

Shrine Circus
a smash —
for young
and old

As always, the appearance of the Shriners Circus puts a little life in what is sometimes a boring time of year. Capacity crowds are not new to the annual event, and cotton candy is another regular feature. The acts themselves change considerably though, and lions and elephants, along with clowns and acrobatics, just to mention a few, excited all who attended. Hats off to the Shriners for another good show.
Staff photo

Local optometrist

Tweedle retires after 56 years

After 56 years in the optometry business, (29 of them on Midland's King Street), Arthur Tweedle has retired.

Although he is probably best known locally as an optometrist, he and his wife (Dr. Lois Tweedle) are also frequent guest speakers at group and club meetings in the area, where they've shown photographs and curios that they have brought back from many out-of-the-way corners of the earth.

The pictures and mementoes — Eskimo carvings, bits of jade and brass and carved wood — attest to the many miles the pair has logged as curious and eager world travellers.

As well as the more popular European countries, they've been to Burma, Russia, South America, Iceland, India and the Canadian Arctic. Their conversation is studded with fascinating place names like Katmandu, and Calcutta.

"We were fortunate," says Dr. Lois, "to see most of these places before many other people did, which made our trips all the more interesting."

Arthur Tweedle is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and it was a combination of photography and optometry that took him into the Arctic circle in 1945. He was part of the first study team sent north to study the eyes of the Eskimo.

"The Eskimo eye, at that time," he says, "seemed pretty much the same as those of any people who live away from civilization. But in the intervening years, problems have come up because the Eskimo has adopted white man's food, and many of his vices, without the controls that we have recognized as essential."

He remembers an Eskimo youth who came to him for glasses. "He was pretty worried, because he couldn't get a wife. His eye sight was so poor that he was a poor hunter and that meant no woman would have him. He was overjoyed when he got his glasses."

"Snowblindness is a common problem up there," says Tweedle. "The Eskimo used to make himself an eye shield of bone or wood, with slits cut into it. This limited their vision, so many of them used to blacken the area around the eye with burned wood, in order to cut down the reflection."

The photographs that Arthur Tweedle took on that expedition were widely published, and at the moment the federal government wants to acquire them, as a record of native life in the days before there was universal contact with the white man.

At the moment, Arthur Tweedle is collecting 100 of his best Arctic slides and printing them in a

Cibachrome process in which the projected image is printed on paper, in sparkling enlargement.

Will he exhibit the collection when it is complete? He says this is not his primary interest. "Arthur takes photographs for the joy of it," explains his wife.

It is ironic that a man who has devoted so many years of his life to vision in one form or another, now has serious vision problems of his own. A blood clot has interfered with the blood supply to his brain, and one eye has been paralyzed. Many of his activities have been limited, but he looks forward to improvement.

"In my 56 years in optometry," he says, "I've only seen one other case like mine."

Both the Tweedles dream of more adventures. "We'd like to fly to Istanbul and see Iran and Afghanistan," says Arthur Tweedle. They talk wistfully of the "Lindblad Explorer," a ship which travels to the bottom of the world, into the Antarctic.

These two world travellers who have gotten the most out of every minute spent abroad, offer the following hints to others who have the same passion to see the world.

"We always read extensively about the countries we are about to visit," says Arthur Tweedle. "Then we have some idea of what to expect."

He adds, "We try to get as close to the people as possible. We don't believe in staying in a 'little Canada!'"

Dr. Lois recalls that a trip to Iceland in 1974 brought them very close to the people indeed. "We slept in tents which we had to erect ourselves," she says, "and kept our mittens on while we ate. It was that cold. But the air was good, and the food wholesome, and we returned from that trip in wonderful condition!"

Language seems not to be a problem. "Wear a smile," says Arthur Tweedle, "and mean it. Ask the people on the streets, 'Do you speak English, please?' A great many of them do."

He says that he and his wife have never been in any place where they felt they were in danger. "We use discretion and we determine the lay of the land before we set out."

"I also try never to be in a hurry. I may be seething inside, but I try to keep calm, and to remember that time isn't all that important when you're trying to get the feel of a country and its people."

