



Elderly citizens need challenge according to UWC's speakers

By **MAGGIE HANNAH**
Herald staff writer
The elderly need challenges and stresses just the same as younger people according to the Senior Citizens Department director for Niagara Region.

"If society becomes over-protective of them, senior citizens find life to be hardly worth living," D.H. Rapelje told a seminar on aging held in Sacre Coeur Parish Hall recently and sponsored by the University Women's Club.

Prior to coming into senior citizens' homes and nursing homes the residents had to face all sorts of situations, he said. Moving into one of these facilities doesn't change their capacities nor does it change their need for social contact and stimulation. When well-meaning family, friends and social workers try to anticipate all the problems a senior citizen will face and solve them for him they may wind up smothering his initiative and make him feel useless and frustrated.

"We can't overprotect old people and still expect them to lead normal lives," he said.

Mr. Rapelje said that instead of building nursing homes and trying to put elderly citizens in a place that will wait on them hand and foot communities should be looking

Optimists' trip winner

By **JOHN GRABOWSKI**
The Georgetown Optimists trip of the month club winner to Freeport Bahamas was Alton Brecken who is presently relaxing in Florida. The \$100 consolation prize went to Mona Milne of Georgetown.

At their recent meeting the Optimists heard a guest speaker from the Milton Optimist Club. Optimist Al Logan who is the manager and 3 1/2 year member of Milton, spoke on the construction and financing of a new building. Thanks Opt. Al and we hope your information will help us in our plans for the future.

at increasing support services that will enable the elderly to remain in their homes as long as possible.

HOT MEAL.
Services like Meals-on-Wheels which provides one hot meal a day are a great help to senior citizens who find cooking difficult. Having someone take care of heavier house-keeping tasks like moving furniture or scrubbing floors might be all another senior citizen needs to be able to continue living in his home. Another senior might need regular medical attention of the type which could be provided by a Victorian Order Nurse but be perfectly capable of living alone so long as this care was available. Still others need nothing more than a daily contact to check on the state of their health.

With such support many seniors could continue in their own homes and would be much happier doing so, he said.

Mr. Rapelje said that in Niagara Region attention to the needs of the elderly has been an evolving process for over 20 years and thus many services are already in place which other communities are just now beginning to consider. Among these programs, he listed a vacation care program which enables elderly residents living with their relatives to come to one of the region's five nursing homes for periods up to a month in length while younger members of their families go on vacation. Not only does this give the elderly resident and his family a break, it lets him discover first hand what life in one of the homes is like and prepares him for the possibility of eventually making his permanent home in one.

SHARE MEALS
Another program allows seniors to come to the homes for a portion of each day and share meals, health care and recreation programs with the residents of the home, then return to their own homes for the night.

Our elderly have a wealth of knowledge and experience to give if we will allow them to do

so. Mr. Rapelje said, and thus residents in the Niagara Region homes take part in visits to local schools and entertain classes who visit the homes. They also help youngsters in nursery school and kindergarten by reading to them and hearing them read as well as sharing their games and story times. One of the homes has a day care center operating in it part of the time while residents travel to the school the rest of the time. Interaction between the very young and very old benefits both groups, he said.

Since loneliness and boredom are the biggest enemies of the elderly, residents in the homes are encouraged to participate in many activities. Craft rooms have been established but separate areas were set up for male residents when staff members found them reluctant to enter a craft room full of women doing the more traditionally female things like crocheting or knitting.

TALK A BIT
He explained how residents in the homes help those still living on their own through a program called Talk A Bit, whereby the resident calls someone living on his own and talks to him each day to be sure how he is. If they got no answer to their call they'd notify someone to check if the person was ill.

Esme Bull, co-ordinator of the Georgetown library shut-in service explained that volunteers take books, cassettes, records and all types of material available from the library out to shut-ins from the handicapped child to the sick or elderly adult.

