

Kaleidoscope

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Club planned to help the old and the lonely



John Hunter sits behind a desk and discusses plans for a series of friendship clubs he wants to start across Canada. He has chosen Mississauga as the location for his first club and would like to see one organized here by May. Times photo by Ron Pozzer.

BY SHERI CRAIG

Would you devote a few minutes every day phoning some lonely older people just to let them know that you are interested and to find out how they are?

Would you? asks John Hunter bluntly.

Well what are you going to say. A few minutes after all... to give a few minutes of their time to help someone else, his Friends Clubs of Canada will be a success.

John S. Hunter sits there behind a desk, dignified in his trim brown striped suit, a Royal Canadian Legion membership pin in his lapel, seriously discussing plans to set up a series of friendship clubs across Canada.

LONELY

"There are too many lonely people in this country, especially in our larger cities," he says. "There is a desperate need for a strong, nation-wide association which will provide expanded continuous service to lonely people and follow through to provide and develop perpetual friendships for everyone involved."

Hunter visualizes an organization for people living alone, mainly older women and men, which will offer services, everything from the daily phone call to the weekly shopping trips, transportation to church or clubs, help with minor home repairs. Regular members, as these people will be called, will pay a monthly membership fee based on the extent of services each person requires.

Hunter has set fees tentatively ranging from \$10 to \$30.

Providing services will be adult service members and

married around the same time, will be able to purchase as a group new appliances, furniture, even cars and houses, at discount prices.

MUSKOKA RESORT

He foresees a resort in Muskoka where members could go for picnics and boat trips, beach parties and marshmallow roasts. It might also be a place where members could recuperate from injuries and operations and perhaps, he says, it could serve as a temporary care centre for elderly people.

And he describes a large sailing yacht the club might buy, a yacht capable of Great Lakes travel. "There is nothing to quite equal the thrill of being at the helm of a tall sailing ship on a warm, sunny breezy day," he says poetically.

But those plans, of course, are for the future. Right now John Hunter is faced with the job of organizing his first club here, singlehandedly so far, of convincing people that he really is serious and that his ideas are feasible.

He's accustomed to selling ideas. He has made his living as a salesman, recently with Mutual Life of Canada and before that for a number of years, travelling around northern Ontario selling heating equipment.

"It was those years that taught me about being lonely," he explains. "A Sunday alone in Fort William can be a very unhappy time."

IDEA

But it was several experiences in Vancouver and Victoria that gave Hunter the idea for his Friends Clubs.

Two years ago he was visiting his mother in Victoria when she mentioned that she had been robbed twice while returning home alone from shopping trips. In the same apartment house where his mother was living, Hunter noticed another older woman, a widow also, who admitted to him one day that she was lonely and in need of more companionship.

There were other encounters with lonely older people but it was an aunt's death in Vancouver last October that convinced Hunter that something must be done. He was named executor of his aunt's estate and when he went to organize her apartment and settle her affairs he found some clippings and notes on the night table beside her bed that revealed her extreme loneliness and her great fear of dying alone without anyone even knowing.

IRONY

"The irony of the situation," Hunter says sounding bitter, "is that there was another older woman two floors below in the same building who desperately needed my aunt's friendship."

He shakes his head. "I'm prepared to devote the rest

of my life to founding and developing clubs to help people like this. I read somewhere that a life is insignificant unless it has some important accomplishment as its goal."

And so John Hunter has come to Mississauga to start his first Friends club. His home is in Huntsville, he speaks of it proudly, "a nice house by the water", where he lives with his wife and 16 year old daughter Debbie. There are two other married daughters.

But he came to Mississauga because "Huntsville wouldn't have the potential members to form a club. The big cities and suburbs are where the real problem exists."

"Mississauga was selected because it contains sufficient prospective members, it's not too congested with traffic and has a good balanced mixture of apartment dwellers and home owners."

Hunter would like to begin operations here by May 1 and then, if all goes smoothly, to start another club in Montreal or Vancouver, wherever his ideas seem to receive the best response.

PROBLEMS

He knows there are a great many problems. Members will all have to be carefully screened. "This club is for decent, clean ladies and gentlemen and fine young adults of the same type," he says firmly. "We cannot will not condone immoral behaviour."

"Young people with long hair will be accepted if they are neat and their style of haircut is generally acceptable to the majority."

