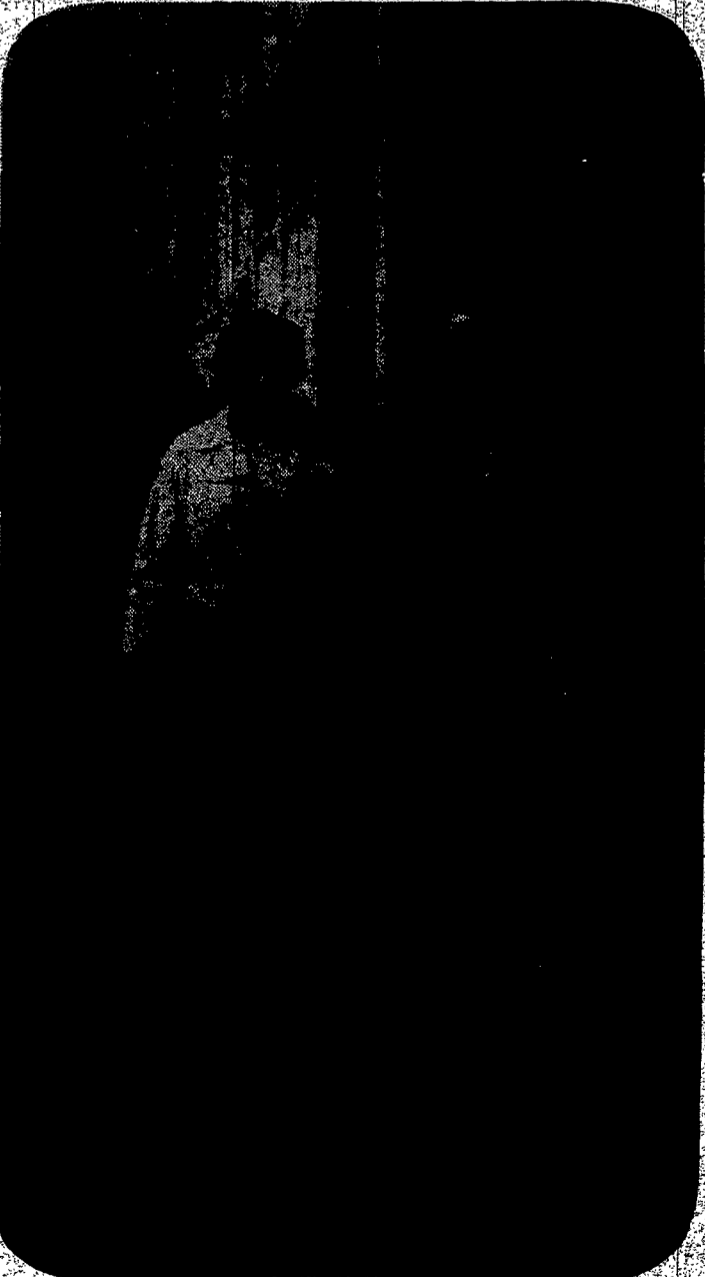


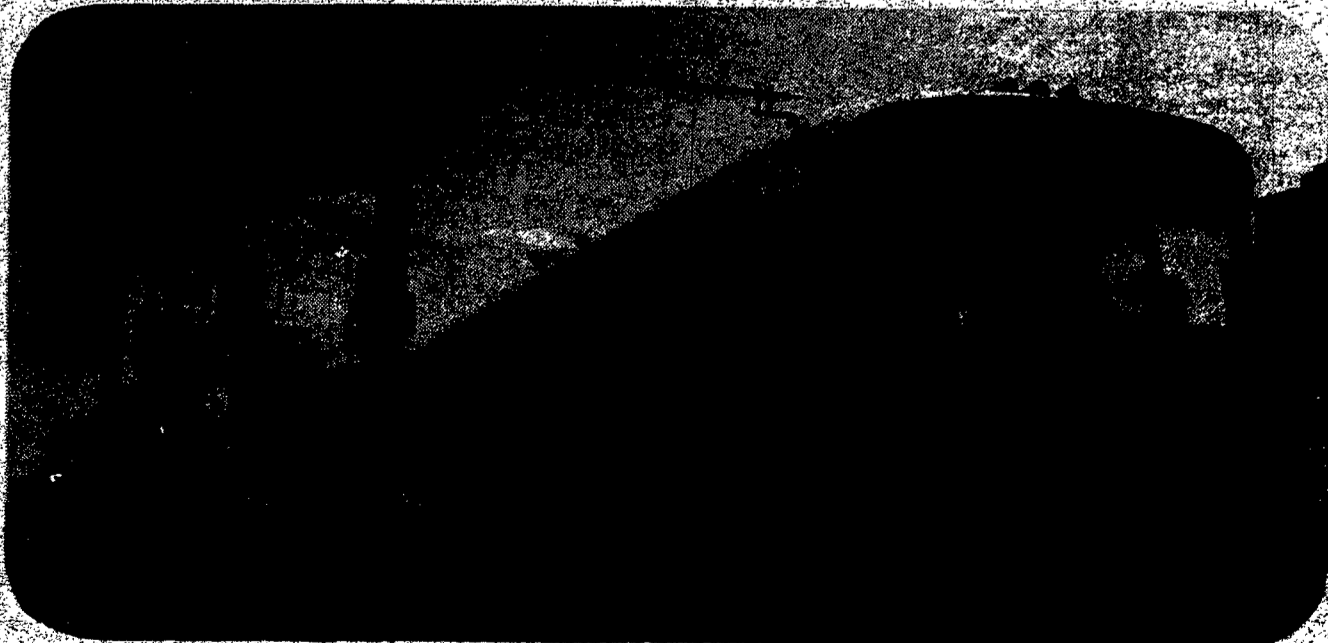


Mrs. Helen Stevens visits the low vision clinic for an eye examination. In the photos above Dr. Bernard Reznick tries special glasses, examines her eyes, and lets her read with the aid of a magnifying glass.



Herb Thatcher and Dolores Peets have put in their day's work and they head home.

Text by Martin Toombs
Photos by Susan McKinney



Some of those who work at the association board a bus for the trip home.

Learning Inde

In the course of a day, a person automatically accomplishes a countless number of seemingly trivial actions, such as pouring a cup of coffee or crossing the street. The importance of such actions becomes evident when the skills involved are lost. That's the situation the newly blind are confronted with; tasks that were accomplished easily become difficult, or even impossible.

The Association for the Blind is dedicated to helping blind people become as independent as possible. The association, located on South Clinton Avenue in Rochester, serves the blind from Monroe, Ontario, Wayne and Seneca counties.

From pouring that cup of coffee to job training, the association offers the specialized services the blind need. Recently that has meant more emphasis on recreational opportunities. John Gaynor, director of Outpatient Rehabilitation, estimates that 80 percent of the association's clients are over 60 years of age, and retired. Special attention to their needs, and to recreational opportunities has become more important.

Getting around is the most serious problem for the blind. A guide dog often is not practical. They are expensive, and hard for an older person or someone with multiple handicaps to handle; most blind people never use one. The association stresses mobility through the use of the white cane. Recognized as a symbol of a blind person, the cane is much more than a label. It provides the blind person with a way to get through hazards of light poles, curbs, broken sidewalks and buildings, as well as around their own home.

Skills required for cleaning and cooking can be learned by blind persons. The outpatient rehabilitative staff provides instruction right in the home of the blind person. The association also has a complete apartment in its building to provide similar training there.

Those who have limited sight are treated in the Association's Low Vision Clinic. The clients are given a thorough examination, and, if possible, lens arrangements are prescribed that will increase the person's ability to see. "Cosmetically ugly," Gaynor calls them, but he points out that they're "beautiful" to those who find that they regain a significant amount of sight.

The sheltered workshop at the association provides jobs, training and paychecks for some of the association's clients.

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