



# SARATOGA VITAL AGING NETWORK

## NEWSLETTER

**November 2011**

**The mission of SVAN is to promote self-determination, civic engagement, and personal growth for people as they age.**

SVAN welcomes you to the third edition of the Saratoga Vital Aging Network Newsletter. Here you will find information on events and happenings for seniors in the Saratoga County area, as well as a wealth of information that will assist you in this forever-changing stage of life.

If you are not a member, please think about joining SVAN. You can be a part of SVAN by filling out the form at the end of this newsletter. Your support will help us move forward with ongoing initiatives for seniors.

### **SVAN IS FOR YOU!**

**WHO:** YOU who are AGING into the third phase of life.

**WHERE:** Here in SARATOGA!

**WHAT:** Connecting with each other and all generations within the community. NETWORKING!

**HOW:** By being healthy, active, and involved through service and work, VITAL!

**WHEN:** Now, every day!

**WHY:** Vital aging benefits everyone in the community!

### **What's in a Name?**

Saratoga Vital Aging Network (SVAN) is a project of the Saratoga Institute. This means that SVAN is a not-for-profit organization under the 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit status of the Saratoga Institute. Therefore, it is not necessary for SVAN to have a board of directors but rather SVAN has chosen to identify its "board" as the Leadership Council.

At some time in the future a change in this status may be explored. For the foreseeable future SVAN will be led by the Leadership Council while benefiting from the support of the Saratoga Institute including its counsel, in-kind support and access to its resources.

Over the next six months SVAN will be making appropriate changes to reflect this on SVAN brochures, publications, communications and the SVAN Web-site.

### **SVAN November Event**

#### **BROWN BAG LUNCH AND A MOVIE!**

*Bring a friend or a neighbor and a sandwich.  
We'll have beverages and cookies!*

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10 – Noon to 3:00PM**

**The Arts Center, 320 Broadway, Saratoga Springs**

#### ***The Straight Story***

**A 1999 Film Directed by David Lynch  
Starring Richard Farnsworth, Sissy Spacek  
And Harry Dean Stanton**

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## A Little Help from Our Friends

SVAN could use a little help from SVAN friends. Currently fourteen volunteers who are members of the Leadership Council are planning programs, writing newsletters, publicizing events, keeping on top of issues that affect seniors, answering e-mail inquiries and managing the Web-site etc. etc, etc,.

**SVAN could use a little help from our friends.** If you have a talent or an inclination to help with publicity, program, planning, grant writing, fund raising, putting together a newsletter or managing a Web-site there's a place for **YOU** on a SVAN committee.

Please contact SVAN at [dsarno@saratogavitalaging.org](mailto:dsarno@saratogavitalaging.org) or to find out more about SVAN go the Web-site [www.saratogavitalaging.org](http://www.saratogavitalaging.org). The SVAN Leadership Council looks forward to hearing from you.

## All Politics is Local

"All politics is local." When Tip O'Neil coined this phrase he was explaining how the problems and concerns of towns and cities around the country affect the actions of their representatives and senators in Washington, D.C. Remember this when you go to the polls on November 8, 2011. Whether you will have the opportunity to elect a State Supreme Court Judge or Town Supervisor your vote counts. Some of these same local elected officials may move on to hold a state or national office.

During the next few weeks before Election Day on November 8, 2011 get out and hear what those seeking office have to say. The League of Women Voters sponsors candidate forums all over the county. Check the Web-site for one near you [www.lwvsaratoga.org](http://www.lwvsaratoga.org)

After Election Day continue to listen to what the elected officials have to say. The best place to hear how an elected official may or may not represent you is to attend a town meeting, a city council meeting, a county supervisors meeting or attend a New York State Assembly or Senate session.

## More Information on "The Straight Story"

This film is based on a true story of Alvin Straight's journey across Iowa and Wisconsin - to see his estranged brother – riding his 30 year-old lawnmower with a small trailer hitched behind it. The film follows Alvin's journey across rural America, the people he meets, his impact on their lives, and theirs on his.

This film depicts the experiences of a man dealing with his own mortality, mistakes made and the important and lasting bonds of family. Join SVAN for a stimulating discussion on your mortality and the intricate issues of life we all face.

**Schedule: Noon, Sandwich; 12:30pm, Movie; 2:30pm, Short Discussion. BE THERE!**

**NOTE: Mark Your Calendars now for December's Event, "Friends, Sandwiches and Stories" on Friday December 16 at 10:30a.m, S. S. Library. More information soon!**

## ARE YOU HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR MEMORY? ARE YOU WORRIED IT MAY BE SOMETHING SERIOUS?

*Here's some helpful information from  
The Alzheimer's Association*

### Signs of Alzheimer's

Poor judgment and decision making

Inability to manage a budget

Losing track of the date or the season

Difficulty having a conversation

Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps to find them

### Typical Age Related Changes

Making a bad decision once in a while

Missing a monthly payment

Forgetting which day it is and remembering it later

Sometimes forgetting what word to use

Losing things from time to time

### **Some Simple Ideas to Help Improve Your Memory**

According to a recent article in USA Weekend, "neuroscientists are making great strides in unlocking the mysteries of why we forget – and identifying techniques to help us remember."

