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HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO

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Produced in association with the Dundas Chapter of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario

Dear neighbors in Dundas County,

Once again we are approaching February, Heart Month, when approximately 340 residents of Dundas County will be out during this cold month going door-to-door collecting funds for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

I personally thank all these canvassers from their dedicated efforts on behalf of the Foundation but I also thank our board members and volunteers who spend many hours throughout the year helping in a variety of ways — in organizing health promotion and fundraising activities, in the selling and buying of raffle tickets, or by participating in fundraisers or sponsoring those who do participate.

The monies raised for research have paid great dividends. Deaths from heart disease and stroke have been reduced by 35 per cent over the last decade. Several key areas of heart and stroke research are on the verge of major breakthroughs - in areas such as correcting heart defects before birth, and in the development of drugs to minimize and prevent brain damage from strokes.

The Foundation has created a 1-800 Healthline to supply heart and stroke-related information. Public awareness concerning women, heart disease, and stroke has been increased across the province through the media and information symposia, and the funding of research programs. Note the information included in this section concerning the upcoming symposium in our area on Feb. 12.

Through your generous support in the past, you have all been a part of the successes of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. I thank you for that and seek your continued support this month as the canvassers call on you.

Margaret Reynolds, President
Dundas County Chapter

Allen: 18 years as president

A small group of dedicated volunteers organized the first canvass for the Ontario Heart Foundation in the mid 1960's. The focus was on Winchester and the surrounding area. By 1968, the group had organized themselves into a chapter structure and had elected Betty Allen of Hallville as the first president.

As the Foundation grew, the new chapter expanded their campaign into the rest of the county by utilizing student manpower from the two high schools: Seaway District High School and North Dundas District High School. During those years, revenue continued to increase at a slow but steady pace and the first initiatives in education which included pamphlet distribution, film viewing and speakers' presentations, were begun.

In 1983, the Dundas County Chapter was formally recognized as a chartered chapter of the Foundation and Betty Allen was presented with the charter at a ceremony in Toronto. She continued to serve as president of the chapter until 1985, when she was presented with a plaque for her 18 years of service to the Foundation.

The charter was reissued to the chapter in 1985 shortly after the Foundation's 1984 name change to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

In the mid 1980's, the major changes were afoot within the Foundation. Firstly, chapters become more responsible and accountable for set revenue goals and secondly, greater emphasis was placed on educational programming, In order to support these new directives it was essential that a more comprehensive chapter structure be formulated. As a result, each chapter was now required to have seven mandated positions in place at each annual meeting in order to retain their chartered chapter status.

In 1986, Allan Sharkey of Chesterville became the new president and began implementation of the new strategies. The chapter developed considerably during the next three year and began the major move to adult canvassers.

In 1989, Mary Steele assumed the presidency and again the chapter flourished and continued to grow. The board grew from the seven original positions to a group of 14 members including a vice-president, chairperson of human resources, chairperson of Jump Rope for Heart, and some branch representatives as well as members-at-large. The first formal education committee also began to hold regular meetings and to offer more formal programs such as brainstorming seminars and CPR courses.

Earl Baker took over in 1991 and was very effective in helping to develop the structure as we know it today. Visibility of the Foundation increased considerably during his tenure as Earl used his wide range of contacts to further the work of the Foundation. In addition, revenue increased by over 22 per cent during his two-year term.

Current president, Margaret Reynolds, who has just completed her second year in this position, is extremely knowledgeable about the Foundation as she has also served in the positions of co-chairperson of the Person-to-Person campaign and chairperson of Jump Rope for Heart. Her superior organizational skills have enhanced an already smooth-running and effective chapter set-up. The Foundation was pleased to learn that Margaret has agreed to extend her term by one year in order to allow vice-president, Joan Larocque, to complete her two-year term in that position. The future of the Dundas County Chapter is in good hands.

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Tues., Feb. 6	Winchester Seniors Band
Fri., Feb. 9	Winter Party/Winchester Public School
Mon., Feb. 12	Valentine Crafts
Wed., Feb. 14	Valentine's Party/Hot Dog Day *Marleen Fawcett entertaining*
Thurs., Feb. 22	Winter Slide Show
Thurs., Feb. 29	February Birthday Party *Jim & Lila McMillan entertaining*

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Brooks has new lease on life

by C. Thompson

SOUTH MOUNTAIN — After coping with a congenital heart disorder for most of his short life, 14-year-old Allen Brooks was given another chance last March.

