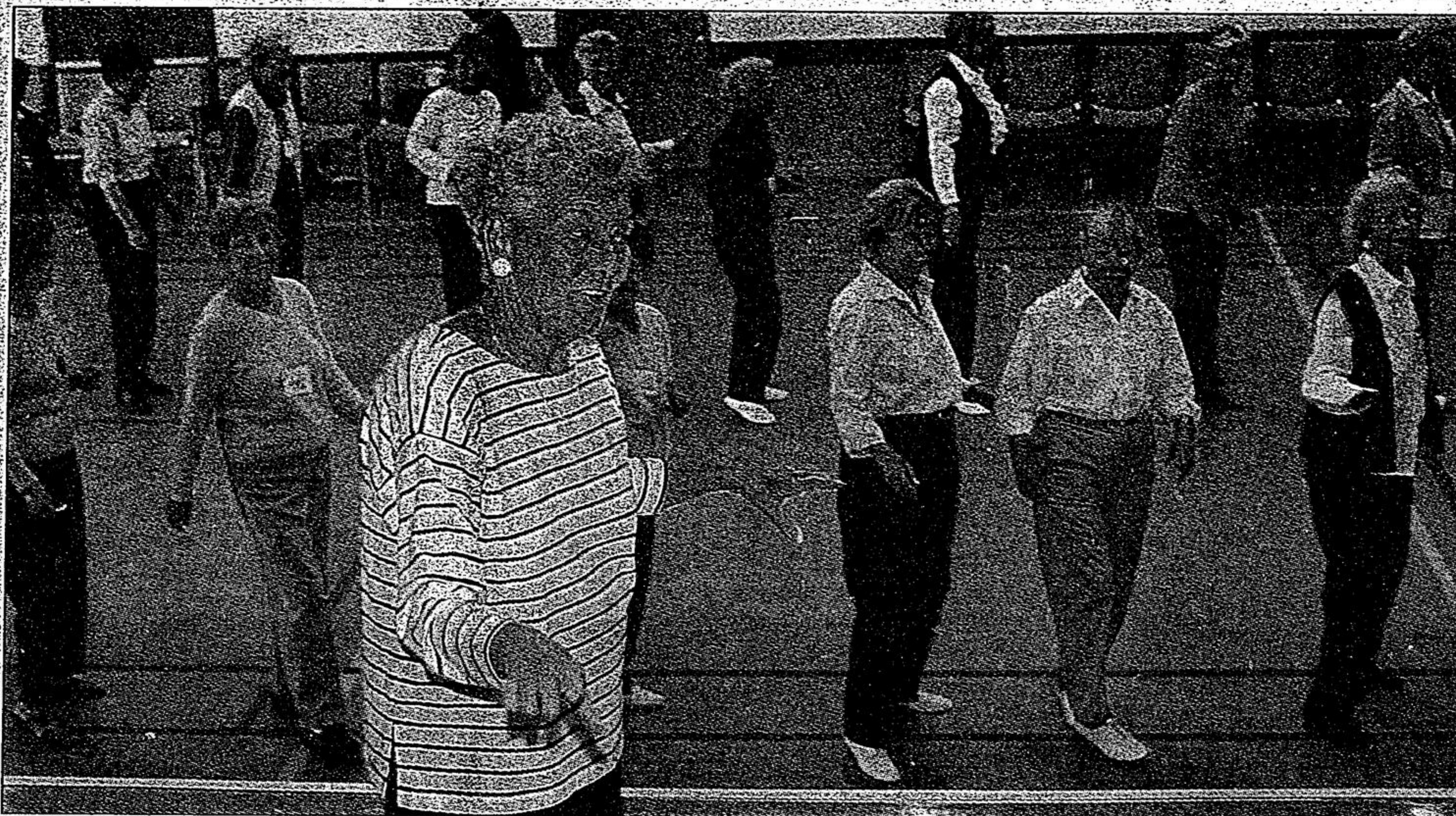


Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

DIVERSIONS



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Lois Clarridge, 80, leads a line dance class at the Older Adults in Action Centre in Markham. Mrs. Clarridge also holds gold medals in swimming, organizes events at the centre and leads a performing group called The Personalities.

No rocking chairs required

Today's senior citizens will try anything for fun

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Lois Clarridge doesn't have time to get old.

The 80-year-old Markham resident doesn't take line dancing; she teaches it.

Mrs. Clarridge doesn't paddle around in the pool; she wins gold medals at swim meets.

She doesn't go to bazaars; she helps run them.

