

of town five miles to St. Gregory's Separate School. She had to be on time to ring the school bell.

After school she ran home again to help out on the 30-acre market-garden farm.

At high school, then named Prince Edward County Vocational Institute, she excelled in track, baseball and basketball. After completing Grade 12, she left Picton to work in Montreal, then married Harold Thompson in 1949. Eventually they moved to Belleville where Harold, also a collector of trophies in the sport of archery, worked for 30 years for a grocery chain.

The Thompsons celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 3 — "so we know each other," Sarah says.

Sarah raised a son and a daughter but continued to run, despite a retina problem that developed after the birth of her second child.

However, she only became a serious competitor when, almost blind following a stroke, she attended a White Cane Club event in 1979. As a speaker outlined sports that were open to the blind, one member commented, "But we're too old for all that stuff."

Never one to ignore a challenge, Sarah began competing in the 3,000 metres, the 100-metre dash, long-jump, discus, javelin and shot put.

Lacking a shot to put, she practiced with two bricks that Harold tied together. A neighbour, watching Sarah gouging holes in her own backyard, phoned in consternation. "Are you crazy?" she asked. Sarah explained her latest project, then both women took turns gouging the garden.

Two years later, Sarah competed in the blind masters division at the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled. She won four gold medals and set a Canadian record.

Her wins and her trophies accumulated. In 1984, at the age of 66, she switched to powerlifting. By 1987 she was a top powerlifter in the Canadian Handicapped competition.

The rest, as they say, is history. At meets in the U.S., Spain, Mexico and Australia, she brought home still more medals and trophies.

In 1990 at Riverside, Calif., she

set a world record in squat, benchpress and deadlift, and was named the Best Female Powerlifter in the blind masters (over 40) category.

In 1997 at the World Cup championship, she benchpressed 50 kilograms (110 pounds), recorded a deadlift of 102 kilos (224 pounds) and a squat of 80 kilos (176 pounds).

The trips, while enjoyable for the Thompsons, are also expensive, and despite her string of wins, Sarah doesn't receive any remuneration. Still, she's looking

forward to competing for her eighth World Cup in Kitchener in July.

Meanwhile, she says, she's "just one of the guys at the gym."

Besides her daily three-mile walks with Harold, she works out twice a week at the Apollo Barbell Club, north of Belleville. The 5-foot-5-inch-tall woman lifts 155 pounds.

"People say to me, 'When are you going to quit?' Well, why quit? I like doing it."

Besides, the Olympics are coming up next year in Australia.

Youth will put a finishing touch to the Older Persons dinner with a musical rendition by the Prince Edward Collegiate institute Jazz Choir. The dinner begins at 6 p.m. at the Prince Edward Community Centre in Picton.

Tickets are \$12 per person and may be purchased by June 4 from any Seniors' Club in the county or from the Community Care office, 256 Main St. in Picton.

For more information call (613) 476-7493.