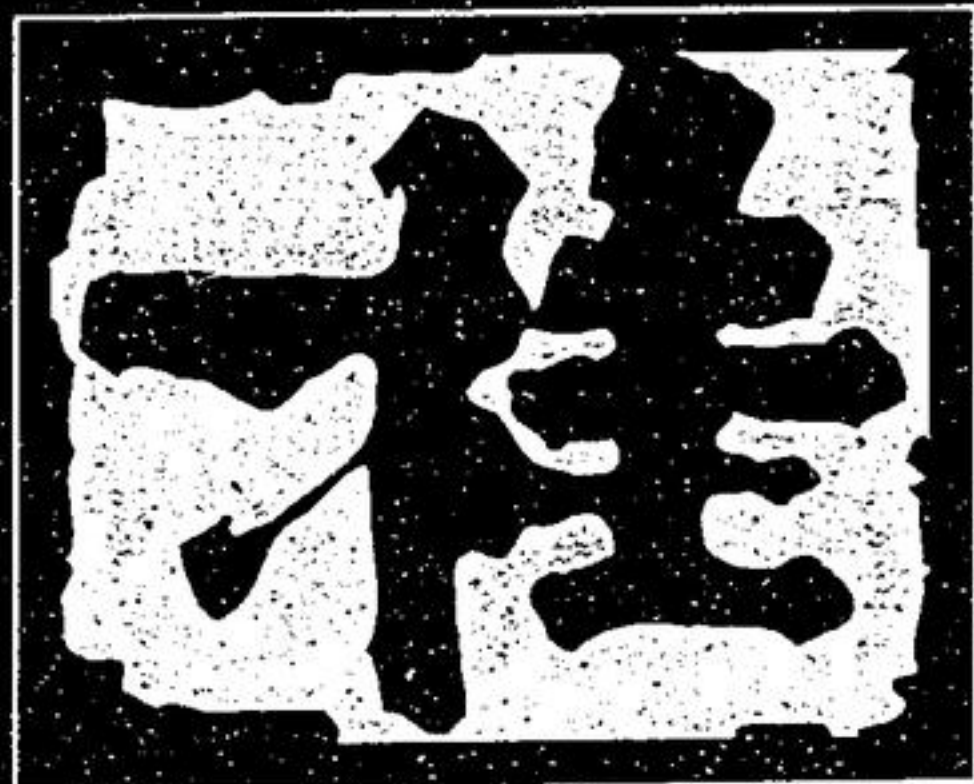


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Markham doc an infomercial success

BY PATRICK CASEY
Staff Writer

Markham doctor Michael Ho wasn't planning to transform himself from a chiropractor to an enterprising entrepreneur, but now that it's done he's certainly not complaining.

"I feel really good promoting a product where I can turn a skeptic into a believer and, at the same time, improve a person's quality of life," Ho explained. "I know I am going to help people."

For those who have not caught his gig on his widely televised infomercial, Ho is the creator of Dr. Ho's Muscle Massage System, a small, portable device that provides gentle electrical stimulation to the nerves and muscles.

The battery-operated unit uses two gel pads that stick to the afflicted area, sending impulses that simulate 12 deep-tissue massage techniques, which, combined with a variety of muscle movements, cause an immediate relaxation sensation.

Ho has sold more than 250,000 units over the last four years, doubling sales of the \$135 system

each year.

But the personable doctor didn't set out to rival George Foreman and his cooking grill for a share of the infomercial market.

The clinical director of the Toronto Pain and Headache Clinic, Ho has been practising and teaching for more than 15 years. As a chiropractic and acupuncture doctor, he has devoted his life to the study of natural medicine.

Believing the body has incredible healing power and, under the right conditions, Ho stumbled into the massage system market.

After using many of the therapeutic devices designed for clinical applications, he was disappointed with their limited results.

Working with several engineers, he originally designed the system for use within his clinic. But during a two-year testing period, hundreds of patients placed their names on a waiting list to purchase the device.

"I went into the venture with absolutely no risk," said Ho, who writes his own infomercial scripts. "We built one machine for our patients but then people put a \$50 deposit for the waiting list. People were calling asking when it would be ready."

The challenge from day 1 has been to convince people the unit is the real deal and not another crazy gimmick.

"It has been a very difficult thing to do," Ho admitted. He builds on the success of the product by using the 1,000 testimonial letters he receives each month in his marketing campaign.

"I thought running a clinic was tough, but that was easy compared to this. This business is so dynamic and demanding, dealing with people who want the device and they want it right away."

