

CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2020

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Lois Brown

“I am still the same person”

Lois Brown is a vibrant and wonderful woman living with Alzheimer’s disease.

Lois and her husband Al have been married for 62 years and have 4 wonderful children, James Alan, David Edward, Douglas Steven, and Susan Barbara. Lois and Al are retired teachers, having spent their careers working for the Board of Education in Scarborough. Lois taught all of the primary

grades but admits that kindergarten and grade one were her favourites.

Lois and Al led busy lives. Lois said she has always loved live music and concerts and declared, “Al, was the sport’s guy.” Lois and Al golfed together for many years and had seasons’ tickets for the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team. They enjoyed many games in the famous Maple Leaf Gardens. Al said, as a sports fan the first time you go into the Gardens and see the ice it is a breathtaking experience.

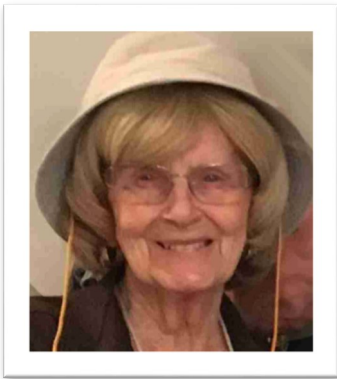
They are ardent Toronto Blue Jay fans and attended many games when they lived in the Toronto area. Lois and Al continued to attend at least one Toronto Blue Jay game each year, usually during the CNE Exhibition. Today they watch and cheer for the Blue Jays on television.

Lois and Al retired to the Niagara area in 1989 after many years of visiting Al’s best friend who lives here. Lois and Al also chose to be ‘snowbirds’ and decided that Niagara was a good “jumping off” place to travel to Nokomis, Florida every year. They remained ‘snowbirds’ for 20 years.

Lois spoke enthusiastically about her love of music. She said that music has always been an important part of her life. Lois and her brother Jim took piano lessons at the Royal Conservatory of Music for 3 years and she continued to play piano until the age of 10 years. High school introduced Lois to the world of singing and she became a member of the Glee Club, and was given the role of understudy for the lead singer.



Lois Brown



Lois performed in many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas while attending East York Collegiate and said that her favourite was the role of cousin Hebe in HMS Pinafore.

Lois was then encouraged to return to the Royal Conservatory of Music to take singing lessons and continued for 4 years. She was the assistant soprano in Church and led many choirs. "Anything music and I was in," mused Lois. "I love to listen to music and I love to teach." Lois's love of music has been a joy and an inspiration to her throughout her entire life. This writer can tell you that Lois truly has the voice of an angel. You can not only hear the beauty of her voice, you can see the joy in her face when Lois is singing.

Lois also mentioned a very significant event in her life when she was 18 years of age. She was the provincial president of the CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) and was chosen to represent the province of Ontario at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953. Lois described this event as breathtaking and exciting. "*It really was a great experience,*" said Lois.

When Lois was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease she admits to feeling uncertain and confused. "When the doctor told me, it didn't hit me for a day or two," Lois explained. She said she began to think about it and went to the library to learn more about Alzheimer's disease. "It scared me then, I didn't look or feel any different." Lois credits her husband Al with tremendous support and encouragement. Lois also said she realized it was even more important to continue to enjoy life one day at a time, finding moments and experiences of joy.

In addition to the joy Lois continues to experience through music, she also shares there are many other ways in which she finds meaning and purpose in her life.

Spending time with Al, talking with their children every Sunday are very important ways for Lois to stay connected to those nearest and dearest to her heart.

Lois and Al have been members of the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region (ASNR) for 3 years and she credits the many programs, including Early Stage, R.E.B.E.L. and the Brain Wave Cafés with helping her to continue to find joy and meaning in her life. Lois is a member of the Alzheimer Society's Client Advisory Group, and explains that being a part of this advocacy group has given her a sense of purpose in her life. "The Alzheimer Society has become my whole life, I would not have survived without it. It gives me something to look forward to, makes me feel better, feel normal," explained Lois.

Lois encourages others who have been diagnosed with dementia to contact their local Alzheimer Society. She wants people to reach out and ask for support and to consider the many programs available to people living with dementia, and their care partners. One of the programs Lois enjoyed was the Recollections Life Story Program. Lois and Al worked with Angela Monrad, First Link Coordinator and a volunteer to create a life story book. Lois said, "It was something I looked forward to each week. We had copies made for our family. We brought pictures from home each week and we talked about memories I had forgotten, I felt so comfortable."

Lois also encourages people living with dementia to stay active in their lives, in their communities. Lois ended her interview with this very important message, "I am still the same person." She wants people to know that life continues to have meaning, purpose and joy as you live with dementia.

On The Bright Side



*"Music gives a soul to the universe,
wings to the mind, flight to the
imagination, and life to everything."*

--Plato



Did You Know...

- That the Beatles were banned in the Soviet Union in the 1960's because they were "too political."
- That LP (long playing) records cost about \$2.00-\$3.00 in the 1960's and a single record cost about 69 cents
- That singing as a part of a group is good for our brains and our emotional well-being. Singing together can be soothing and raise your spirits
- That "Jingle Bells," the famous Christmas classic was actually written for Thanksgiving and the original title was "One Horse Open Sleigh." It was written in 1857 in Medford, Massachusetts where sleigh races were popular.
- That plants may grow faster when music is played around them. South Korean scientists found that playing classical music such as Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" helped plants grow at a faster pace.
- That the Beatles could not read or write music and never understood musical theory. Paul McCartney revealed in a 2018 *60 Minutes* interview that he nor John, George or Ringo could read music.
- That the band The Eagles got their start as a back-up band for Linda Ronstadt
- According to Rolling Stone Magazine the four (4) greatest singers of all time are, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Elvis Presley and Sam Cooke





Keep your Brain Young with Music

“There are few things that stimulate the brain the way music does” says one Johns Hopkins physician. “If you want to keep your brain engaged..... listening to or playing music is a great tool. It provides a total brain workout.”

