



Craft show

The Mountainview Mall was filled with all kinds of hand-made crafts and odds and ends as a craft show moved in for the weekend. Here, Alfred McCleary shows off a hand-embroidered table cloth, for

which he was asking about \$90. McCleary says he travels from mall to mall, and usually visits Midland two or three times per year.

Askennonia Senior Centre to be a first in Midland

There has never been anything like it in Midland. The Askennonia Senior Centre will be a place for Midland seniors to do more than socialize.

It will also be an educational experience.

Sometime this fall, probably around October, the new concept in senior centres should be a reality, according to organizers.

The Askennonia centre will be run out of the Calvary Baptist Church on King Street, and it will be designed "to meet the social, educational and recreational needs" of those it serves.

Rev. Jim Manuel of the Calvary Baptist Church says such a centre is much needed in Midland, which has a higher percentage of seniors than the national average.

"We have a fairly significant concentration of seniors," said Rev. Manuel, "and quite a number of people who find this area a pretty good place to retire."

He quoted Simcoe County District Health Unit statistics that show Midland is made up of about 14 per cent seniors, compared to a national average of about 11 per cent. And with the baby boom generation aging, that figure will surely rise.

Although there are already a variety of healthy social clubs for senior citizens in Midland, said Rev. Manuel, there is a great need for a kind of "one-stop shopping" centre of activities.

Although the programming for the centre has not yet been finalized, organizers expect things like seminars on nutrition, workshops on health care, travel counselling as well as anything else those who participate ask for.

The demands of the participants will really set the tone of the centre said Rev. Manuel.

"Two things are very important here: One is that the programming will grow out of what they see

as a need. We're not going to lay it all on them."

"The other thing is that we are not duplicating the services of other clubs. We are plugging the holes and building bridges between our centre and other agencies."

Askennonia will operate five days a week out of existing church facilities. Eventually a full time director of the centre will be hired.

The ambitious project, described by Rev. Manuel as a "bold venture," evolved out of the church's long time involvement with seniors in the community. The location of the church building, which is near several retirement buildings and homes for the elderly, is in a naturally ideal location for such a comprehensive senior centre.

The idea first came up about one and a half years ago at the Calvary Baptist Church's annual meeting.

Since then a search committee set out to discover

how to respond to the needs of seniors.

What it came up with is the birth of Askennonia, which will be "developed by a group of people who have developed a keen interest and expertise in working with seniors."

One of those people is Martha Dickerson, who has worked with similar types of operations in her native U.S.

"There is nothing like it in Midland at the present time," said Dickerson.

She added that the centre has already received assurances of funding from several government groups, including the province.

She also noted that, although Askennonia will not be a religious organization, the Calvary Church has generously donated the space for it to operate. "It is difficult to put a dollar figure on that contribution," she said.

Midland theatre fans go north

With so many tourists bringing themselves and their business into Midland, it is often forgotten that Midlanders do some touring around of their own.

And one of the many places they do their touring is right next door at the

Muskoka Festival.

Organizer Norman Brown says he has noticed over the years a large influx of people from the Midland area, who travel to Port Carling, Gravenhurst and Bracebridge to take in some of the festival.

The Muskoka Festival is a series of theatrical productions, including some original works.

It is staged in the three municipalities during the summer, from June 27 to Sept. 5.

Brown says festival organizers are targeting

Midland as one of the places they'd like to draw even more people from.

Last Saturday was the opening of Brighton Beach Neil Simon. It stars Eric Woolfe, who starred in the same production at Theatre London last year.

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