Allen was born with a rare condition called truncus arteriosus. Instead of a separate artery leading from the heart to the lungs and one to the rest of the body, he had to share one main artery and a valve for both functions. The condition results in excess pressure, flooding the lungs with blood.

Diagnosed at the age of only one month, he had two closed heart surgeries performed by Dr. Wilburt Keon during the spring of 1981-82. Surgery called "pulmonary banding" consisted of banding the artery, to take some pressure off the lungs.

If Allen was lucky enough to survive at all, doctors predicted a two-year lifespan at the most.

After surgery, parents Gail and Martin followed the advice to "wait and see" along with six-month check-ups at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, until the age of six. But at that time, doctors found permanent damage to lungs and heart from excess pressure on the lungs, and corrective surgery was cancelled.

However, the possibility of transplant was held as an option, since success was being reported with children.

Despite the odds, Allen's health remained relatively good from age six to 14, and doctors held out hope for an eventual transplant. He was going to school, riding a bike, and was seldom ill during an eight-year interval. "We were very lucky," Gail said.

Allen was in the care of Dr. Peter Vlad at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, while Dr. Wilbert Keon of the Heart Institute maintained a role in his care from the sidelines.

Allen was not put on an "active" list for transplants at the time, since the optimum age for transplants is after puberty. During assessment, there was discussion whether he should be listed, but doctors decided this option didn't necessarily guarantee an improvement.

You're taking an extremely large chance, and they couldn't guarantee he would survive the surgery," Gail said.

"They said if we could get to 15 that would be optimum because there is some retardation in growth and development for the year they're on extremely heavy drug doses. The longer they wait, the better," she added.

TURN FOR THE WORSE

However, in the fall of 1994, Allen's health took a turn for the worse. He finally came down with a sinus infection he couldn't shake.

Allen was hospitalized at CHEO and didn't come home for the next five months. On December 16, Allen suffered his first heart attack at age 13.

Cover photo

Allen Brooks, this year's Heart and Stroke Campaign Chairman, recently visited local businesses with his mother Gail to let them know about the "Dress Red" event, scheduled for St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. On that day, businesses and the public are encouraged to dress in red to raise awareness of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Cathy Albert, centre, the assistant manager of customer service at the Royal Bank in Winchester, took the information for her workplace.



Finding a transplant became urgent, and he was placed high on the priority list. But finding a donor was easier said than done. Even if a donor was found with a heart of the right size, and correct blood type, there was only a 20 per cent chance Allen's body would accept the transplant because of a high rejection rate due to intravenous drugs to fight chronic infections.

Allen's possibility of rejection in September was 40 per cent. By Christmas it had jumped to 60 per cent and skyrocketed to 95 per cent between Christmas and March.

Hundreds of potential matches were investigated, but one possibility after another was ruled out because of his high rejection rate.

On February 22, Allen had his second heart attack while in intensive care. As fate would have it, most of the staff was still present, including the head cardiologist. A physician immediately did CPR on him and succeeded in getting his overtaxed heart functioning again.

But his critical condition continued and he was placed on life support systems for respiration and kidney dialysis.

RACE AGAINST TIME

At this time, the drive to fine a donor became a real race. March 8 became a turning point in Allen's life, when the family heart a suitable donor heart was available.

"We were just ecstatic, we couldn't believe he got the chance," Gail added. At the time, Allen had agreed on an interview for the Children's Telethon, but never had the interview because he was being prepared for surgery.

"When he got the news, he was on morphine and thought they were kidding," Gail said.

"He was reasonably sedated but being a very active child, he remembers a lot. We were told he shouldn't have remembered any of it, that's how sedated he was and the toxic condition he was in."

Chronic pneumonia, a generalized infection and problems with kidney and liver function added to his troubles at the time of transplant. Levels of creatnine in the kidneys and bilirubin in the liver were so high, doctors said they had never seen someone so ill pull through. In fact, his case was known as one of the most difficult heart transplants.

In a successful operation by Dr. Keon that took 12 hours including preparation time, Allen received not only a new heart, but new pulmonary arteries as well.

He stayed at the Heart Institute during the crucial period following the operation. During 51 days of recovery, Allen had two bouts of pneumonia. He returned home with pneumonia at the end of April, still on intravenous drugs to combat the infection which were continued at home through the VON.