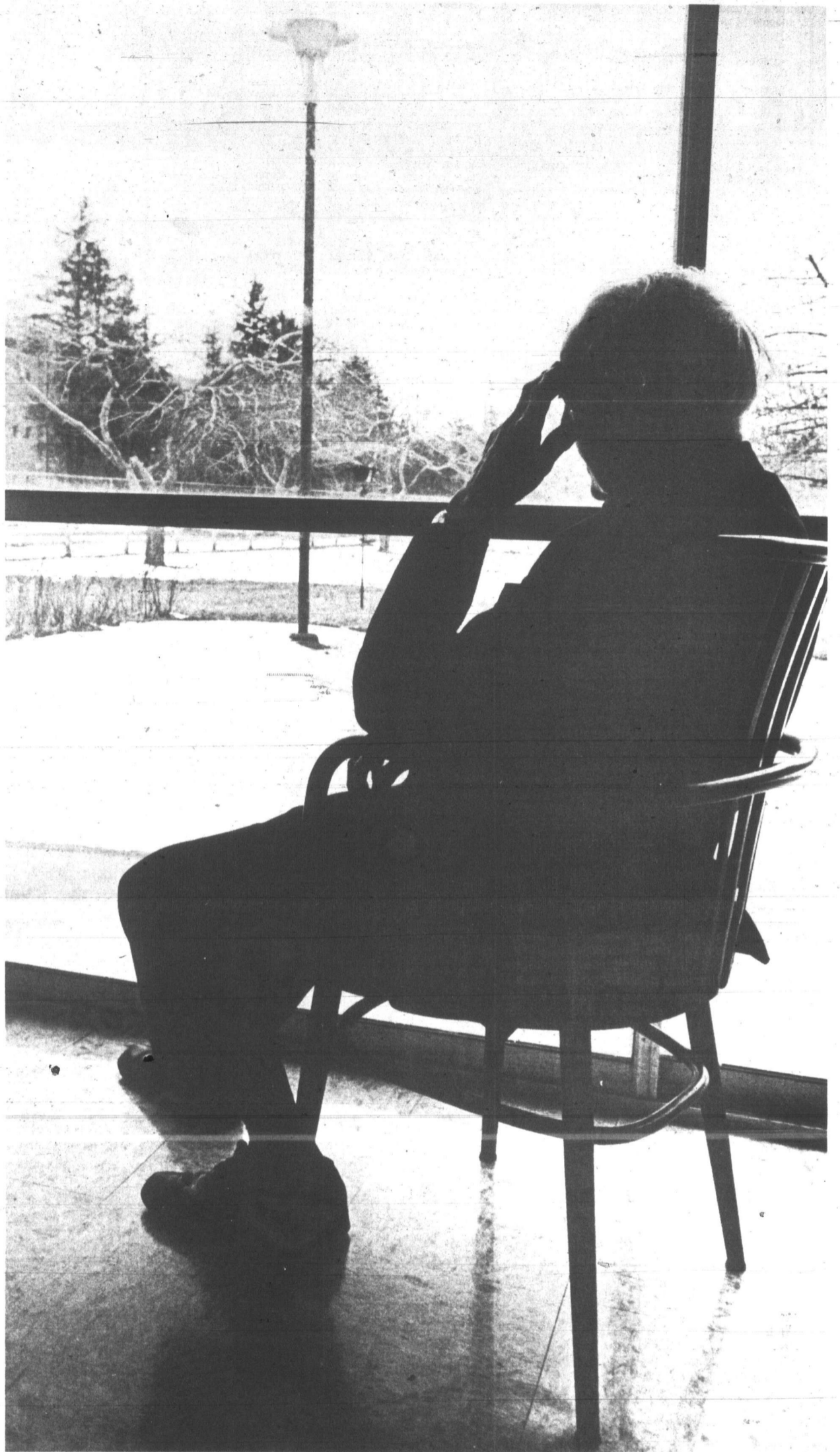
"I don't want to be discriminatory," he continues. "I've thought a lot about this. I think the standards we must employ will be what is most acceptable to our senior members. After all, they're the ones putting up the money."

If Hunter gets enough response here he hopes to set up an office, get things running, leave a manager in charge and then start a club some place else. "I would take my living expenses from the club but those expenses would be determined by the board of directors. I won't get rich from this."

If the clubs aren't successful, he will return to his home workshop where he has started designing and manufacturing fire warning systems.

"I think there is a very real need for this kind of service," Hunter says earnestly. "I know the people are there but whether they'll take the action necessary to let me know," he shrugs. "I'm waiting to see."

