

Big Brothers on a two-way street

A group of young-thinking men—at least that is one of the things they held in common—met last week to try to put flesh and bone to an abstract being called a Big Brother.

They were meeting amid the rustic elegance of a room at Terra Cotta Inn. Some had come from Streetsville, one from Guelph and a number from Norval, Acton and Georgetown. A few were Big Brothers already and the rest, potential Big Brothers, had to come to find out more about the Big Brother agency, which, although 63 years old in Canada, was actually founded in 1904, in New York.

Chairman of the meeting was Mike Lawrie, a Big Brother in Georgetown. In an informal and relaxed manner, much like the relationship between two friendly, close boys of one family, he outlined how simple, honest pleasure could be achieved between a boy, 6 to 16 years old, and a Big Brother, "from labourer to company president...from 17 to 70 years old."

All it takes, he said, is a commitment of three hours a week of a man's time. That's how long the men who make up the Big Brother association in Canada, where growth has risen in the past seven years to 115 from 15 branches, gets a chance to be a Big Brother each week with a lad who is the only male in the household. "A big brother does not have to be perfect or superhuman," said Keith Marsland,

executive director of the agency in Guelph where there are 120 "matches". He was at the meeting to help answer questions and share the experiences of that larger association.

In Georgetown, where the Big Brothers are sponsored by the Optimists Club, there are 12 "matches" said Mr. Lawrie. "Each agency is autonomous but must follow certain guidelines."

The guidelines of the Big Brother Agency focuses on the other half of the relationship, the Little Brother, and what is in his best interests. The agency strives for a very natural evolution of friendship between the man and the boy, the Big Brother and the Little Brother.

Joy comes to the Big Brother, said Mr. Marsland, who provided a brief slide presentation of group get-togethers of Big and Little Brothers, in "a sense of pride in accomplishment the two share together."

After making an initial application, which includes three "informal" references, and some talks with experienced Big Brothers, a man is "matched" with a boy. The new Big Brother meets the boy, the boy's mother and a social worker, usually at a school, and after a get-acquainted period develop their relationship over a period of at least two years and as long as a lifetime.

A story was told of a boy

who, at age seven, got a Big Brother. The Big Brother, aged 67, recently died and the boy learned to cope with the sense of loss which, for one reason or another, he did not experience with his departed father or any other male in the family.

The agency's composition is almost equally divided up between single men, men married without children and men married with children, said Mr. Marsland. The need in the Halton Hills area he added, in response to a question from Rev. Peter Barrow, if it follows the national average of one per cent of the population, would be "30 to 40" Big Brothers, although he was aware of "specifically 18."

"Single men may be a bit embarrassed applying," Mr. Marsland said, "but it can do as much for the Big Brother as for the Little Brother."

"But it's a plus having your own son," he said. In cases where the Big Brother's natural son was born during a relationship, the Little Brother showed the same loving attention to the baby as that which he received from his Big Brother.

"The needs of the Big Brother are encouraged," Mr. Marsland said. Being a Big Brother "is not a selfish thing. It's the need for companionship."

What the men get to do with their Little Brothers is to take them to circuses and hockey

games, camping or fishing, tours, or just around the house or whatever things an ideal older brother does with a favourite younger brother. The main difference between the Big Brother Agency and other organizations, such as Boy Scouts, the "Y" or boy's clubs is the individual attention. One boy is matched to one man.

If you ask some of the men there why they are or want to become Big Brothers, their answers sound very formal as they put into a few words the essence of a relationship.

Said Brian Carlo, a prospective Big Brother, 18 years old. "It gives you a chance to do something you did six years ago. You can get

away with it if you have a little kid."

Mr. Carlo, who is one of five children and himself has an older brother, said he was attracted to the agency after he "was involved with a boy in Toronto. Just a kid who didn't get enough attention."

Jack Greenwood, also a prospective Big Brother, said

"You know what appeals to me about it? I remember the time I was helping someone else." He goes on to say how much self satisfaction, an honest pleasure, he got from the work he did.

"Bobby Hull and Frank Mahovlich are involved in Big Brothers in Canada," said Peter Scarth who became a Big Brother this year. He said that a World Hockey Association game this year was in aid of the Big Brother Agency. He added: "You live in a community—you do

something for the children. Today they need all the kinds of things they can get."