Anti-rejection drugs which have the effect of putting the immune system to sleep were given in high oral doses following surgery and continued in smaller doses as the months went on. Allen's kidneys started to function better and his health to improve. Although he is felling better, it takes a year to make a full recovery.

It is not surprising that Allen had little to say about his survival of this ordeal. To his parents, he is just like "any other kid of 14 — looking forward to finishing high school and taking up a career. We were encouraged by the knowledge that many other heart transplant patients were leading normal and active lives. Some will not be able to wait long enough."

It is the family's urgent wish for everyone to make a commitment to organ donations so that others may have a similar chance.

Fun and healthy ways to raise funds for research

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has devised a number of interesting, active, healthy and challenging ways by which we were able to raise funds for health promotion and research.

One of these is *Fit for Heart*, formerly known as Dance for Heart but which underwent a name change to include many more forms of exercise activity — line dancing, aerobics, walking, volleyball, skiing and others.

Jump Rope for Heart, now in its 14th year, is an event geared especially to elementary school students. Many of us have sponsored children and young people who have participated in this healthy exercise program which also includes healthy education resources and the opportunity to become a Health Smart All Star school to regularly receive helpful ideas to teach students healthy lifestyle habits that they will use for the rest of their lives.

Our newest fundraising idea is *Hoops for Heart*, an opportunity for high school and senior elementary students to have fun playing baseball, showing their skills and taking charge of their "heart" health.

Another exciting fundraiser is *Big Bike for Stroke*, a great way to build team spirit in your workplace or your club by joining other teams in riding a 30-seat bike around your town or village as your friends, families and neighbors cheer you on.

Just recently *Swim for Heart*, a new program in our area, has been very successful, particularly because of the generosity of the owners of San Mar Pool. Several groups have already participated in this splash event.

All the above programs are pledge generated with attractive incentive prizes.

For more information please call Barbara Wells, Jump and Hoops, 535-2170; Susan Hanson, Fit and Hoops, 448-2040, Marian Michilicka, Swim, 543-3343; or Margaret Reynolds, president, 543-2547.

So hop into the fray! Become involved! Help fight Canada's #1 killer - heart disease and stroke. The life you save may be your own.

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Mrs. Freda Mellan
Stroke Survivor
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Coming Events

for Dundas County Chapter, Heart & Stroke Foundation

General Campaign	February, everywhere
Person-to-Person	Campaign canvassers calling door to door during the month of February
Roses for Heart Blitz	February 2-3 - Morrisburg, Williamsburg, South Mountain and Hainsville, Chesterville and Winchester
Hugs for Heart	All month at the Hartford Retirement Centre, Morrisburg and Dundas Manor, Winchester
Darts for Heart	February 10, Iroquois Legion
Women, Heart Disease and Stroke Symposium	February 12 (see ad on this page), North Dundas District High School
Fly Higher	February 17, General Vanier Secondary School, Cornwall - workshop for secondary school females in Eastern Ontario to promote healthy school environments
Swim for Heart	Saturday, February 3, 9-10 am - First Winchester Brownies at San Mar Pool
Dress Red	February 14 - Businesses and the public will be encouraged to dress **RED** on St. Valentine's Day for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Team co-ordinators have been assigned to assist in helping to paint Dundas County **RED**.

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Harper beats odds

Liz Edwards
Press staff

WINCHESTER — Mae Harper can't remember the day her life changed.

Nor can she remember anything from the 16 days following Nov. 24, 1988. The Winchester resident, then 55, was in a coma at the time — a result of what she calls a "man-made" stroke.

The stroke was a result of complications from an operation for an aneurysm on the right side of the brain that began bleeding while she slept on Nov. 24. An aneurysm occurs when the wall of an artery becomes weak and then dilates. Aneurysms frequently bleed and can be fatal.

Harper's husband Arthur woke that night when her hand jerked violently and hit him on the nose. After one look at Mae, Arthur called an ambulance. Eventually she was taken from Winchester District Memorial Hospital to the Ottawa General.

Sitting in their living room at the Beachcroft Apartments in Winchester, Arthur, 68, helps Mae, 61, fill in the blanks of their story. He can remember what Mae can't. He will always remember that particularly stressful time when he wasn't sure if his wife would ever come home.