Edith Peck, president of the United Senior Citizens' group, stressed the problems seniors have in getting to medical appointments as well as to meetings and to shopping because there is no public transportation in Georgetown. She noted that while some seniors can walk to most of their destinations others are physically unable to do so and must rely on taxis to transport them unless someone is kind enough to volunteer to drive them

around.
FRUSTRATION POINT
Ernie Forgrave pointed out the frustration of elderly Georgetown residents who must remain in active treatment beds at Georgetown hospital after they have had serious illnesses like a stroke even though they have recovered sufficiently to enter an extended care facility. He said keeping such a patient in an active treatment bed costs the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan about \$110 daily while keeping the same person in a nursing home bed would only cost OHIP about \$20 a day, and questioned why Georgetown has received no replay to its request for some extended care facility in the community.

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CHOIR PERFORMS

Members of St. Michael's Choir performed to a full house Friday evening in Holy Cross Church. The senior choir, the tenor and bass choir and the junior choir each performed individually as well as together. Their repertoire included traditional church music as well as a variety of folk songs and semi-classical numbers. The boys leave soon for a trip to Italy where they will be performing in Rome.
(Herald photo by Maggie Hannah)

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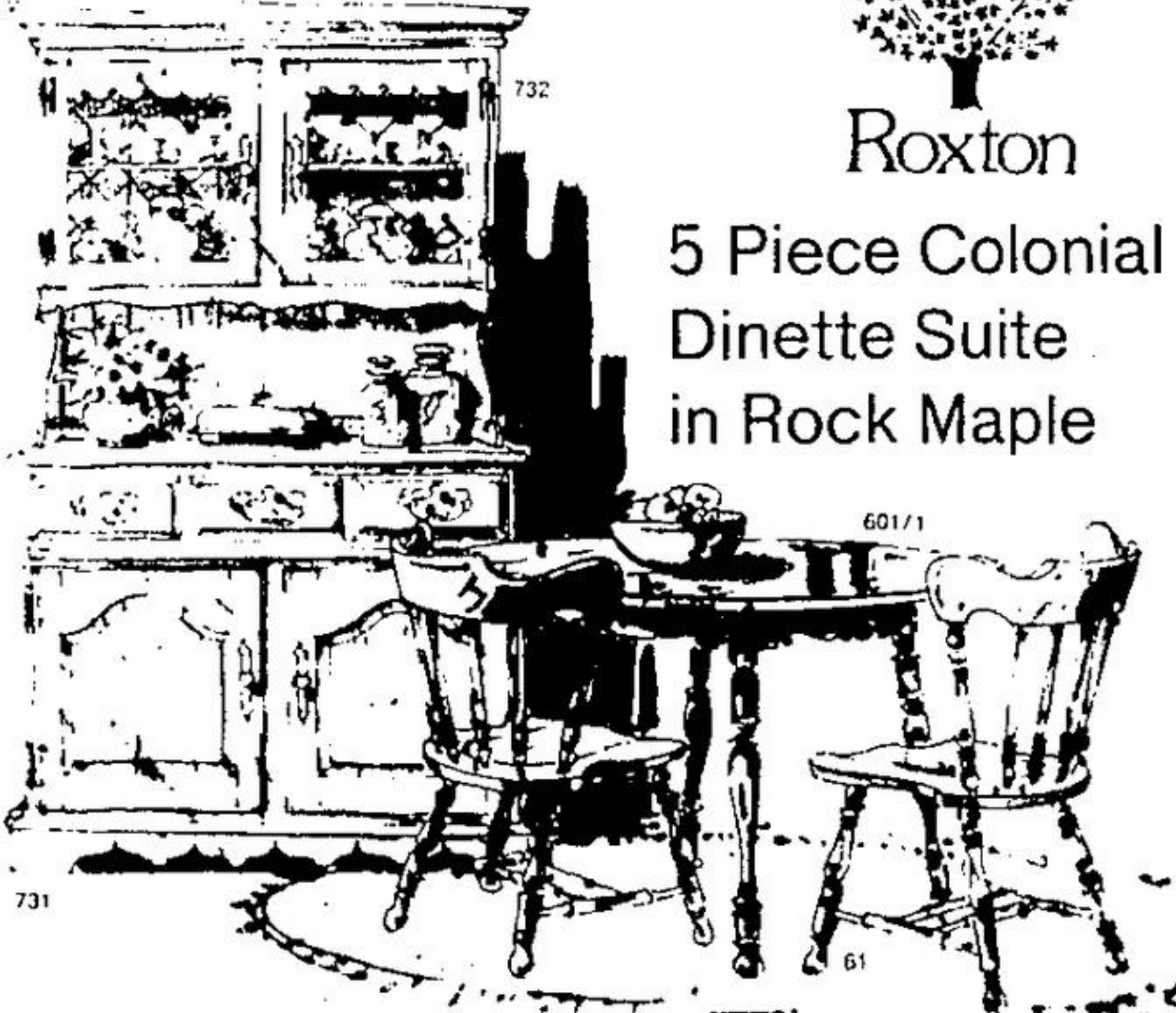
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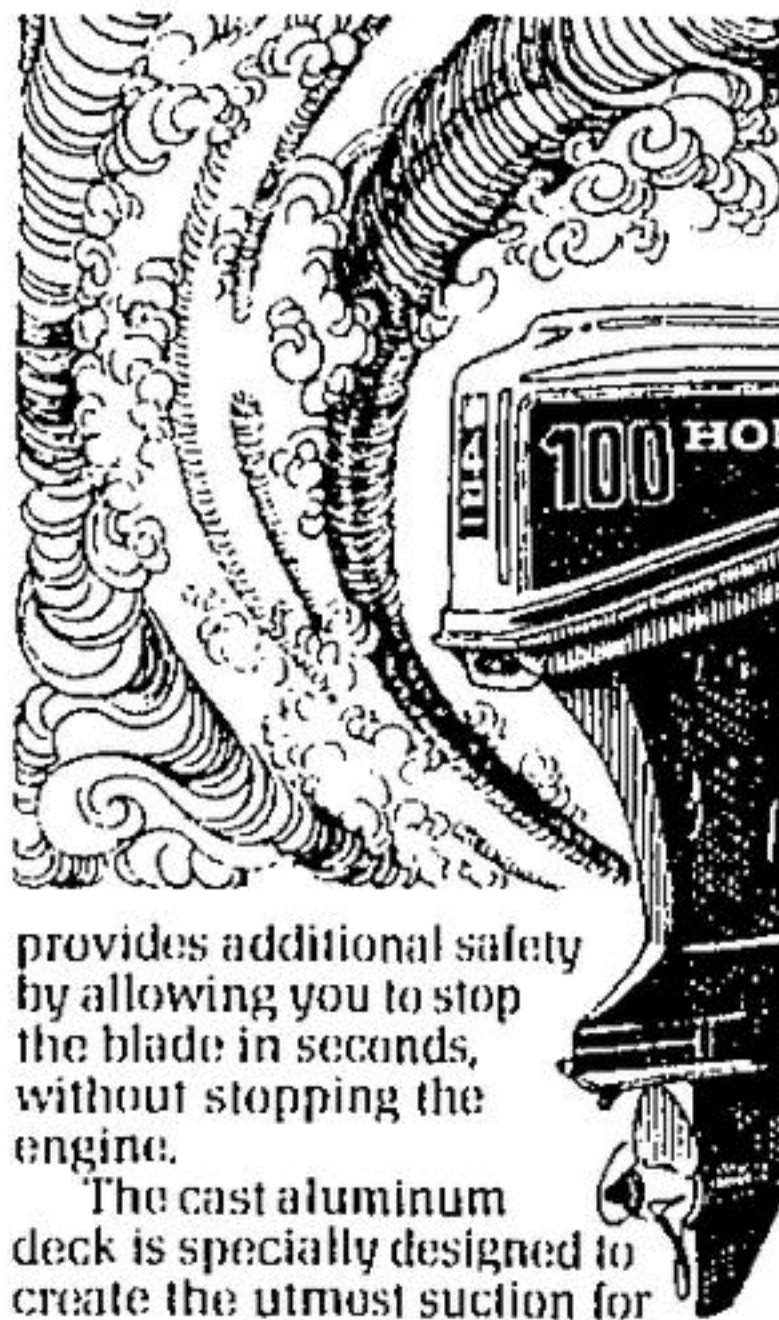


