time Master's students, medical residents pursuing full-time research, and Ph.D. students at the University of Manitoba whose studies focus on aging.
- For the **Esther and Samuel Milmot Scholarship**: Full-time students pursuing a program which bears on gerontology either in the Faculty of Arts or in the Faculty of Graduate Studies with the principal field of study in a department of the Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba

Application conditions, all eligibility criteria and application forms are available on the Centre's web site or by telephoning the Centre.

Applications and references must be received no later than **April 3, 2006**.

Alzheimer Society Manitoba

Graduate Student Fellowship

- To enhance knowledge into the cause, treatment, cure and effects of Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders;
- To encourage graduate student interest in Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders;
- To stimulate graduate student research activity in Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders

Two \$3000 Fellowships are available.

Applications and references must be received no later than **April 3, 2006**.

For further information contact the Alzheimer Society Manitoba or the Centre on Aging's web site.

CENTRE ON AGING INFORMATION

The Centre on Aging, established on July 1, 1982, is a university-wide research Centre with a mandate to conduct, encourage, integrate, and disseminate research on all aspects of aging.

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Faculty of Medicine

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