

HISTORY OF THE INNISFAIL SENIORS DROP-IN SOCIETY

By Elsie Moffat and Mabel Lundgren

A group met at the United Church the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, to play cards, games and tea, etc. Although the space was there, people only attended in small numbers and not many men. It was not in the downtown area and mostly only United Church people came. After two years of this, we decided to do something different.

The Innisfail Health Nurse sent out a survey of the Town and adjoining areas, looking for interest in a Seniors Drop-In. At Easter 1974, there were 189 people signed up who were interested. On July 5, 1974, thirty-five seniors were phoned and invited to a coffee party at Mabel & Oscar Lundgren's home (pictured right); 29 attended.



An Executive of 14 was organized (see First Executive, below). On October 3, 1974 we opened in a vacant barbershop with some renovations (14 ft x 26 ft); paying \$80.00 rent a month, plus \$30.00 a month for utilities. The group was able to pay the first month's rent from membership fees, and the Lions Club advanced us funds to pay for plumbing and so on, plus we applied to the New Horizons grant for \$5,285. At that time, the name was Innisfail Friendship Drop-In; later this was changed.

Card tables, chairs, benches, cards, and games were loaned to us. We were pleased to see seniors who never went out of their homes, several with canes, one on crutches, and one in wheelchair, come in for an afternoon and wait for grandchildren or family to pick them up, who said it was great.

There was room for 4 card tables, and we were open 6 days a week from 1 – 5 pm. When we found the place was too small and terribly cold, we suggested to the Mayor that the town consider the Senior Citizens as tenants in their new Town Complex.

So on August 25, 1975 the town opened a new \$260,000 Fire Hall Complex and we moved in, with the Health Unit, Town Library, Fire Hall, and 3 fire engines.

The group gradually grew in size of functions and membership. Recently, we were expecting to fill 12 tables for a Whist party, but had to borrow more from the Orange Lodge, filling 20 tables!

We hosted a Travelogue, expecting about 40 people. Then again we had to borrow more chairs to seat 99 people! So once again, we will be applying for funding.

We have a mug for coffee donations and pretty well break even. We have two hostesses each afternoon; we do our own janitor work. We have a used stove, new refrigerator, cupboards and counter with double sink, 50 stacking chairs and 10 stacking tables; we have sing-songs which are great, although many are off key, but the joy in their faces is wonderful.

As of this writing in 2014, there have been 14 presidents, and the membership is over 200. We are now celebrating the 40th Anniversary!

We assist the Town with \$100 per month rent or heating, lights and water. Our drop-in hall is 30'x50' with indirect lighting. We have a piano donated by the Grahamston Community from out east, a fairly large used shuffleboard and floor shuffleboard; we are hoping for a pool table, new chesterfield and used television.

Our carpet bowlers and floor curlers have brought home a variety of ribbons and trophies over the years. Jam Sessions began in November of 2000 and are very popular. By the end of 2014, the much awaited for new accessible bathrooms are nearly ready to use.

THE FIRST EXECUTIVE July 12, 1974

President – Oscar Lundgren **Secretary** – Ethel Smith **Treasurer** – Lauri Downy

Property Committee

Bill Perrott

Martin Rubab

Mabel Lundgren

Supply and Demand Committee

Rita Cole

Bertha Waltz

Flo Hunt