Researchers are trying to understand how our brains are able to hear and play music. Vibrations from the music get inside the ear canal and are then transmitted into an electrical signal. Music, we are told is based on the relationship between one note and the next. Your brain has to work hard to make sense of the music vibrations.

Individuals who play a musical instrument may have the greatest level of protection, however listening to music can also have beneficial effects on the brain.

Research studies have shown that listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure and pain, as well as show improvements in mood, sleep quality and memory. Interestingly, individuals who engaged in meditation as well as listening to music on a regular basis enjoyed the highest level of benefit.

These studies suggest that it is never too late for the brain to benefit from the powers of music.

Everyday Brain Boosts from Music

Be creative, try something new:

- *Try listening to a different genre of music. New music challenges the brain in a way that familiar melodies don't. New music forces the brain to understand a different kind of music.*

Recall memories from long ago:

- *When you listen to your favourite music of the past it might bring you back to a special time in your life. You may vividly recall the details of wonderful events and people in your life.*

Listen to your body:

- *Pay attention to how you react to different forms of music. Pick what works for you. What may be distracting to one person may help another concentrate, focus or unwind. (hopkinsmedicine.org)*

Sources: alzdiscovery.org,
www.hopkinsmedicine.org



Alzheimer Niagara Music Program



 **Music Program**



Société Alzheimer Society
NIAGARA REGION
RÉGION DE NIAGARA

Please consider our wonderful music program at the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region. This program is a six (6) month borrowing program offered to persons living with dementia. The Alzheimer Society will load personally selected music from our vast library onto an iPod Shuffle, mp3 player or your own personal music device. Participants will have six months to evaluate the benefits of the program. **There is no fee for this program.** Please contact your Family Support Counsellor or the Alzheimer Society Niagara Region for more information.



Pineapple Cheese Cake

by Bev Smith

Crust:

1 cup graham wafer crumbs
¼ cup melted butter

Directions:

Mix the graham wafer crumbs and the melted butter together. Put into an 8x8 square pan (I use a glass pan). Let set for 4 hours

Filling:

2 packages of Dream Whip (follow the directions on the packages of Dream Whip) 1 package of Philadelphia Cream cheese (250 grams) softened

Directions:

Follow the directions on the Dream Whip package. Add milk as directed on the package. Whip the Dream Whip with a mixer or by hand. Cut the cream cheese into small cubes. Mix the Dream whip and the cream cheese together until smooth. Let set for 1 hour



Next step:

Drain a tin of crushed pineapple (14 ounce can)

Directions:

Fold in the drained pineapple with the Dream Whip and Philadelphia cream cheese mixture. Put this mixture into your pan on top of the graham wafer crumbs. Keep in fridge for at least 2 hours.

Additional ideas:

You can decorate with maraschino cherries (rinse the cherries first in cold water). Sprinkle a little of the graham wafer crumbs on top

Summer Word Search



AUGUST
BARBECUE
BASEBALL
BEACH
BIKING
GOLF
HATS
HOLIDAY
HOT
HUMID
JULY
RELAX
SANDALS
SHORTS
SOCCER
SUNBURN
SUNSCREEN
SUNTAN
SWIMMING
VACATION

S	U	M	S	A	N	D	A	L	S	J	M	H	E	R
S	T	A	R	U	T	S	W	H	E	N	U	I	T	S
T	H	E	S	G	N	U	M	M	E	M	R	L	S	O
H	A	T	S	U	L	B	I	K	I	N	G	S	Y	T
O	I	C	E	S	A	R	U	D	O	U	O	N	D	T
L	H	E	T	T	W	E	N	R	R	E	L	A	X	T
I	Y	S	S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	F	S	E	C
D	O	B	T	N	D	O	F	E	O	J	U	N	L	E
A	A	A	N	R	S	D	E	F	I	I	N	I	L	S
Y	H	R	E	S	O	R	W	I	T	O	H	T	A	H
T	H	B	E	A	C	H	E	A	A	U	T	U	B	M
N	E	E	Q	S	C	U	S	I	C	N	O	X	E	N
E	A	C	N	R	E	T	H	N	A	T	N	U	S	E
T	W	U	E	N	R	T	Y	S	V	E	C	O	A	N
D	S	E	O	F	S	E	P	T	E	M	B	E	B	R



Letter From the Editor



Welcome to our summer edition of Connections. Many thanks to Cynthia Krawczuk, Communications Coordinator for taking the rough drafts of the articles this writer has been doing while working from home, and making them into this beautiful newsletter.

You will get to know Lois Brown, a wonderful woman living with dementia and a member of our Client Advisory Group. Lois wants you to know that you can have a life with meaning, purpose and joy while living with dementia.

The Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region staff continue to work remotely from home and we now offer many programs using the ZOOM platform. Please have a look at our website for a variety of daily activities.

We are all experiencing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social and physical distancing are new words in our vocabulary and we are sanitizing and washing our hands more than ever. These measures are meant to keep us safe and well. This however has been difficult for everyone as we enjoy spending time with family and friends. We are finding new ways to stay connected to family and friends, using Facetime and ZOOM platforms.

Please let us know if you have any ideas for future editions of this newsletter. If you wish to be interviewed for a feature article please contact me at 905-687-6856, extension 543.

Stay well and stay safe!

My kindest regards,

Gina

Gina Bendo Reg.N

Wellness and Early Stage Program Coordinator

