

# Elderfit NEWS

*Pooling Together for Good Health*



**The current Board of Directors for Elderfit, pictured above; there will be some vacancies for the next term. The Board meets every two months for one hour and oversees all aspects of our wonderful program. At the Annual General Meeting on March 24th, we will be seeking willing members to fill those vacancies. Please attend and have your voice heard during discussions of current and future plans.**

**There will be door prize draws for 3 pool cards! We will also enjoy a brief slideshow on the early history of our program. More info on Pg.3.**

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## *Martha's Message*



Although the weather doesn't often pay much attention to the actual calendar, we hope it will as this month progresses! March 21 is supposed to be the first day of Spring, but we wouldn't mind if it came sooner than that. So Happy Spring, everyone, and let's continue enjoying each other and Elderfit!

We have noticed that class sizes in all of our pools have diminished since last fall and we hope that this is not a trend that will continue! Spring is the time some of our snowbirds return, and we look forward to that. If you have got out of the habit of attending regularly, please come back! Elderfit can only continue if we have the participation to justify it. Thanks!

Just a reminder that tax receipts (for the medical claim on your income tax return) are available at the pool you regularly attend. If you have a question about the receipt, please email [elderfit@eastlink.ca](mailto:elderfit@eastlink.ca).

2018 marks our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and a committee of the Board of Directors is making plans for a celebration of that accomplishment. We have had quite a history in that 20 years and are proud that Elderfit has evolved and grown to be the program it is today. There is a lot more about that in this issue. Thank you Nancy MacDonald for the research you have done in preparation for our celebration.

Coming to the pool is a steady and beneficial part of our lives and having the company of each other as we improve our health and mobility has its own pleasant benefits. Thank you for your participation in our program! And thank your volunteer instructor!

# ELDERFIT NEWS

## News Heard Around the Pool

## Drips & Drops



### Elderfit Pool Pass

1 Pool Pass with 10 squares \$60

2 Pool Passes purchased together \$115

3 Pool Passes purchased together \$165

Pool passes can be used for any class at any pool, and do not expire. Passes are required to be marked by the instructor at each class. Passes will be available at each pool for purchase at any time, but **MUST** be presented for each class. Members who do not have

- **Important dates:**
- **No classes at Best Western or Oak Island during Spring Break, March 12-16. Please join us at emOcean or LCLC during that time!**
- **No classes at Oak Island or LCLC on Good Friday, March 30th; open Easter Monday**
- **Instructor Training: Saturday, April 14th at LCLC 10:30-2:00**

Reminder to always thank our dedicated and amazing volunteer instructors! Without them, there would be no Elderfit. We love them all and appreciate their efforts to make our classes fun... and even good for us! All of them are unique and offer a variety of teaching styles which adds to our enjoyment at each pool.

- **The Annual General Meeting for Elderfit will be held on Saturday, March 24th at 10:00 am. It will be at St. Joseph's Parish Hall - the parking lot and entry door are at 110 Queen Street in Bridgewater. At this meeting we hear reports on the previous year and discuss upcoming plans for 2018/19. We elect our Board of Directors. The meeting usually lasts about an hour. Hope to see you all there!**
- **There will be light refreshments available.**



# ELDERFIT NEWS

## The Birth of Elderfit...



In 1998, Dr. George McKiel was busy writing proposals, soliciting financial support and knocking on doors to spread the message about a vision he had for a comprehensive exercise program to help the seniors living in Lunenburg County. He called his program “Elderfit Lunenburg”.

George did secure funding from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Lunenburg County Community Health Board to proceed with a pilot program. Elderfit began with a group of 26 seniors, who had their health assessed for a baseline by local physiotherapist, Darlene Sanford (they were assessed again after the program to record improvements).

The Elderfit then engaged in a 16 week program that included 3 mornings a week at Jo’s Dive Shop (emOcean) participating in aquasize classes (led by Jackie Lee Chisholm, physiotherapist and lifeguard). The other 2 mornings they met at the Legion where they did aerobic exercises. The Legion provided free space for these exercise classes as well as for the information/discussion sessions offered biweekly by medical professionals for the Elderfit members and open to the public. Topics included Arthritis, Bone Density, Yoga, Managing Stress, etc.

Blue Cross became interested after the positive results were apparent, and offered “scholarships” for seniors who needed assistance to join Elderfit... this was their statement of belief that health promotion would significantly alter the demands on Medicare.

