

Seniors' Month - Focus on Marie Zions/Fryer

By Julie Couroy

Last week you read a little about Flora Barber who was born just outside Acton and lived in the area all her life. This week I am writing about Marie Zions/Fryer another "local" person who was born in Guelph General Hospital and lived with her parents Steve Emmerson and Claire in Georgetown.

She has one brother Kevin. Her first five years were spent living with her Mom and Gramma Emmerson while her dad was overseas. He was with the Lorne Scots Regiment. Marie attended Chapel Street School. Her father and his siblings also attended the same school. She even had some of the same teachers. Later she attended Georgetown High School and the Guelph Business College. She travelled to Guelph by train.

In the summer she worked at Provincial Paper Ltd. to help pay for her tuition. Before graduating she started to work for Tom Van Sicker, a lawyer in Georgetown and worked for Tom for about two years. She decided to go back to work at the paper mill. When visiting Marie and Bobby Kerr's parent's farm on the Fifth Line, she met her future husband, John Zions, who was a drummer in the Rock and Roll band *The Midnighters*. She wanted to sing with the band but instead on November 15, 1958 she married the drummer.

They lived with John's family on the Fourth Line, in the house John and his brothers built for their parents. They raised their four children - Peter, Julie, Linda and Stephen - in the family home.

Marie's mother was French Canadian from Valleyfield, Quebec. They visited Marie's grandparents and Auntie Cecile, and it was there she began her love of music and singing. Her Aunt Cecile was an accomplished pianist, and from a very early age Marie would sing when her aunt played the piano.

When Marie was 14 she joined the Holy Cross Church choir in Georgetown and has been in a choir ever since. She is a charter member of the Georgetown Choral Society under directors Charlie Grimmes and Ralph Ursel, and later Dale Wood.

In 1978 she battled colon cancer which did not stop her singing, and continuing in the activities she loved.

Pat Salt was the organist with St Joseph's Church in Acton. Pat and Marie started the children's choir. There were 15 to 20 boys and girls in the choir. Pat and Marie and the choir members' mothers made red surpluses for them to wear at the 9 a.m. Mass. They also entertained at the Old Hide House and Chudleighs Apple Farm.

Pat was instrumental in encouraging Marie to take singing lessons and Marie spent two years traveling to Guelph for voice training.

Not only does Marie love to sing, but she loved her garden on the Fourth Line. She was a neighbour of Steve and Nina Palichuk and they persuaded her to join the Georgetown Horticulture Society. She smiled remembering how she and her children created many arrangements over the years for their flower shows. Today her children all love gardening and flowers.

She later joined the Acton Horticulture Society in 1987 and became a charter member when the AHS received its charter in 1988.

Their new home was built by John on three acres beside the original house on the Fourth Line in 1969. Marie loved cutting the grass, but when John decided to buy a riding lawn mower he took over. She had a huge rock garden which was her pride and joy. She spent many hours planting and weeding it, plus the flower beds that surrounded the house.

Mansell Nellis dug a pond on their property. There were many swimming parties in the summer and skating and hockey parties and skiing in the winter.

Many residents of Acton realize that people that live on the Fourth Line are a community unto themselves and very supportive of their neighbours.

As the children grew Marie had a variety of jobs. You may have met her in Grace Robertson's Flower shop on Mill Street, or Webb's in Norval. Her long time friends the Kockx's opened the Fourth Line Flower Shop and she and her son Peter both helped.

She also worked for the Red Cross assisting people that needed help with cleaning, shopping, bathing, and help around their home. She worked for Janet Goy's Medical Supply business.

She also worked in the bakery in the IGA where Giant Tiger is now located, and later in the new Sobeys store. She worked in the office for her son Peter. She also worked at the home of David and Elyse Chapman (Purity Life) until she retired.

Marie was asked to sing at the opening of the new Civic Centre in Georgetown and at the opening of the new Hydro Office in Acton. Over the years Marie sang with several local bands including *Corey's Band*, *The Kerr Band* and *Friends from the Hill*. She took lessons on the guitar and piano but laughs when she says she can't do two things at once, so now she just sings.