Dr. Lois has one last word of advice. "Travel when you're young," she says.

This the Tweedles have done. Since they are both very much young at heart, they will undoubtedly do it again.

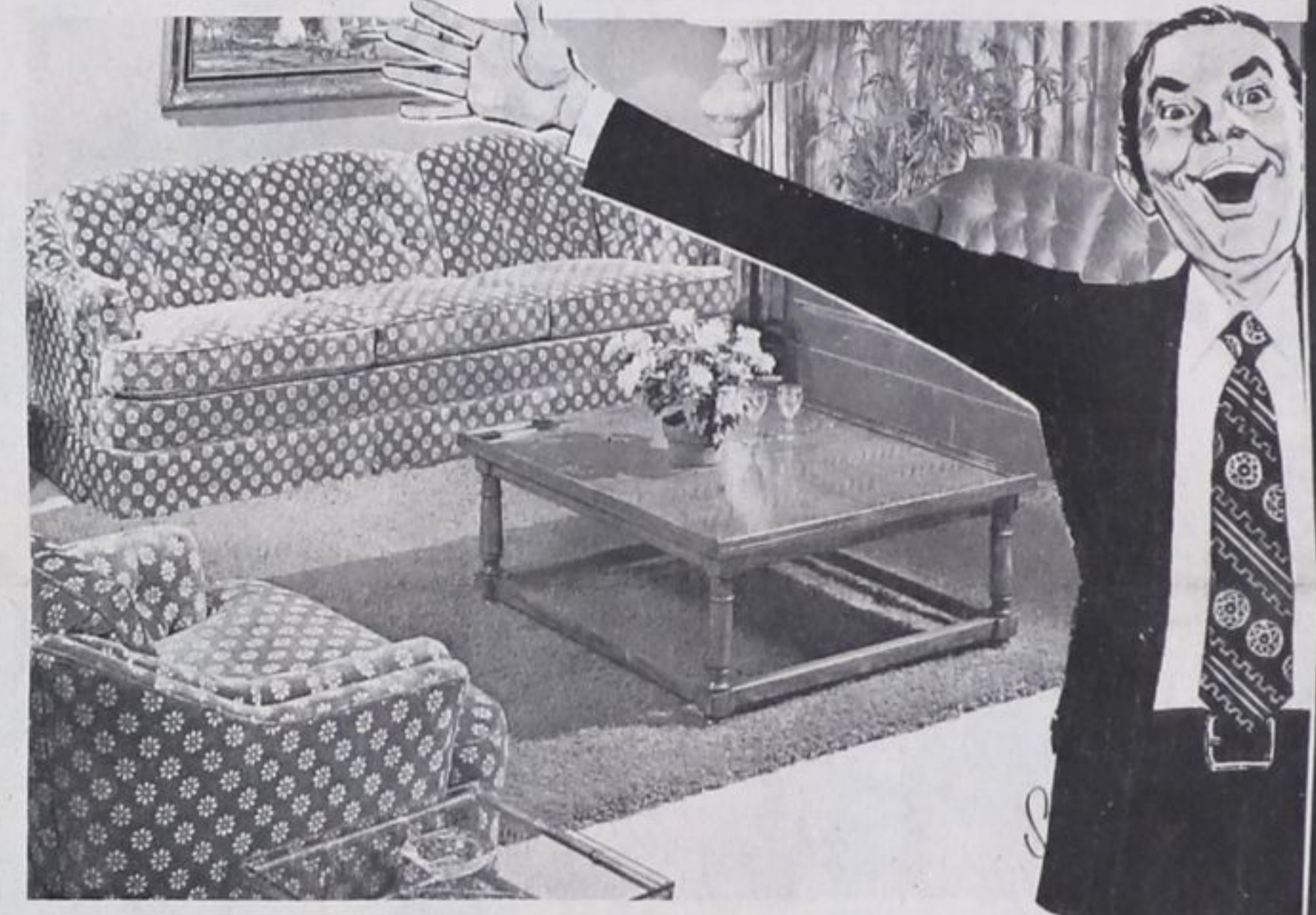


Midland couple

Although the Tweedles have spent much of their time travelling together to exotic corners of the earth, they find tranquility and beauty in their landscaped garden where they have a fishpond, flowers, and dozens of feathered visitors.
Shirley Whittington photo

