

Obituaries : Freda Fohn : 1916-2008

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*Deine
Gegenwart ist
wie der Wind -
man kann
dich nicht
sehen, aber
spüren!*



*Kein Mensch
hat Macht über
den Wind,
Und niemand
hat Macht über
den Tag des
Todes.*

Prediger 8.8

Herbert Franz

1936 - 2008

With the sudden and unexpected death of plumber Herbert Franz on 20th November, the Motueka community has lost a figure extraordinarily well-known in the cycling world, and nationally known in Switzerland where he used to live.

Herbert was born in Munich in 1936 to Joseph and Rosa Franz. His father was a policeman but inevitably was sent away to the war, and inevitably did not return. Herbert was therefore brought up by his mother alone, his only brother having died in infancy. At the age of 14 he started an apprenticeship as a plumber, and, joining the main Munich racing club, he spent the first money he earned on a racing bike.

In 1957 he moved to Switzerland and continued cycle racing at an amateur level. Here in 1961 he met Leni, who had also moved to Switzerland from Munich, and they were married in 1963. Their first child Christian was born that year, and is the father of Eugen who now lives in Motueka. In 1966 they had a daughter, Daniella, who like her father was very sporting. However, in 1983 tragedy struck, when Herbert's wife and daughter, cycling home from school, were hit by a young motorist going round a corner at three times the legal speed limit. Leni Franz broke seventeen bones but their sixteen-year-old daughter Daniella went into a coma and died. The emotional stress of living just a kilometre from the crash site eventually became too much for them and they immigrated to New Zealand, settling in Motueka.

Soon after their arrival Herbert was out on a bike ride and fell into conversation with another rider, Karen Holliday. This started the warm relationship between the Franz and Holliday families that eventually resulted in the young woman becoming New Zealand's first cycling World Champion. At National level, Herbert went abroad on tours as part of the support team with Nathan Dahlberg, Darien Rush, Ben Watson and Julian Dean.

Herbert died suddenly in his sleep, two days after returning from an extended holiday in Switzerland, Germany and Australia. He is survived in Motueka by his wife Leni, grandson Eugen and wife Damaris, and in Switzerland by his son Christian.

The Swiss Society of New Zealand and Herbert's friends in Taranaki extend their deepest sympathy to Leni and family.



Freda Fohn

1916 - 2008

Freda Steiner was born on 18th August 1916 in Kapinga, the sixth of seven children to Swiss immigrant parents. They farmed in the Mahoe area, and Freda attended Mahoe School. Upon leaving school, she helped two of her brothers on another farm, and then helped Pauline (her sister) and John Schupfer on their farm in Meremere. She would work alternately on the farm one week and in the house the other week. Freda then met a Swiss gentleman, Joe Fohn, who she later married, and they sharemilked on various farms in Taranaki before purchasing a pig farm at Mangorei, near New Plymouth. Freda continued to milk a few cows for several years, while Joe and their son Joe looked after the pigs.

Freda had a great love of Swiss music and truly appreciated and enjoyed the company of her sister and sisters-in-law. Another passion for Freda was her love of Swiss cooking.

After breaking her hip, Freda was well looked after in a home. Although Joe wasn't able to look after his mum in their home, he visited her every day. 'Young' Joe was the most caring son to his parents.

The Taranaki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand extend their deepest sympathy to Joe and the extended family.

Letzte Verse

Tief in den Himmel verklingt
traurig der letzte Stern,
noch eine Nachtigall singt
fern, - fern.

Geh schlafen, mein Herz, es ist Zeit.
Kühl weht die Ewigkeit.

Matt im Schoss liegt die Hand,
einst so tapfer am Schwert.
War, wofür du entbrannt,
Kampfes wert?

Geh schlafen, mein Herz, es ist Zeit.
Kühl weht die Ewigkeit.

Ricarda Huch