

Having fun at summer sale

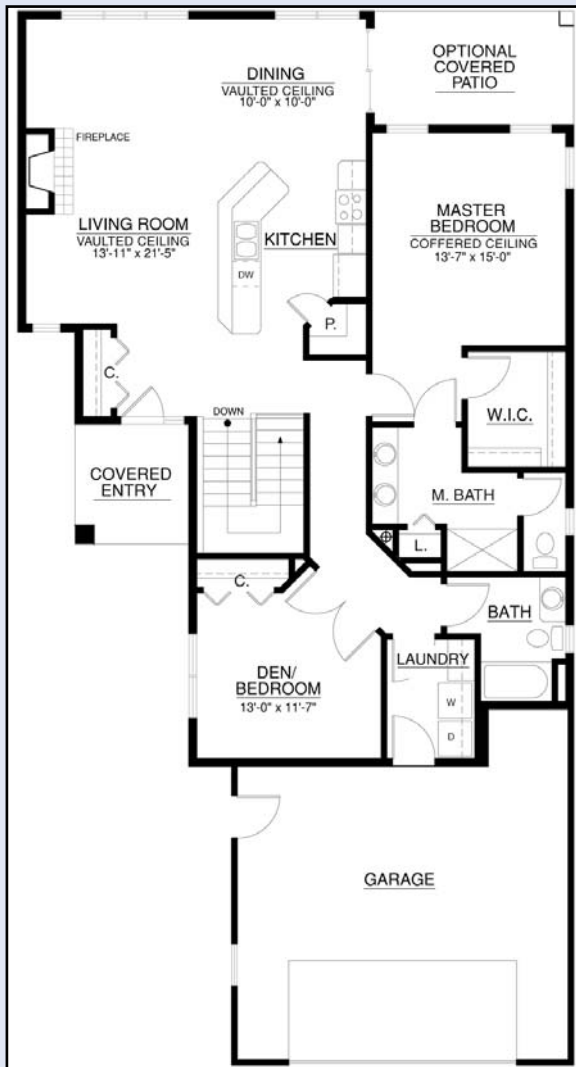
The Wedgewood Community Garage Sale had all of the elements of a fun and successful event—lots of donations and shoppers, great weather, and tasty food. The third-annual garage sale raised more than \$1,600 for the Fund-raising Committee. Also, residents, family members, and staff from the Health Services Neighbourhood provided donations and volunteered at the sale. Some of the proceeds from the sale go to the Health Services Neighbourhood’s Resident Comfort Fund.

After the sale, The Jasper Place Lions Club hauled away two truckloads of unsold items, which the club distributed to families who have recently moved to Canada and are in need. Touchmark also used \$100 from the garage sale proceeds to present a donation to the Whitemud Lifestyle Options community that recently experienced a fire that displaced residents. “They need to know that people care,” says Fundraising Chairman Al Rempel. ■



Above: Resident Jeannette Kusovac sells tickets for a spa gift basket, donated by Heather Flewwelling from Touch Cuts Salon. Erin Wood, daughter of staff member Annette Wood, took home the prize. Left: Happy shoppers Nettie White and Fred Bray show some of their purchases.

The perfect place for your welcome mat



With 1,617 square feet of living space, vaulted ceilings, and a gas fireplace, the Fairmont bungalow offers spacious comfort with several upgrades. A corner pantry, ample storage, and a large island with bar are some of the highlights of the impressive kitchen, with easy access to the deck for seamless summer entertaining. The large master bedroom can be a private retreat, and the master bathroom features an oversized shower with two seats. This two-bedroom, two-bathroom home has an extra room for an office, library, or third bedroom. The two-car garage offers space for storage and parking. Call today for a personal presentation.



Suite 223 offers 950 square feet of living space with special touches that make daily life a bit easier. This two-bedroom home has one bathroom with a walk-in shower and grab bars. Conveniently located on the second floor with access to Assisted Living services, the home has a large hallway, ample storage, and a corner kitchenette. Call or stop by today and discover the "suite" life at Touchmark.

Authors in Residence Series

Throughout 2009, Touchmark is featuring stories about authors (and their published works) who reside at Touchmark communities in the United States and Canada. The year-long series is a new aspect of Touchmark's award-winning Let Your Spirit Soar—a component of the Life Enrichment/Wellness program.