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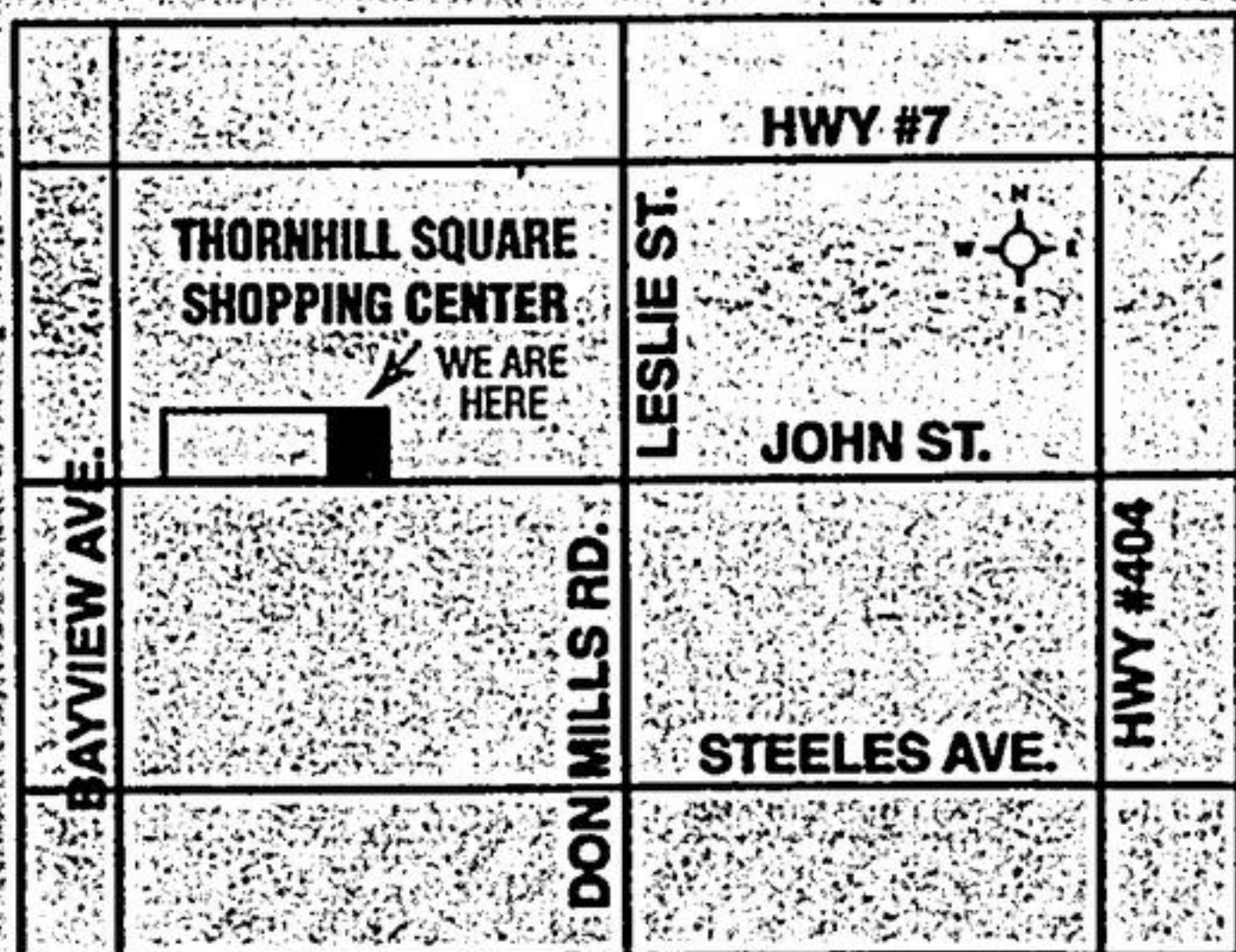
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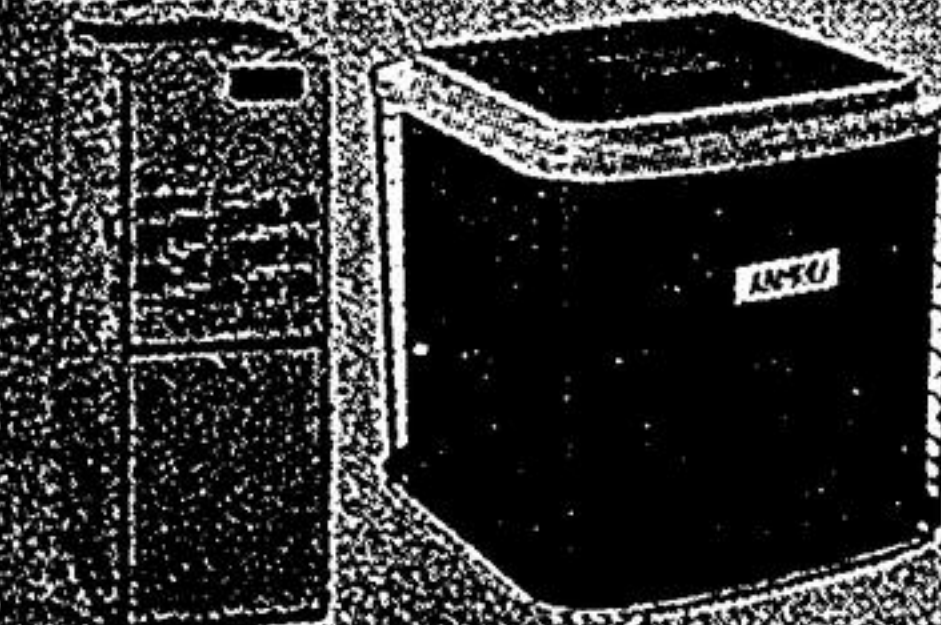
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Dr. Michael Ho shows off his massage system.

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