In 1986 while John built her a new house on Fourth Line, Marie went back to school to finish her high school education. While there she was in musical *Preppies*. She really enjoyed her year back at school. In 1989 and

1990 she performed and sang in Georgetown Globe Productions *Fiddler on the Roof* and *My Fair Lady*. She also did some Mystery Dinner Theatre at the Old Town Hall.

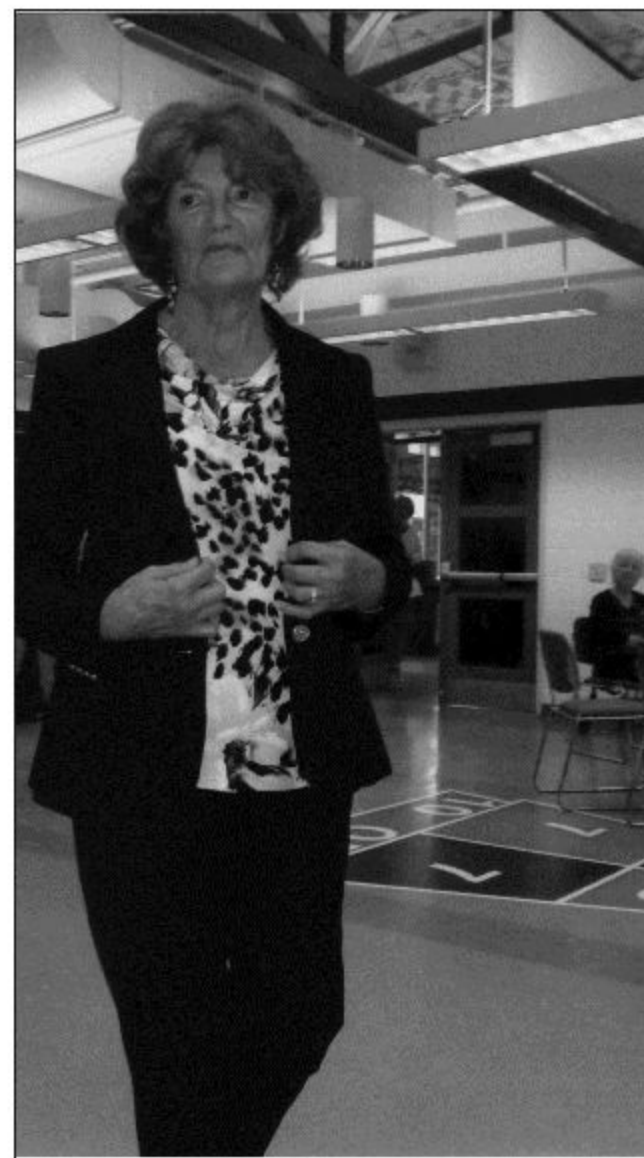
In 2003, her husband John died very unexpectedly, and she received a lot of support and love from her Fourth Line friends.

Over the years Marie and Johnny met Clayton Fryer who was a friend of Bob and Arlene Bruce. In fact Clay helped Johnny build the basement for the second house they built on the Fourth Line. Clayton was born in Acton, and although he lived in Vancouver and had retired from the RCMP, he kept in touch with and visited family and friends in town. When he was visiting the Bruce's, he and Marie discovered they both loved to walk and travel. She visited him when he returned to Vancouver, B.C.

On December 28, 2007 they married in St. Joseph's Church and later lived in the Legion Birchway apartments. They enjoyed the social dinners at the Centre. They have a trailer



Then



Now

on Fairy Lake where Clayton loved to go and play in the lake and putter about.

Sadly, Clayton died on November 6, 2012.

Marie loves to walk, play golf, swim and travel. She has recently returned from Hawaii and Vancouver where she visited Clay's daughter and grandsons.

Marie has four children and eleven grandchildren, three step-children and five step-grandchildren. She is looking forward to the arrival of her first great grandchild expected in July. Marie says she loves her life in Acton and all her many friends and family.