Francis Ruiter—Never a dull moment

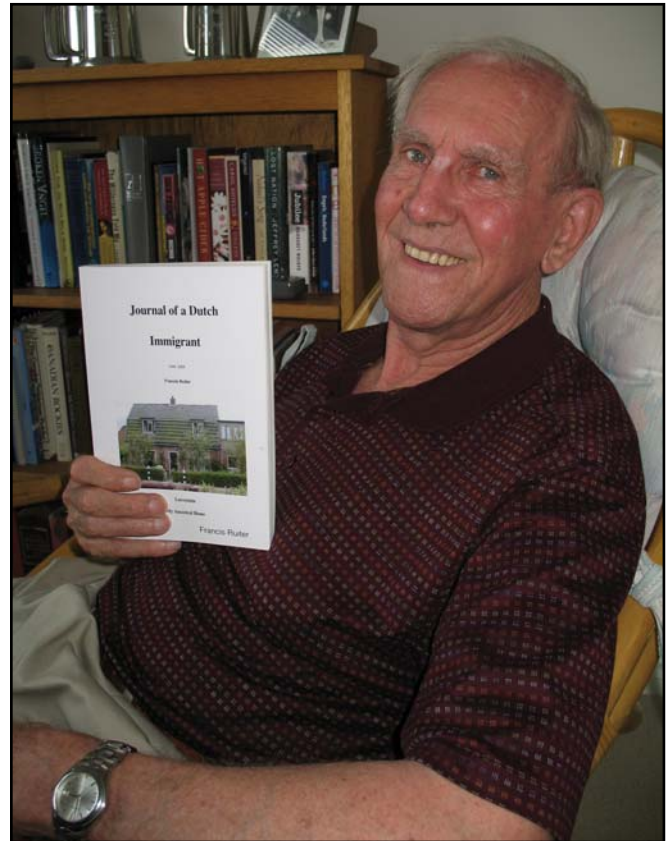
Some authors will tell you they were “born that way,” born with a special gift for writing prose or poetry. Others, like Francis Ruiter, may tell you they accidentally discovered their talent much later in life, only after a sudden twist of fate.

“I’ve thought about that,” says Francis. “If it hadn’t been for my accident, would I have ever written this book?”

Francis was born in Holland (The Netherlands), in 1929. In 1948, just before he turned 19, Francis and two of his cousins decided to visit family in British Columbia rather than get recruited into the army. The young men boarded a ship, crossed the Atlantic, and then traveled to their uncle’s small ranch in Houston, B.C.

Francis ended up staying in that area for several years, working on his uncle’s ranch during the summers and helping harvest and mill timber during the winters.

In 1952, Francis moved to Edmonton, Alberta. Four years later, he met and married his wife, Grace, also a Dutch



Francis Ruiter

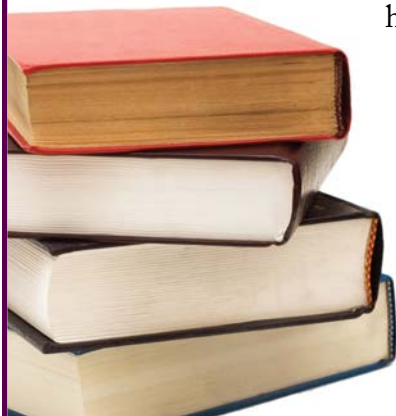
immigrant, and they raised three daughters.

The adventurous spirit that sent him across the Atlantic was always a driving force in Francis’s life. He traveled a lot and held various jobs after his early ranching and timber days. He was a station agent for the Canadian National Railway; then he worked for a seed company for about five years before becoming a life insurance agent for the next 30 years.

Throughout his life, he has been physically active. “I was very athletic and did most sports,” says Francis. He ran marathons, cycled, backpacked, hiked, canoed, and swam. “You name it. I was always on the go,” he says. “I never got bored.” With Francis, there was never a dull moment.

A twist of fate

Then, in 1978 Francis had an accident that changed everything. He lost his left leg below the knee, (*cont.*)



(cont.)

severely restricting the easy, athletic mobility that had been such an integral part of his lifestyle.

Understandably, Francis had a difficult transition to make. “With my suddenly reduced mobility, I experienced some depression and quickly got bored,” he recalls. “I was still traveling and going places, but I was missing something.”

One day, Francis noticed an ad in the paper announcing an introductory course on creative writing. “I said, ‘Hey! Here we are! Maybe that’s what I should do!’” And that’s when Francis’s focus turned to writing.

Education and publication

About 12 years ago, Francis enrolled in his first creative writing course. He and his wife spent winters in Apache Junction, Arizona, so his first course was at a university near there. He began writing short vignettes of his life and sharing them with his classmates. “From everyone’s comments, I thought, ‘Hey, I’m not too bad!’ I might as well keep writing.” From then on, he took writing courses each winter (including several online correspondence courses) in both Edmonton and Arizona.

Journal of a Dutch Immigrant was not originally conceived as a book. It started with one short episode about his life. With each new writing course, Francis added another story until he had quite a collection. It covers the span of his life, from his earliest memories in Holland, to his Canadian immigration, to present day.

Francis was reading to an appreciative Edmonton group one day when they suggested that he compile his stories into a book. “I was surprised,” he says. But that’s exactly what he did. In 2008, Francis put them all together and self-published his first book. Already, he has sold or given out over 200 volumes.

Enjoying life at Touchmark

Francis and Grace Rüter have three grown daughters, eight grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Two daughters live in Edmonton, while the third lives just a couple hours away.

The Rütters were the first to move into the Touchmark community in November 2005. “Touchmark is very good at keeping everyone on the go,” says Francis. “There are all kinds of stuff going on here. We are never bored.”

To keep his heart in shape, Francis swims one kilometer, four times a week at the YMCA. He laughs and says, “I’m also on our kitchen floor four times a week doing exercises to keep my muscles loose.”

