

# Nothing in moderation for LX Club founder

By Mary Kay Bertha

Professionals in the field of recreation shake their heads in amazing approval at what Marion Schuppner, 8837 N. Navajo Rd., Fox Point, has accomplished. "Now listen," Marion warns, "I don't want to come across too strong. No, Never."

So, in understatement, this is what Marion has done: She organized the Fox Point-Bayside LX Senior Citizen Club, On June 8, 1979 she held the first meeting with 25 people.

She now has 200 paid members.

\* Fox Point has obtained \$47,000 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

With this the LX Club rented a spacious wing of the Peter Stormonth School which is owned by the Fox Point-Bayside School District.

Marion has picked out the paint, drapes, and, carpeting. Now she must organize a \$20,000 fund-raising drive to pay for the furnishings,

The grand opening of the LX Senior club is expected to be in April.

Marion is desperate about the fund-raising, but her alarm is laced with chunks of unshakeable confidence.

How did one retired lady get into all of this? "Welt, tell you," says Marion. "I never was into club work. I never stood up and talked before people. I certainly never

ran a fund drive. The getting of the HUD money, and the Stormonth School took a lot of doing. Oh, yes."

But, don't let Marion fool you. She has an inborn expertise in getting things done,

Since Marion is afraid of coming on too strong, she precludes herself by saying she was a homemaker, and proud of it. Her husband Jerry used to marvel at how she made every curtain and drape in their home. She upholstered the furniture, including the elegant white damask sofa.

She sewed stylish clothes for her two daughters and herself. Now, one daughter is a dress designer, and flies to Europe twice year to check the fashion scene, "Maybe a little bit rubbed off on her," Marion says.

The Schuppners loved to travel together; "We were always searching for our Shangri-la." Finally they decided it was in their own backyard.

Jerry would say to Marion, "Hon, it's all here. Wisconsin is a good place to live. We have our friends and our home in Fox Point. Everything is convenient for us. We don't need a Sun City." When Jerry died a few months before his retirement, Marion was at wits end. One of the things she did was to take a course at Cardinal Stritch College in retirement, alone.

Then, in an attempt to fill up her days, she started to paint. She hadn't done it in 20 years. Soon she had a gallery of paintings on her wall. "I even ran out of walls."



## Prime Time

*"Age before beauty" or the beauty of age? Retirement gives the gift of time to many North Shore senior citizens. Time to explore, create, learn, contribute and enjoy life. This series features North Shore "seniors" who lead "enriched, fulfilling lives."*

Bob Young, the pastor from Fox Point Evangelical Lutheran Church was sympathetic. He'd check on her and ask, "How are things going, Marion?" One day she said to him. "You know, it's just too bad there isn't a place for us to go...There are so many lonesome people, and so many widows and widowers. I know so many people. We should get together, but we lack a meeting place. We use to have our children, and our own private circle of friends, but much of that is gone now. We need a place to visit."

The pastor thought it was a good idea. He put a notice in the bulletin to see what would happen. Twenty-five people responded. Young said they could meet in the church basement on the second Friday of the month from 1 to 4 pm.

Then, he said to Marion, "O,K, Here's your room; You run it."

"But, I've never stood up and talked to people before," she remembers saying.

The pastor replied, "Marion, it's just like eating Cracker Jack. The more you do it, the more you'll like it. Stick with it." That was the beginning of the LX Senior Club.

"In our basement room we have our business meeting, programs that are social, educational or cultural, refreshments, cards, and games," she explains.

At their last Valentine party a couple announced their engagement and wedding

# LX Club founder

Continued from page 1)

date. "It did our hearts good to see them so happy together."

Being happy together is what it's all about at the LX Senior Club. Marion's creed is that friendship is the prime ingredient necessary for a successful senior center. She tells you, "A person makes the first step to come into a strange place to make friends. That's what they come for, isn't it? If they wanted entertainment, they could watch TV. If they wanted to eat, they could open their refrigerator door. If they wanted cards, they could play solitaire. They come for friendship! "In our club there is a lot of touching and reaching out. There's not enough of that today."

member I t ' s r comes e wa rdup i n gto her t o and h e r tells w hher, e n "Ia never left my apartment except to get my hair done and go to the store. Now my phone keeps ringing. I go out for lunch and things with my friends. What would we do without you, Marion?" Also, Marion is a good listener. "Sometimes they relieve their burdens on me, and sometimes I take them home with me. "I never thought all this would happen to me. My days are 'filled, and I don't have time to think of myself anymore. All of this is tu rning into something b ig and beautiful.

"I was the founder, the president, the director, and the janitor. Now I'm getting some very competent help. I couldn't do it without everyone pitching in. I keep saying that we are building a ship together, and we have to work together as a crew. Everyone does their part. '

"I know I'm not indispensable. But, my feelings make me have a need to be there. My heart is in it."

The members of the club know about Marion's dedication. She must have gotten over her stage fright, because they tell how sometimes Marion seems' to have a charisma that radiates and reaches out and enfolds them all.

It's the mother hen instinct in her that wants more for her members. She started a

"satellite program". The members may now bowl every Thursday at Brown Port Bowling Alley. Every other Monday they play bridge and sheephead at the Fox Hills condominium party room.

Still the members beg Marion for a chorus, craft work, and dancing. "I have no place to do these things."

Finally Marion came to the conviction that her seniors must have a proper center where they can meet regularly. They should have space, and the facilities to engage in varied activities.

With the help of the Fox Point officials, HUD money was obtained to rent a wing of the Peter Stormonth School for her seniors. The wing includes a spacious activity room, a lounge, and a fully equipped kitchen with "cabinets you'd never believe."

The wing is ideally located. There's a studio room in the school that will be available to them for gymnastics. Its complete with mirrors and bars. They may use the Heritage Room when they need a stage. The library will be available.

The Fox Point -Bayside Health Center is near. Marion can visualize her members being helpful volunteers. She has her eye on the upstairs floor that is used by the Cardinal Stritch Art department. They have looms up there, and drawing boards and instructors. Maybe they could work something out.

Meanwhile, the first business on the agen-

da is the \$20,000 fund-raiser for the curtains, rugs, and furniture. Her daughter in California keeps calling her to come out and visit, but Marion can't right now. She's busy. "I've never worked on a fund-raising drive. HUD doesn't pay for furnishings. All I know is I need \$20,000. I haven't a penny yet. I'm not going to have my members go door to door, but we have to all pull together—fast.

"It could very well happen that our club may open and just be a shell. We need everything down to the teaspoons to stir the coffee."

On the other hand, she thinks positively. "In my lifetime it has, indeed, helped me." Then she adds, "I should learn to do things in moderation."