Below is a condensed version of their suggestions for improving your memory.

1. When you've just met someone, say their name out loud and try associating something fun or interesting with their name. World memory champion, Ed Cook, suggests, "When remembering a person's name make your experience more vivid."
2. Stay Social! Meet friends for coffee in the morning. Find activities that will get you out and talking to others – volunteer for a community organization. Think of fun activities to do with others, anything that will keep you in lively conversation.
3. Work your brain! Take a languages class, learn how to play bridge, play scrabble, read non-fiction books, or audit a class at your local college. Write letters instead of e-mailing all the time or keep a diary, highlight important events and experiences.
4. Think Healthy! Take a long walk 3 or 4 times a week or take an exercise class. Exercise is just as beneficial for your brain as your body. Eat well and get a good night's sleep. A recent study at Stanford University indicates that, "Regardless of the total amount of sleep, a minimal unit of uninterrupted sleep is crucial for memory consolidation."

*"The advantage of a bad **memory** is that one enjoys several times the same good things for the first time."*

**Friedrich Nietzsche – 1844 -1900**

## What Will Our Grandchildren Say?

Most senior citizens age 65 years old or older remember some story or snippet told to them about life during the Great Depression by either their parents or grandparents. The stories went like this:

“There was no money for shoes so I wore a pair of rubber boots to school when I was in the sixth grade.”

“When company came to visit on Sunday afternoon we children sat against the wall and refused the dessert because “we didn’t like it.”

“We got up at 4:00 a.m. to help milk the cows and then walked six miles to get to school by 7:30 a.m. School started early so farm children could be home to help with the milking again at 4:00 p.m.”

“When I was ten years old I spent my evenings sitting around the table with my mother and sisters hand sewing gloves for the local factory to help bring in money for the family.”

Reading about and living through today’s economy makes one wonder if our grandchildren will have similar experiences to tell about the Great Recession. The stories might go like this:

“Internet service became a luxury both at home and in school so I had to go to the library to do my research for a term paper.”

“When I was in sixth grade our family had to sell one of the family cars so I had to walk to school or catch a school bus an hour before school started.”

“I never had a new pair of jeans. I got my older sister’s hand-me-downs. She was always very skinny which meant I had to watch what I ate so I could fit into her jeans.”

“Tuesday of every other week my brother and I got up at 5:30 a.m. and checked through the neighbor’s recyclables for return deposit bottles. After school we cashed them in so we could have a little change to jingle in our pockets.”

What goes around comes around – isn’t that what they say? What will our grandchildren say about the greatest generation and/or the baby boomers? Two very different generations but both were responsible for moving our nation forward into the future with dedication, courage, new ideas and hope. Will they say, “They had the experience, they had the numbers, they had the power but they didn’t have the fight.” Or will they say, “They had the experience, they had the numbers, they had the power and they helped to lead the way back to a united and prosperous nation.”

I’m guessing that these two generations will be heard from. They will vote. They will speak up in public meetings. They will use the power of their experience and numbers to make a difference. They will not stand by and just watch.

**SVAN Leadership Council**

Beverly Becker

Mary Chamberlain

Laura Chodos

Sandy Cross

Phil Diamond

Helen Endres

Nancy Fairbanks

Edwin Hammond, Jr.

Margie Ingram

Scott B. Knox

Jackie Marcelle

Carol Obloy

Ann Quinn

Dee Sarno

**Check the SVAN web site for the latest information about SVAN activities and events of interest. [www.saratogavitalaging.org](http://www.saratogavitalaging.org)**

**SVAN's plan of action for YOU:**

- **To promote self-determination through:**
  - Health and wellness programs
  - Knowledge of community resources
  - Development of personal strengths
- **To promote civic engagement through:**
  - Being informed about issues impacting aging
  - Participating in public policy decisions
  - Advocacy for Vital Aging

**To promote personal growth through:**

- Opportunities for continued education
- Options for meaningful work
- Service as a volunteer
- Connections to the community
- Cultural exploration



Want to find out more about Saratoga Vital Aging Network?  
Become a Friend of SVAN and receive e-mail notification of events, member benefits and information

**Saratoga Vital Aging Network  
110 Spring Street  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
[dsarno@saratogavitalaging.org](mailto:dsarno@saratogavitalaging.org)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, I want to be a Friend of SVAN. Enclosed is my check for \$15.00       I wish to make a donation to SVAN Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to: Saratoga Institute - SVAN**

If you are already a SVAN Friend, please pass this form onto one of your friends.