Elderfit is one of the legacies of Dr. George McKiel. We will always appreciate his vision, drive and determination to support healthy living for the seniors of Lunenburg County. In the past 20 years, over 1000 seniors have benefited from participating in Elderfit! Many have written testimonials claiming their improved lifestyle was due in part to attending Elderfit classes on a regular basis.

Today, Elderfit is a successful, popular program that offers 12 classes per week, at 4 different pools. There are over 200 members currently. Many local doctors and other health professionals recommend our program for issues like recovery from surgeries, maintaining good posture and balance, strengthening of muscles and joints, and many other benefits. We are all fortunate to live in a community that promotes healthy lifestyles for our aging population, and can celebrate that we are each taking up that challenge by attending Elderfit regularly!



## The Incredible Life of Dr. George McKiel!

The founder of Elderfit, Dr. George McKiel, led a very busy and fulfilling life. He was born in 1924 in New Brunswick and moved to Devon, England when he was 2. He returned to Saint John, NB in 1937 and graduated from Saint John Vocational School in 1940.

In May, 1942 George joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. Upon completion of Navigation School as a Pilot Officer, he was assigned to Canadian 6 Group, flying Lancasters on bombing runs over Germany. His plane was shot down in 1944 and he was interned at the infamous Stalag Luft #3 in Poland. While there, PO McKiel was involved with the famous **“Great Escape”**. Although not selected to actually escape, he participated in the tunnelling process, which allowed 75 of his fellow prisoners to make good their attempt.

Following his repatriation to Canada in 1945, he was discharged from service in 1946. George continued his life of service by pursuing his education; graduating in 1950 with a Bachelors of Science. He then obtained an Education Diploma from McGill University in 1952, a Master of Arts from Wesleyan University in Connecticut in '62, culminating with his PhD from the University of London in 1970.

Throughout the years, George taught and promoted health and recreation as a lifestyle. He held many different positions, even a term in Australia revising and updating their Nursing Education Program. He returned to Ontario and retired in 1987, after forty years in academia.

In retirement he didn't slow down, working on various Boards in the medical field in Ontario. In 1995 he and his wife, Jean, moved to Nova Scotia and continued to serve in their new community. He became a Provincial Board member for the VON, and served on the Community Health Board of Lunenburg and Queens Counties. In '98 he founded Elderfit and worked tirelessly to promote it, making it a respected program that is recognized by most healthcare professionals in the community to this day!

He continued his work by obtaining two years of grant money from Health Canada and Veterans' Affairs to champion seniors again by developing a “Falls Prevention Program”.

In December of 2010, Dr. McKiel stepped down from his involvement with Elderfit Lunenburg; he passed away in May of 2013.

**The many, many hundreds of seniors in Lunenburg County who have benefitted from taking part in Elderfit are an ongoing testament to this amazing man and his dedication to improving the lifestyle of so many people of all ages. We will continue to carry his torch!**



*For those of you who didn't have the pleasure of knowing Lindy Guild, she is an original Charter Member of Elderfit, a longtime Instructor, Board Member, and wonderful Social Convenor! Lindy has done it all for Elderfit and she was very respected on our Board for her common sense approach to making decisions. She's also one of the nicest people you could ever meet (she was my first instructor and got me hooked on Elderfit!). She will be sorely missed, but we all wish her the best as she enjoys life close to her family in the UK! Thanks for everything, Lindy, we won't forget you!*

George McKiel was the guiding light behind Elderfit; after getting funds from Veterans Affairs, he gathered a group of 26 for testing a 'before and after' program. I was one of those lucky folk and was not surprised to find after three months of pool and land classes that my flexibility and power functions had improved immensely. So I was hooked! Gradually we were transformed from a very casual club to a charitable organization and ended up with a Board to oversee and direct.

We started using the Lunenburg pool, as that was shallow enough to hold 30 of us, and continued there for several often rocky years with inadequate management until they decided not to have us there anymore. Martha joined the group in 2000 and she was the 'saviour' of the program as she scouted out the alternate pools for us; so we used the various hotels as substitutes. Much is owed to her for doing this without pay or a great deal of help, especially as George had retired from Elderfit by then. She was also instrumental in getting us established at the LC as well as keeping a class going in Oak Island, the Best Western, Days Inn, and returning to Lunenburg again under different management. So a huge thank you to Martha!

.As we grew so did our social activities and although many ideas were tried we finally settled on a Summer and Christmas lunch with other events added that we felt might be fun. There are still many other directions that Elderfit could take but it all depends on volunteers being available to carry on and help out.

As you may imagine I am truly sorry not to be a part of it now and wish I were younger and able to initiate a club here in the UK. Any volunteers out there?

