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June is Seniors' Month

Celebrating Our Seniors

The New Tanner is proud to feature seniors each week this month

This week I have chosen to write about a very busy lady, Margaret Anderson, who has held several Board positions.

Margaret was born in London (England). She was born within the sound of Bow Bells which makes her a true cockney (a native of London).

She told me her earliest memory was about the war starting and her dad and all the neighbourhood men started digging holes in the back gardens to build zinc corrugated air-raid shelters (these were called Anderson shelters). If you didn't have a garden big enough to hold a shelter, street shelters were built of re-enforced concrete for the community. The underground train stations were also used by many Londoners to protect them during air raids.

During this time, her sister became ill, and was diagnosed with T.B. She was in hospital for two-and-a-half years. Margaret's mother would not leave London until she could take all her children. As soon as her sister came home, cured, they were on a train to Wales and her mother's family.

She was nine when the war ended and they returned to London in time for her tenth birthday. Even though she was a child she could see the devastation of London. She went back to the same junior school she had left a couple of year before. Many of her class mates were evacuated to various parts of England. Now they were back in London. The kids spoke with different dialects and had lost their distinctive Cockney accents. At first they found it hard to understand each other.

Many of the young male teachers had returned from the war, and Margaret says the teachers certainly kept them on their toes.

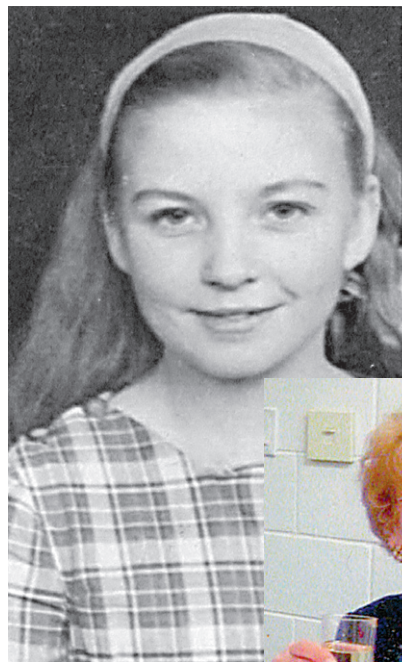
At eleven she took the 11 plus and went to Crondell Street Girls School. She was only there for just over a year when the family moved to Essex, east of London. No bomb sites visible near her home. She attended Halbert Street School for Girls.

On leaving school she travelled to London to work for Lipton's in their head office. The owner was Thomas Lipton, a famous Yachtsman. "Liptons" had a chain of grocery stores which included Perks, Home and Colonial, plus Lipton's. While working there she attended higher education classes and over the years learned all aspects of accounting. She started by filing documents, and over the years

she moved up the "ladder." She met her husband-to-be at a dance. He had just finished serving five years in the R.A.F. as a military policeman and was applying to the Essex Police Force. He was accepted

she had done in England and he immediately offered her a job in the bank starting the following Monday. Luckily, their money turned up 10 days later. Now they both had work and their daughter was in nursery school.

One year later, Bill was accepted by the O.P.P. and was posted to Downsvew. Margaret still worked for the bank but in a different branch. During this time they moved to Albertus Ave., Toronto. For the next few years they saved



six months before they married.

They married on February 14, 1959 and went to live in Chelmsford, Essex where Bill was stationed. After traveling to London every day for six months she decided to find a job which wouldn't mean as much traveling. She stated to work for Marconi's which was a short bus ride away from their home. She worked there until her daughter Beverley was born in August 1961. In the following months, they talked about immigrating to Canada. They felt it would offer their family a better life, so in March 1963, they arrived in Canada.

Her husband Bill had applied to the O.P.P. as he had been a policeman all his life and loved the work, but he had to have a year's residency in Ontario before he could be accepted, so he took any work he could find. He worked as a security guard at several hospitals, and Channel Nine (TV) which was in the middle of nowhere in those days. Bill needed to purchase a car to get to the various job locations.

They had transferred money from their bank in England to a bank in Canada but it got "lost in transit". It was in the bank's head office somewhere. The cash they were allowed to bring with them was slowly running out, so they asked the local bank manager for a loan until the bank found their money. The bank manager asked Margaret what work

their money to buy a house. They made many friends at the police station and the bank, and she is still friend with many of them.

They bought their first house in Pickering. At this time, Bill couldn't see any future for him in the police force, so after talking it over, he resigned and went into the leisure business (pools and accessories) the business was in Milton, so they sold their house in Pickering and bought a house in Acton in June 1971.

Margaret resigned from the bank, which left her free to work on the books and paperwork for the business. They sold to pool dealers in Canada and the USA. When the business moved to Toronto, Bill sold pools and equipment all over the world and Margaret was able to travel with him 50 per cent of the time. It was a very exciting time in their lives. Beverley was 10 when she started school at Robert Little School. She later attended Acton High school and then university. Beverley married and has three children. Shortly after the youngest grandchild turned two-and-a-half, Bill died after a short battle with cancer in July 1994.

Margaret has volunteered at the schools in Acton from the time Beverley started school

in Acton. She was so used to being busy that when Bill was traveling so much, she applied for a job in the newly build Woolco in Georgetown. She helped set up the store and jewellery departments. When Wal-Mart took over, she became the department manager of lingerie and hosiery. She worked there until she retired.

She joined the Acton Seniors Centre in September 2001, and immediately started volunteering, which she really enjoys.

She served as the Chair of Fundraising for a number of years. She was vice-president for two years, and then moved up to president for two years. Her term as past-president will end in February 2011. She is still on various committees at the Centre.

Needless to say, the Acton Seniors Centre is not the only place she volunteers. For the past six years she has been the Municipal Seniors advisor for Halton Hills (Georgetown and Acton) on the Elder Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) which is an advisory body to Halton Regional Council. They provide information on seniors' issues to assist council in making informed decisions on behalf of seniors of Halton. She has a real passion for this position and finds it very satisfying. She told me that even when they have sets backs, it makes them pull together and work even harder. She also sits on the friends of the Halton Hills Library Board.

She is rightly proud of her family and their accomplishments, their hard work, and tenacity. She said with a smile, "I guess I must have done something right bringing up my daughter as her children are all high achievers as well." Ben, her grandson is working full time, her eldest granddaughter Holly graduated from university and is now just starting her career as a paralegal, and finally Emma the youngest has just completed her first year at the University of Toronto, working towards a Medical Degree.

All three of Margaret's grandchildren are following in her footsteps. They have all volunteered many hours helping at the Centre whether it is selling tickets or articles from granny's attic at the Spring and Christmas Bazaars, or helping serve meals at special events.

As you can see a very busy lady who has volunteered for countless hours, not only for Acton and Halton Hills but Halton County as well. She has helped make Acton the special community it is.