Stroke has complications beyond physical problems. It affects whole families, changing their lives in ways they never anticipated. In the past years, the Harpers have learned how much. But they've also learn how to fight to carry on.

Doctors operated to fix the aneurysm but following the procedure, Mae had a stroke and was both comatose and paralyzed for weeks afterward.

The little she can recall from that time is vague and confusing. She didn't know where she was or what was happening to her. The first time Arthur realized she was aware of her surroundings was at Christmas dinner in the hospital.

"She said something about having a candlelight dinner," says Arthur.

Mae lost a whole season. It was almost like falling asleep and waking up to find the world changed.

"Before I took sick, everyone was in a turmoil for Christmas. When I woke up, it was all over. Flick of a switch and it was all over," she says.

But she could have lost a lot more than just the Christmas season, the Harpers realize. Doctors told Arthur Mae wouldn't wake up, then they told him she'd never walk, and she wouldn't come home.

Mae has surpassed all their expectations. She has been home for years now and walks daily around the village with her husband. She can manage to cook their meals now, and do some light housework around their small home. Yellow knitted baby clothes and a ball of yellow yarn are evidence she is keeping busy even when she's sitting down.

But her accomplishments have come with great difficulty. Mae tires easily. Coffee acts like alcohol for Mae so she can't drink it. Her balance is off so she falls easily, even badly breaking her arm in one spill last fall. She has tunnel vision and her short term memory is sketchy at times.

The stroke also changed her personality.

"I used to be easy-going. I used to babysit kids. Now I worry and stew, I can't help it...as they say, you make a mountain out of a molehill," she says.

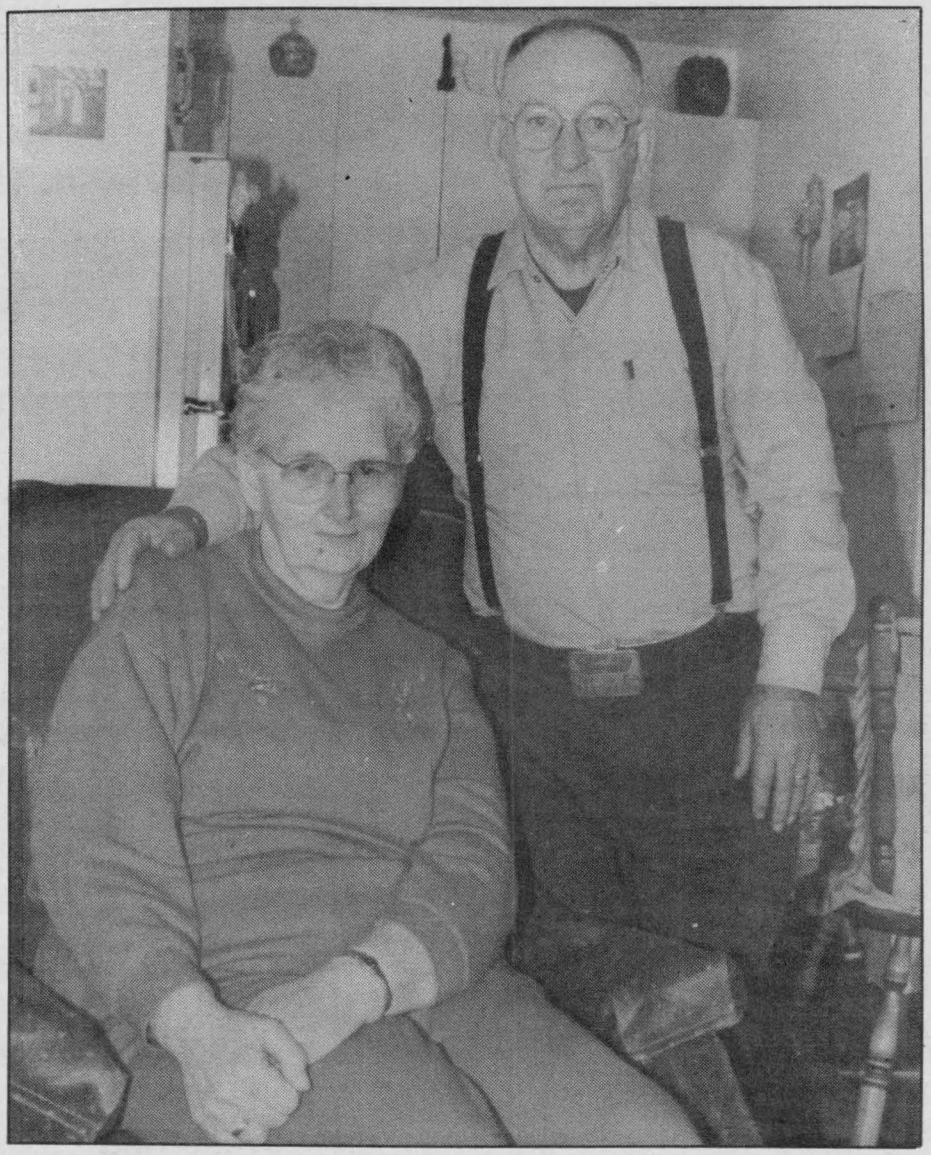
Every gain toward normalcy has been a struggle. She spent almost six months in speech, occupational and physical therapy at St. Vincent's Hospital in Ottawa.