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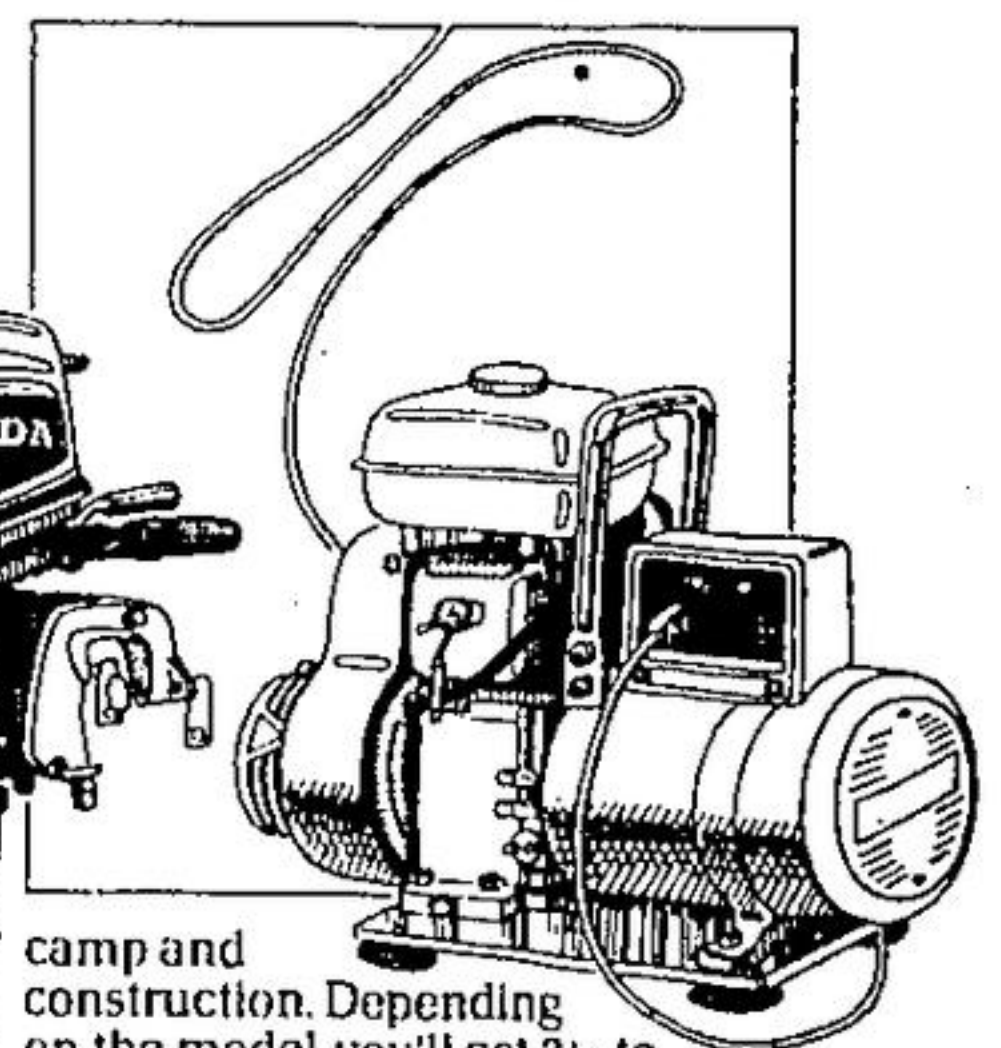
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