Klaus Vandemeer, a Georgetown bachelor, has been a Big Brother for "a little more than a year," he said. "I like to know if I could help somebody, to help the boy out. He's got somebody to look forward to...and it's a lot of fun."

Clarence Baker, a resident of Georgetown for 28 years, said he had been a Big Brother for "about a year and a half." "You get satisfaction. There

truly is a lot of self satisfaction to be gained from respect received from someone other than a relative."

Mike Lawrie announced that a Big Brother Camping Jamboree was to be held the May 24 week at Rockwood Conservation Area where 200 to 300 Big and Little Brothers were expected.

He said that any men who are interested in the agency should telephone Ray Martin at his home phone number, 877-8371, or office number, 877-5115.

Ashgrove WI elects executive

by Mrs. Tom Bellbody
The Public Relations and annual meeting of the Ashgrove Women's Institute was held on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 20 in the home of Mrs. Vern Pickett. President Mrs. John McNabb presided over the meeting, which was well-attended.

Rollcall was answered with payment of fees and the ladies present answered the question, "If you were a shut-in, how would you like to be remembered?"

An invitation was received from Halton Manor to bake for their sale on May 12. Achievement Day for the 4-H was announced for May 15. Mrs. John Bird gave a report of the Anniversary Golden Ball held in March and Mrs. C. Hunter gave a report on the recent district director's meeting. Mrs. Clayton Wilson was voted to be the model from our Institute for the district annual to be held in Campbellville on May 18, and other delegates from Ashgrove W. I. were appointed to attend.

A donation of \$25. is to be sent to the Children's Aid for camping purposes.

Mrs. Francis Thompson, who was in charge of the program, had everyone stand up and join in a sing-song.

The speaker, Mrs. Sandy McKenzie, supervisor with the homemaker service in Georgetown, Milton and Acton, described the type of services the 13 members of her organization provide for the elderly and those who are unable to care for themselves.

A humorous dialogue, based on questions and answers in a doctor's offices, was presented by Mrs. John Ruddle and Mrs. Bellbody.

Mrs. Bob Alexander gave a lovely "In Memoriam" for Mrs. George Nurse and Mrs. Russel Hepburn, two life members who passed away.

The minutes of the annual meeting, last year, the secretary-treasurer's report and the reports from the standing committees were read by Mrs. John Bird. This showed an encouraging and successful year.

The president then vacated the chair and asked Mrs. John Bird to install the new officers for 1976-77. They are: president, Mrs. John Hunter; first vice-president, Mrs. R.



JACK GREENWOOD (left), a prospective Big Brother attends an information night the agency held at the Terra Cotta Inn where he talks with Clarence Baker who has been a Big Brother for 18 months. At least 18 and maybe 30 Big Brothers are needed in Halton Hills.

Alexander; second vice-president, Mrs. G. Trevirannus; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. James McPhail; assistant, Mrs. Craig Reed; district director, Mrs. John McNabb; alternate, Mrs. J. Carney; public relations, Mrs. F. Thompson; branch directors, Mrs. W. Bird, Mrs. W. Stringer, Mrs. H. Nurse, Mrs. C. Hunter; pianist, Mrs. J. Carney; assistant, Mrs. Ford Wickson; auditors, Mrs. M. Bird, Mrs. J. Ruddle.

Standing Committees: Agriculture and Canadian Industry, Mrs. Percy Cox; Mrs. F. Nurse; Citizenship and World Affairs, Mrs. Wm. Allison, Mrs. G. Wingfield; Education and Cultural Activities, Mrs. G. Trevirannus

Mrs. F. Wickson; Family and Consumer Affairs, Mrs. Ralph Cunningham, Mrs. George Wilson; Resolutions, Mrs. R. Cunningham; Curators, Mrs. J. Bird, Mrs. C.B. Dick, Courtesy, Mrs. C. Wilson, Mrs. G. Wilson, Mrs. N. Haiste; Flower Committee, Mrs. V. Pickett, Mrs. F. Ruddle, Mrs. T. Blackett.

The new president, Mrs. J.H. Hunter, then took the chair to finish the meeting and called on Mrs. Frank Wilson to present a gift to Mrs. John McNabb, for her excellent job as president during the past two years. Doris thanked everyone.

After Mrs. H. Nurse gave the courtesies, O Canada was sung and the social hour began.

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