Arthur has been her inspiration for recovery. He kept telling her she would come home even when she wouldn't believe it. During the time Mae was in the hospital, he visited her every night after finishing his job as a milk truck driver. Arthur was so tired and frazzled, he would write notes to himself so he could remember what he did during the day. He says he managed with a lot of help.

"You never know how many friends you've got until you need them," he says.

But Mae gives a lot of credit to him during the tough times.

"The inner strength. You hear them talk about it. He was running on the inner strength," says Mae.



Mae Harper of Winchester, pictured with her husband Arthur, fought back from a stroke she suffered in 1988. She is able to walk, though doctors said she wouldn't. *Press Photo —Edwards*

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Marjorie McMillan of Elma underwent a triple bypass last May. The veins to her heart were corroding, necessitating the operation.

McMillan just keeps on going

by Melissa Batchilder

ELMA — Marjorie McMillan's heart just keeps on ticking.

The 74-year-old says her health is just fine after enduring a triple bypass last May. "There's a few more good years in me yet," she laughs with her trademark sense of humor.

Her way of coping through this latest health crisis, she says, is just the same way she handled the rest. "I just get up and keep on going."

Health difficulties are not unusual for Marjorie, but she doesn't let them keep her down. After enduring breast cancer — and a mastectomy as a result — 11 years ago, she continued her work at Winchester and District Memorial Hospital and then went on to open a small convenience store in Elma.

"I just kept doing what I enjoyed doing," she says.

While working in the store last spring, Marjorie explains, the VON arrived to check on an injury to her arm. "The nurse told me I didn't look well and I told her I didn't feel well."

An ambulance was called and Marjorie's shop closed when she was taken to the Winchester and District Memorial Hospital.

"Dr. Adamson had me go and get my heart checked a few weeks before at a clinic in Ottawa and they told me there was something that wasn't right."

It appeared there were veins to her heart corroding, she explains, and a triple bypass was completed May 1. "They had to take a vein out of my leg and use it to restructure the one to my heart."

At the same time, she adds, she was awaiting surgery for blocked arteries in her neck.

"I always had trouble with my cholesterol," she supposes. But, never did open heart surgery enter into her mind.

In Marjorie's simple manner, she blows it off. "Oh, the surgery itself wasn't so bad, but the angiogram done before the surgery caused a few problems."

Apparently, some sort of puncture had occurred and the infection had to be removed. "I had to have that done as well, so it took me longer to recover."

Upon being released from the Heart Institute in Ottawa, Marjorie was returned to Winchester and remained there for three more weeks.

"I guess I must have needed the surgery," muses Marjorie, "they did it fast enough."

Eight months after the surgery, Marjorie is no longer able to maintain her store, but her love affair with life continues.

"I just keep going. I didn't feel well at first, but I came around." As soon as she was able to drive again, Marjorie felt better. "I was nervous at first about driving, but once I got over that, things were fine."

The VON no longer needs to visit, but Homecare helps a bit, she explains, with heavy tasks like vacuuming.

"I was out this morning for groceries, so I guess that shows that everything is back to normal."

Along with her own strong will to survive, Marjorie also credits, neighbors, friends and family for their constant strength and aid when she needed their assistance. "Everyone has been wonderful in helping me."

Now sitting at her kitchen table she chuckles at the pills she must take each day. However, it is those same medications that allow her the ability to "keep going."

