

SENIORS

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gging isn't for all but it could be
some seniors and their families



JIM STEWART

designed to locate and respond quickly when vulnerable seniors lose their way or need help. It's also a gross enough invasion of privacy to make anyone cringe. If this is the way of the future for everybody, we can kiss our private lives goodbye.

But a case can be made for electronic tagging of people – elderly or otherwise – who suffer

from severe physical or mental deficiencies. The privacy issue doesn't seem all that important when we hear about Alzheimer's patients who wander off and whose decomposed bodies are found weeks or months later.

With proper safeguards (informed consent of the wearer, sound medical authority, access to monitors restricted to those who need to know), electronic tagging could be a source of comfort and security to many seniors and their families. It could preserve dignity, save lives and, of course, make certain retirement homes more efficient and profitable.

Q. An insurance company whose name is new to me sent me an application form for travel insurance that offers very attractive rates. How can I check on

the reliability of this company?
R.M.

A. Insurance companies doing business in Quebec must be registered with the province's Inspector General of Financial Institutions. You can check the register free of charge at the office in Place Victoria, or on the Internet at www.igif.gouv.qc.ca. For a small fee, you can check by phone at the toll-free number, (888) 291-4443. The Better Business Bureau of Montreal, at (514) 286-9281, may also have information about the company.

Q. Would your male readers be interested in learning about barbershop singing? I'm a member of the Barbershop Society Men's Chorus in Saint-Lambert, composed mostly of seniors. We have a great time. It's a popular hobby and a true art form, so

anyone interested could give me a call.

André Doré

A. I wouldn't be surprised if a few men who have been singing all alone in the shower might like to try a little public harmony. They can reach Mr. Doré at (450) 465-6620, Local 224.

Moving? As winter looms, the thoughts of many seniors who find it increasingly difficult to remain in their own homes turn to relocating in a residence. It's a big decision that requires lots of planning. Counselors at the CLSC can help, especially if, for financial reasons, the senior is looking for a public, subsidized retirement home.

In the private realm, the Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montreal, at (514)

527-1375, publishes an annual, bilingual, objective and inexpensive guide to private residences for self-sufficient seniors.

Personalized help is also available from Helping Seniors, a placement agency which, for a reasonable fee, will scout residences, make recommendations and provide transportation to and from potential homes. For information and a free booklet called *The 65+ Key Questions You Must Ask When Looking for a Residence*, call Marie-Claude Giguère at (514) 748-7485.

You can write to Jim Stewart care of the Arts & Life Section, The Gazette, 250 St. Antoine St. W., Montreal H2Y 3R7, or call (514) 987-2553 and leave your question or comment, with your name and phone number. Personal replies by mail cannot be provided.

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