Elderfit helped me in so many ways to cope with retirement and subsequent deaths in the family. I always knew that somebody would be there to cheer me up and get me through the tough times. I shall miss it all very much and will think of you all at the 20th anniversary.

May there be many more!

Cheers and farewell, Lindy

## Meet Betty McLain!

I first came to Elderfit at the request of my sister-in-law. I didn't want to come because I couldn't swim and felt uncomfortable in water. But I tried it and loved it right away. After months of attending I decided I would like to become an instructor. I truly enjoy the Elderfit program, not only for the exercise, but also for the social aspect of the program. What a wonderful way to exercise. I have many health issues that make it hard to exercise, but Elderfit makes it easy and fun. So now a little about me. I am a transplant to Bridgewater and moved here from the valley about 10 years ago. I am a mother of two and a stepmother of two. Those grown children have made me the proud grandmother of 8 awesome children. I am a small business owner of a very cute, country decor shop called Prim Country Creations. This store is my second baby. So now I have three passions...my store, my grandkids, and Elderfit!



## OurInstructors~

*Our Chief Instructor, Martha Saunders, works along with these Elderfit Certified and dedicated volunteer instructors who, together, lead the classes that Elderfit offers. The instructors attend semiannual workshops to remain current in techniques and to improve the quality of their instructions. Anyone wishing to become an Elderfit Certified instructor is invited to contact Martha for additional information on how to become an Elderfit*

### Instructors

Nancy Allin  
Sylvia Brown  
Ellie Burt  
Janette Church  
Shirley Creaser  
Brenda Fancey  
Michele Haddal  
Liz Hubley  
Lynne McDormand  
Susan McDormand  
Wendy McKinnon  
Betty McLain  
Barbara Proux  
Ella Rafuse  
Susan Swallow



**Our Chief Instructor,  
Martha Saunders**

### **Best Western Hotel, Bridgewater**

Hwy.10, at Exit 12 off Hwy 103

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Classes begin at 9:00am



### **Atlantica Hotel And Marina, Oak Island**

36 Treasure Drive, Western Shore

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

Classes begin at 10:30am



### **Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, Bridgewater**

135 North Park Street

All weekdays

Classes begin at 10:00am



### **emOcean Wellness Center, Lunenburg**

296 Lincoln Street

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Classes begin at 9:30am



### **Elderfit**

21 Feindel Street

Wileville, NS B4V 5K6

902 766-0272

[elderfit@eastlink.ca](mailto:elderfit@eastlink.ca)





## Elderfit Pool Schedule

**Best Western Hotel, Bridgewater: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00am**

**Atlantica, Oak Island: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 10:30am**

**Lunenburg County Lifestyle Center, Bridgewater: Mondays to Fridays 10:00am**

**emOcean Wellness Center, Lunenburg: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30am**

**\* Please be advised that our next Elderfit gathering will be the Annual Summer Lunch, which will be held this year at Osprey Ridge Golf Club on Thursday, June 7th. We will be inviting some former members and enjoying a slideshow featuring our 20 year history. Watch for information about times, the meal, cost, etc!**

**\* You can also mark your calendars with Thursday, Dec.6th for the Christmas Lunch at the Lunenburg Fire Hall, where Elderfit members celebrated Christmas together in the early years!**

Members, please be aware that when we take Elderfit photos at events/pools they could be posted on our Website or on Facebook. If you do not want your image online, please inform the photographer! We have added this consent to our waiver forms.

Photos for our Newsletter and Display Boards are used for local Elderfit purposes, but it is always your choice to be included or not, so please let the photographer know your choice!

### Volunteer Board of Directors

**President**  
*Jeanne Fay*

**Vice President**  
*Nancy MacDonald*

**Secretary**  
*Peg Widdes*

**Treasurer**  
*Martha Saunders*

*Sue Nichols*

*Marilyn Branson*

*Sue Rushton*

*Brenda Fancey*

*Eileen Ross*

*Shirley Creaser*

*Rosalie Studley*

*Susan Swallow*

### For More Information:

Contact *Martha Saunders*

Email: [elderfit@eastlink.ca](mailto:elderfit@eastlink.ca)

Web: [www.elderfitlunenburg.ca](http://www.elderfitlunenburg.ca)

Phone: 902-766-0272

If anyone has any concerns or questions about Elderfit or our facilities, please see, write or call Martha. Your opinions, suggestions and ideas are important to us. We can't fix what we don't know about: **Martha Saunders**: 766-0272 or email: [elderfit@eastlink.ca](mailto:elderfit@eastlink.ca)