The stroke at midnight

by Dr. Graham Jacques
Medical Advisor for Dundas County Chapter, Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation

I hadn't been feeling well the past few days. For one thing, there had been a lot of family problems lately. Times were bad, it seemed the more I did, the less I got. Today I just didn't feel good. My right arm had gone numb and weak a couple of times, and my vision had been a bit blurred. A few days ago, I had noticed my pulse was a bit thready, weak and irregular. Too many cigarettes, I thought, and so I cut back a bit. Tonight, though, I really didn't feel good. Maybe I'd go to bed, and if I didn't feel any better in the morning, I'd call the doctor.

I don't remember what woke me up, but I think the clock said midnight. I was getting a headache, something I hardly ever had. When I tried to roll over I couldn't. I felt awful now. I tried to roll the other way to get out of bed, and suddenly crashed to the floor! I tried to call my husband but my mouth wouldn't work right. He's heard me crash to the floor, though, and he came running into the bedroom. I tried to tell him to get me up, but the words wouldn't come out right, and I couldn't get up on my own. "What's the matter?" I heard him say, but I couldn't tell him — I didn't know myself. He tried to help me up, but every time I sat up I fell over to one side. Things kept spinning around me — I really felt sick. I heard him say "Are you having a stroke?" but the words didn't mean much, and anyway whenever I tried to speak, my words didn't mean much either.

The next thing I know, there's a couple of strangers wearing blue sweaters in my bedroom. They are strapping me to a board, and lifting me up to put me on a stretcher. I try to help them, but things don't seem to work right. I'm pretty groggy now, and seem to be drifting in and out of sleep.

A few minutes later, it seems, we are at a hospital. I'm being poked and prodded, and being asked annoying questions. I'd rather sleep. I hear words like "dense, left", and "hemiplegia". I don't know what it means, but I wish they'd let me sleep. Then I'm put on another stretcher and wheeled down a hallway into a room with a stretcher and a large machine. I hear someone say something about a "CAT scan". Then they lay me on the stretcher, and they put my head into a hole in the machine. Except for the whirring machine, there's nobody here to bother me, and so I drowse off.

I get moved around some more, but I'm really very drowsy now so I don't pay much attention to it, and drift off to sleep. I know they are putting needles in my arm, but I don't much care.

A short while later, I wake up with a terrible burning sensation in my left arm, but I drift off to sleep again. This happens several times before I wake up enough to realize I'm in a hospital bed with wires attached to my chest. I'm still pretty drowsy, but I'm beginning to comprehend what's going on. I see my husband standing there beside the bed, and a nurse standing there, too. The nurse tells me to move my left hand. I do, but it feels very heavy and I don't move it far. My left side feels very tingly and sore. The nurse says "You couldn't do that last night." I don't understand.

My husband says "Last night you had a stroke." Now I'm beginning to understand. "You were very lucky," he says, "Last night you got to the hospital fast, they gave you a CAT-scan right away and because it was stroke from a clot, they were able to give you blood thinners and clot dissolving medication. The doctor says because you were treated within three hours of the stroke starting, you'll have a good recovery. You will have to have some rehab, and there will be some weakness, but that will improve with time." He shifted his feet a bit, then cleared his throat "Uh, one more thing. You can't smoke here, so now's a good time to quit. I'm quitting too, right now, and when I get home I'm going to throw out all the cigarettes, ashtrays, lighters and so on. I love you too much to want to see you go through this again".

