

Seniors' Spotlight

Staying active key to graceful aging

By Chad Ingram

Reprinted from Haliburton Highlands County Life, November 19, 2016

The best way to age with grace is to stay busy, both physically and mentally, says Bill Obee.

I think you've got to keep both your mind and body active," says Obee, sitting in his living room overlooking Twelve Mile Lake. "The quickest way to age, I think, is to quit doing things."

A retired engineer who worked for Haliburton County and later the Ontario Good Roads Association, Obee serves on various boards within Haliburton County, including the Staunworth Non-Profit Housing Corporation Board, the county's medical professional recruitment committee and Minden Hills' roads advisory committee.

A former Minden Hills councilor and Haliburton County Development Corporation board member (he served nine years with that organization), he's involved with the local community kitchen and spends his spare time curling, cycling, golfing, gardening and travelling.

He was a member of the Minden Hills disaster relief committee following the 2013 flood and in his role with the Minden Rotary Club, Obee will travel to Cambodia this winter, delivering bicycles to the children and helping to build a school.

For some 20 years, he's also been a member of CARP.

"What I saw they were doing for seniors, I thought made sense," Obee says. "It looked very positive."

Founded in 1983, CARP is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that advocates a vision for aging well in Canada, including issues of pension reform, health care, eliminating elder abuse and creating age-friendly communities.

It has 300,000 members across the country.



Bill Obee reads in his favourite chair at his home on Twelve Mile Lake. A member of the Canadian Association for Retired Persons for some 20 years, Obee is a member of various advisory committees in the community and will travel to Cambodia this winter to work on Rotary Club projects. CHAD INGRAM Staff

“Seniors were forgotten, I think, in a way,” Obee said, adding he believes CARP has helped bring seniors’ issues to the forefront. “It’s made government and people take a real look at seniors.”

Not only are many seniors still active members of their communities, Obee stresses that in many communities with older demographics, such as Haliburton County, they are economic drivers.

“Seniors who are retirees have pensions and investments they bring with them,” Obee says, adding many of them have more disposable funds than younger people. “They spend money.”

A resident of Haliburton County for 40 years, Obee has witnessed many changes in the community.

“The biggest change, I think, is that we are 12-months a year now,” he says, referring to what has traditionally been the county’s seasonal economy. “The availability of products ... in the wintertime, fresh produce was hard to come by.”

Another transformation has been that of traditional lakeside cottages into year-round homes.

“They’ve gone from cottages to houses on lakes. It’s brought so many people up here permanently,” he says, adding he understands why.

“I think Haliburton is a fantastic place. It’s just absolutely gorgeous.”

The Senior Spotlight feature recognizes local seniors who are nominated by CARP’s local chapter in Haliburton.