She is more alive than most people half her age. Slowing down might be for other people. It's not her.

Instructing a class of 60 at the Older Adults In Action Centre, line dancing is Mrs. Clarridge's main focus.

At least, on Thursdays.

She also spends time on other activities at the 13-year-old Water

Street facility. If it isn't kitchen duty, it's a picnic. If it isn't taking part in a fashion show, it's a pancake breakfast or a day trip on the bus. She does yoga when she can fit it in; badminton and country and western dancing when the mood strikes and then, of course, there's Mrs. Clarridge's very special group, The Personalities.

Made up of five dancers, The Personalities perform a cross between line dancing and cabaret. With Mrs. Clarridge as the choreographer and coach, The Personalities are in demand. Mrs. Clarridge teaches her special group every Monday night. She also designs and sews all the group's costumes. Now in their seventh year, The Personalities perform at clubs and special events throughout York Region.

"We have a lot of fun," Mrs. Clarridge said.

Dancing has been part of Mrs. Clarridge's life since she was a young woman. During the Second World War, she danced her way across the country.

Joining other artists, Mrs. Clarridge entertained the Canadian troops. She was part of Red Cross canteens, bond drives and social events at hospital burn units.

Mrs. Clarridge also had the pleasure of entertaining with the popular Happy Gang. If you walk up to her and say, "knock, knock," she'll answer back, "Who's there? It's the Happy Gang. Come on in."

During the war years, Mrs. Clarridge also shared the Toronto stage with the likes of Oscar Peterson, Joan Fairfax and Jackie Rae. Performing at such hot spots as the Top Hat and the Palais Royal and, of course, the Garden Brothers Circus when it came to town, dancing was in her blood. It never left.

Mrs. Clarridge is not only accomplished on stage, she's more than comfortable in the water. Being a senior has not altered her competitive spirit.

"Swimming is a big part of my life," she said. Competing at the provincial level of the seniors

games, she won medals in the Greater Toronto Area, Ottawa, Kingston and Windsor this year.

When it comes to water, Mrs. Clarridge will try just about anything. Last year, she joined her husband John for a little parasailing in Panama City.

"Parasailing is what we picked to do on our vacation. It was great," she said.

Family is a vital part of Mrs. Clarridge's life. She's especially proud of her three children, five grandchildren and one great grandchild.

"There's another one on the way. The kids are all busy, too," she said.

Senior centres across York Region are a going concern. Most offer such activities as snooker, exercise classes, bridge, wood working, shuffleboard, table tennis, movies, darts, computer classes, day trips, dance classes, health classes, carpet bowling, tai chi and yoga.

See TODAY'S, page 21



Christina Spence-Maharajh
Kitchen Crafts 'n' More

Hot cayenne drink good for what ails you

When your throat hurts, it can bring tears to your eyes.

This natural remedy helps to ease that searing pain with three natural ingredients: honey, lemon and cayenne pepper. Cayenne has been used for centuries as a popular folk medicine ingredient. Pretty amazing for a spice that we usually only pull out when making a big pot of chili.

Cayenne Hot Drink for Sore Throats

2 teaspoons honey

2 teaspoons lemon juice (fresh is best)

Generous pinch (or two) cayenne pepper

Boiling water

Combine the honey and lemon juice in a small mug or cup.

Stir in the cayenne pepper, making sure to stir it well. Add enough boiling water to fill the cup and stir well. Drink whenever you have a sore throat.

Handy Tips

How does cayenne pepper help relieve your sore throat?

Apparently, cayenne can increase blood flow to the throat and also temporarily reduces the amount of pain-causing chemicals produced by nerve endings in the throat.

And remember, nothing helps fight

See GARLIC, page 20

Saturday November 22nd ~ 10 am to 5 pm

Homes for the Holidays



Join us on Saturday, November 22nd, 2003 for an exclusive holiday home tour of nine professionally decorated homes in Markham. See the latest trends in interior and exterior holiday decorating ideas as leading designers show case their talents. Along the way visit our Boutique at Varley Art Gallery, 216 Main St. Unionville, meet the designers and shop for your holiday decorating and gift ideas.

Home Tour Hours: 10 am to 5 pm

Tickets: \$35 available at:

- Varley Art Gallery: 905-477-9511
- Final Touch: 905-940-2340
- The Homesource: 905-474-3524
- Kate's Garden: 905-475-7674
- Niche Décor: 905-479-8385
- Queen's Pantry: 905-477-4625
- Sheridan Nurseries: 905-477-2253
- White Rose: 905-477-5200