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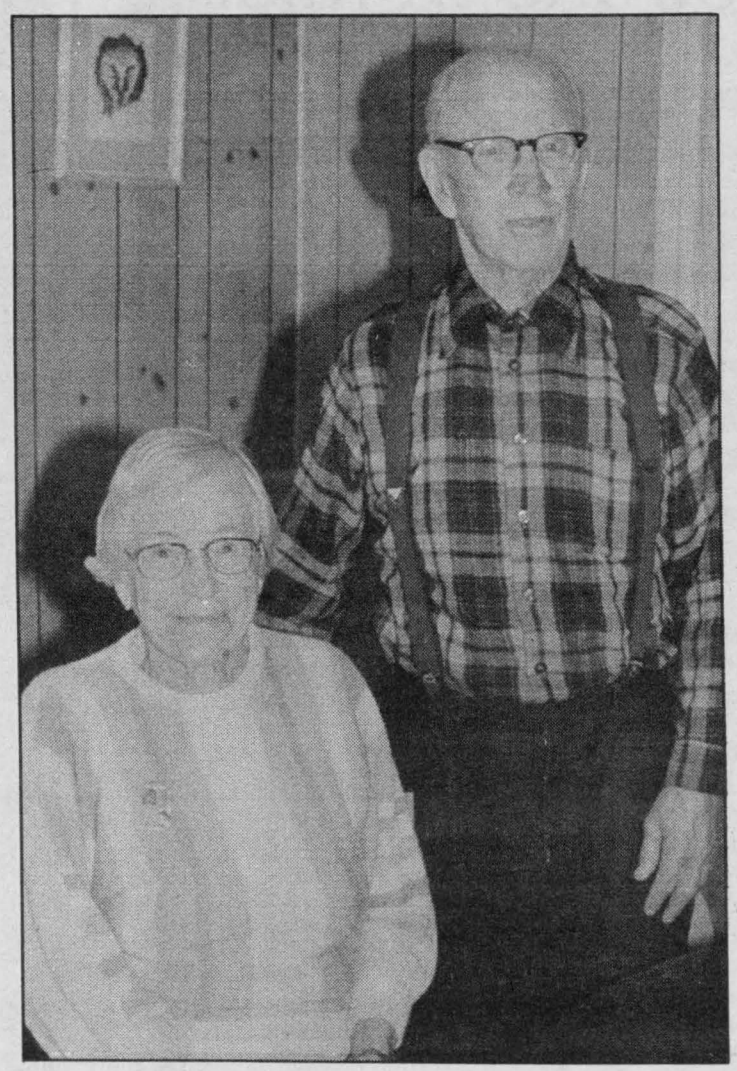
Still going strong 10 years after heart surgery



Audrey Roberts and Clarence Roberts.

by Rebecca van Noppen

It's been 10 years since a golf-ball-sized tumor changed the course of Clarence Roberts' life.

The tumor was discovered on his heart, shortly after he experienced a rare fainting spell at his Matilda Township farm where he lives with his wife Audrey.

"A large tumor, bigger than a golf ball, was hanging to the valves in my heart," he recalls.

Roberts, now 86, was taken to the St. Lawrence Medical Clinic in Morrisburg where Dr. Rene "picked up a problem on his scope."

"He said to me 'there's something in your heart and it's got to come out," Roberts says. "He sent me to the Winchester District Memorial Hospital and there I was told the same thing."

From there, Roberts was taken to a Cornwall hospital and then to the Ottawa General where Dr. LeMay took over his case. Roberts went through a series of tests and when the medical staff discovered what the problem was, they immediately notified well-known heart surgeon Dr. Keon.

His operation took place on July 5, 1986. By July 20, he was picking beans in his garden.

In the meantime, his golf-ball-sized tumor was being preserved in a jar as a future example to medical students.

According to Roberts, he had a rare tumor that was removed through the diligence and hard work of the medical staff. Today, he still speaks fondly of the doctors that conducted the operation and took care of him.

"I was very fortunate with this heart business," he says. "Dr. LeMay worked day and night on it... he was a great help to me and I felt a lot of confidence."

Roberts' tumor was rare. To this day, he still doesn't know when the problem started. He never smoked and didn't drink a lot.

However, he does recall an episode in 1943 during the war when he worked in the Navy. He was on a destroyer when he fainted. He was taken to a Boston hospital, but the doctors couldn't find anything wrong.

Since that experience, he continued life as usual. Over the years, he worked hard, jogged every morning and was an active citizen. Not once, did he suspect that something was wrong.

Now 10 years after his operation, suffering from arterial fibrillation (heart skips a beat) and severe angina, Roberts has to be careful not to over-exert himself. He's not as active as he used to be, and he has to take a number of pills each day.

"I have to take everything at a slow pace," he says. "But I have a great feeling that I'll get better to some extent."

Although he takes life a little slower, Roberts continues to enjoy farming. The Roberts still have 40 head of cattle, and with aid from hired help are able to enjoy country living, Starting in the farming business at age 68, he is not quite ready to give it up. Farming is something he's always wanted to do, and he wants to keep doing it a little longer.

Working for O'Keefe Breweries as an engineer for a number of years, farming was a distant dream until 18 years ago. In 1996, he continues to fulfil that dream on a daily basis, and he plans to, for many years to come.

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