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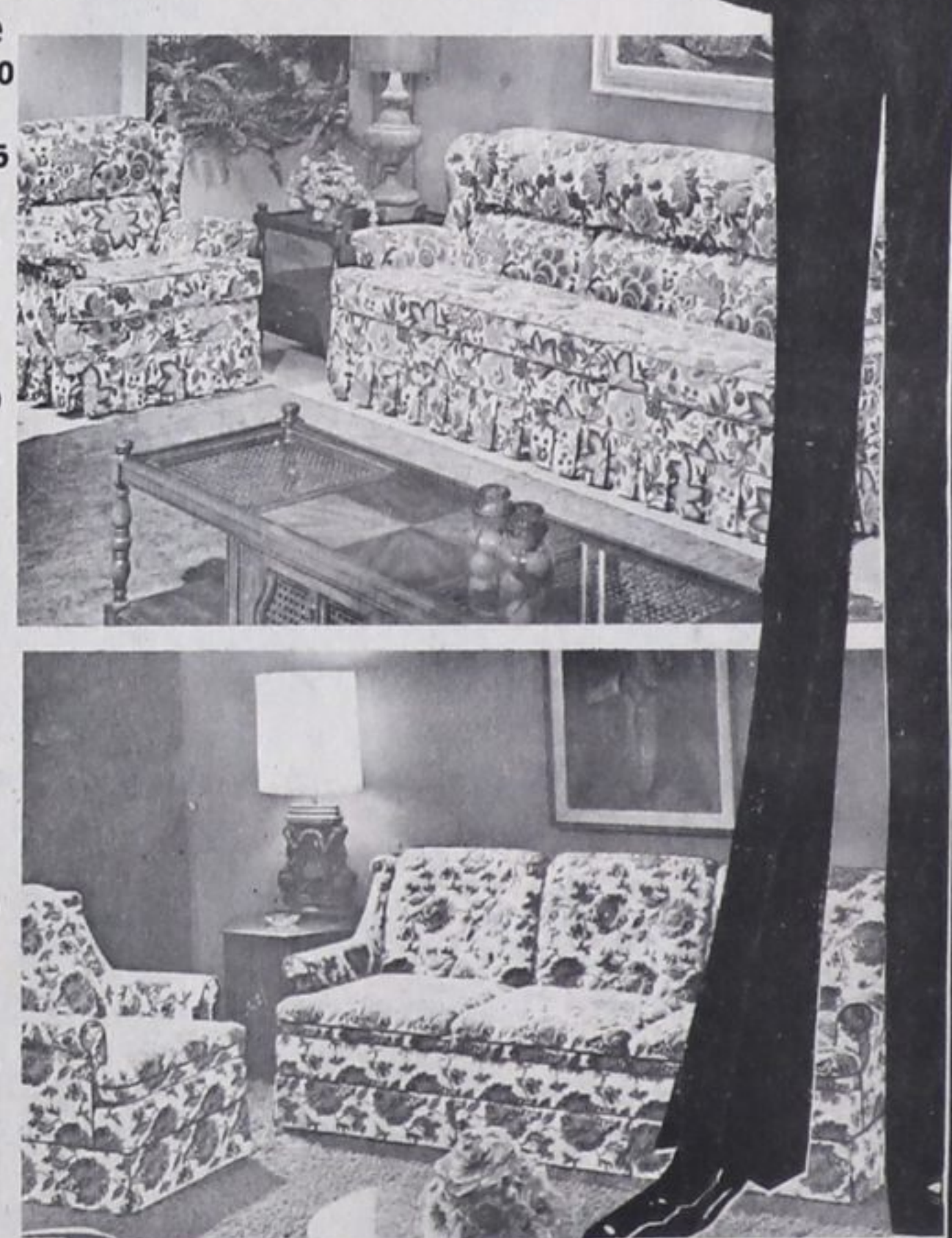
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