Francis prides himself on being a good listener when others need it and on his sense of humor. He knows his humor helped him heal, both emotionally and physically, after his accident, and readers will appreciate this gentle wit throughout *Journal of a Dutch Immigrant*. “I think you’ll find a lot of laughs—and a few tears,” says Francis.

At one point, Francis comments that *Journal of a Dutch Immigrant* is the only book he has written. “I don’t expect to write another.” Moments later, however, he shares, “I’m working on poetry now. I only have about 30 poems so far, but if I can get 40 to 50 together, I may print them, too.”

For Francis and those around him, there’s never a dull moment.

A copy of Francis’ book, *Journal of a Dutch Immigrant*, can be found in the Touchmark library. You can purchase your own copy from the author himself or order it online at www.Lulu.com. (Be sure to ask for the latest version. Francis acknowledges that he can’t seem to stop editing it.) ■

Touchmark nominates neighborhood pharmacy

As a result of their exemplary service to Touchmark residents and the Edmonton community, Hawstone Home Health Care Pharmacy received the W.L. Boddy Pharmacy of the Year award by the Alberta College of Pharmacists.

In a letter nominating Hawstone Home Health Care Pharmacy for the award, Assisted Living Manager Maureen Tiedemann writes, "... The pharmacists have worked with me to develop an effective and safe administration and accountability of all medication services. They have also provided daily delivery services of personal care items and medication changes, often within the hour of ordering. I have been able to rely on the expertise of Pharmacist Jordan Allen and her colleagues for accuracy of information and clarification of medication issues."

Nancy Scrymgeour, daughter of resident Bobby Scrymgeour, echoed Maureen's sentiments. "As the daughter of an aging mother, the services provided by this pharmacy are second to none," she writes.

The award was presented to Jordan Allen, co-owner and manager of the pharmacy. Jordan shares her philosophy of service, "It's karma. Treat others with respect and be good to them, and they'll help you, as well." ■

Citizenship—a call to action



Marge Coalman, EdD
Vice President of
Wellness & Programs,
Touchmark

Each July, cities and towns of all sizes in Canada and the USA display flags, hold neighborhood barbecues, sing anthems, and watch parades. Families, friends, and dignitaries gather to celebrate freedom and independence. This is an ideal time to review and renew individual commitments to citizenship.

"Be the change you want to see in the world." —*Mahatma Gandhi*

Good citizens understand and accept the fact that they have a responsibility to their neighbors, the community, the environment, and the world. They realize it takes commitment—and actions:

- Do the right thing, even when no one is looking.
- Do the right thing, even when it is difficult.
- Share your time and skills with the community to make it better, cleaner, safer, and more accessible.
- Conserve resources—re-use and recycle.
- Reflect on how your actions affect the welfare of others.
- Lend a hand when you can.

- Stay informed on issues, and voice your opinion by voting.
- Be a citizen of the world and contribute to global well-being.

Being a good citizen requires each of us to resolve to work together to overcome the differences that isolate and separate us from each other and our shared future. Applying life lessons while looking toward the future is a skill that many older adults have developed. The unparalleled changes that have occurred in the last 100 years have provided a testing ground for change. The lessons are available to all of us who ask and listen.

At Touchmark, we welcome and nurture diverse opinions and practical solutions to complex challenges. To participate in intellectual and stimulating discussions, contact Brenda Edmonds, Life Enrichment/Wellness director. Your opinions and perspective are welcome! ■

Marge joins ICAA committee

Vice President of Wellness & Programs Marge Coalman, EdD, recently received the honor of being appointed to the ICAA Advisory Board. As a board member, Marge will continue supporting the goals of the ICAA, which connect professionals who, in turn, help older adults.

Coming Events

Sunday, July 26, 7 pm

Opera Club presentation. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Fireside Lounge.

Tuesday, July 28, 11 am

Lunch and tour of Westlock, Alberta, including a stop at the Westlock Pioneer Museum. The museum tour features the Weise Phonograph exhibit, one of the largest collections of phonographs in Western Canada. Cost: \$10, plus money for lunch.

Wednesday, July 29

Wellness Day. Public welcome. Health talk with Cindy Gordon Director of Rehabilitation Services at Bridges Support Services. *Living with Hearing Loss*.

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3 pm

Take a breath of fresh outdoor air while raising your heart rate at the new Rhythm & Moves class. The class is led by Life Enrichment/Wellness Assistant Sharon Low and is held on the East Activity Room patio, weather permitting.

Homonyms ... words that sound the same but are spelled differently.

For example, *flower* and *flour*. Using this list, write a homonym for each word.

beet _____	one _____
hoarse _____	heal _____
prince _____	they're _____
plain _____	bored _____
foul _____	you _____
pale _____	for _____
nose _____	cruise _____
sent _____	hi _____
whale _____	

Receiving national award

Touchmark's sister community, Touchmark at Mt. Bachelor Village, recently received national acclaim from the National Association of Home Builders. Touchmark's Cliff Lodge and Terrace Lodge were named Best Independent Living Community and received a Gold Award (the highest given) at the 2009 Best of 50+ Housing Awards. Learn more by visiting TouchmarkBend.com/news.