John Hunter can be reached by writing to him at P.O. Box 1077, POA-IKO, Huntsville, Ontario or to Box 151, the Mississauga Times, 2300 South Sheridan Way, Mississauga.



Nicole Hyles, one, helps her babysitter Trees Nieuwstad prepare one of Trees' Dutch specialties, stuffed green peppers. Times photo by Ron Pozzer.

Teenager here learning English, teaches Dutch cooking

When a Dutch babysitter goes to work for a West Indian couple living in Canada, the result can be a clash of cultures or a cooperative blending of different ideas and experiences.

Dr. Rudolph Hyles and his wife Dianne, a graduate student in social planning at the University of Toronto, find Trees Nieuwstad a welcome addition to their Clarkson home. Trees, 17, is in Canada for a year, living with another Dutch family, the Pieter de van der Schuerens, of Truscott Drive, and working as a babysitter to learn English and gain some experience helping in a home.

She'll return to her own family in Barnveld, Holland the middle of June and plans to study there to become a midwife.

Meanwhile she takes care of Nicole Hyles, one, when Mrs. Hyles is busy at school or helping as a receptionist in her husband's office. And often Trees will cook some of her favourite Dutch recipes for the Hyles.

They're quite a change from the highly seasoned West Indian meals the Hyles are used to. But then some of the Hyles' favourite dishes, featured in this column last week, are a change for Trees too.

Everyone learns to adapt. The Hyles add more spices to the Dutch dishes and Trees cools down the hottest West Indian foods with tall glasses of water.

And she's busy taking notes to surprise her seven sisters and brothers with unusual West Indian, not to mention Canadian meals, when she gets back home.

These are some of the dishes Trees has cooked for the Hyles.

STUFFED PEPPERS

1 lb. hamburger meat
1 egg
2 onions chopped
1/2 cup bread crumbs
8 green peppers
soya sauce
2 tbsp. butter

What's cooking

flour
milk
small tin of tomato paste
10 oz. tin sliced mushrooms

Mix hamburger, egg, bread crumbs, and chopped onion together. Cut the tops off the green peppers and clean out the insides. Add a few drops of soya sauce to hamburger mixture. Stuff the peppers with the hamburger mixture. Put the tops back on the peppers. Place the peppers in a baking dish and cover with sauce.

SAUCE

Place butter in saucepan, melt and add flour until thick. Add milk and water until the sauce is smooth. Add the tomato paste and the tin of sliced mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper.

Bake the peppers with the sauce in a 375 degree oven for one hour. Serves four to six people.

CHICKEN CASSEROLE

4 chicken breasts
1 onion chopped
1 green pepper chopped
1/2 cup chopped mushrooms
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 cup chicken broth
potato chips

1 cup of cooked rice

1 handful of slivered almonds
Boil chicken breasts in salted water until tender. Remove meat from bones. Save the broth. Fry onion, green pepper, and mushrooms. Add cream of mushroom soup and chicken broth. In a buttered casserole dish put a layer of the crushed

potato chips, then the chicken cut into bite-size pieces, the cooked rice and some almonds. Repeat the layers until the casserole is filled. Then pour the soup mixture, including the onions, green pepper and mushrooms, over the casserole and top with more potato chips. Heat in a 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes. Serves about six.

CHEESE COOKIES

2 1/2 cups of flour
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 cup butter.

Mix ingredients well by hand. Make little balls and place on buttered cookie sheet. Press with fork. Sprinkle some cheese on top. Decorate with an almond in the middle. Bake for 20 minutes at 325 degrees.

1 pint milk
1/2 pint whipping cream
9 envelopes white unflavoured gelatine
1 cup raisins

2 tbsp. sugar
long finger cookies
glazed cherries
1/2 cup rum

Heat milk with raisins and sugar on the stove until the milk boils. Remove and add soaked gelatine and mix well. When the gelatine mixture starts thickening, add the rum and then add the finger cookies broken into pieces and the cherries. Whip the cream until stiff and add to the gelatine. Miss everything well. Serves 10 to 12 people.

HONEY CAKE

3 cups dark rye flour
3 cups white flour
2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. anise seed

1 (tbsp. cinnamon
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
2 cups boiling water
2 1/2 cups honey
3 eggs

Put the honey in the boiling water. Mix all the dry ingredients together. Then add honey mixture and mix well again. Beat the eggs and add to the other ingredients. Mix. Fill three loaf pans half full and bake for half an hour at 325 degrees and then bake for another hour at 300 degrees.