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Obituaries

Max Fuhrer



14 February 1928 - 7 March 2013

Our beloved and esteemed friend Max, patron of the Wellington Swiss club, died of heart failure on the 7th of March 2013. The date also marked Max's and his wife Rosina's 58th wedding anniversary.

Max was born on the 14th of February 1928 in Rorschach, Switzerland, as the second oldest of eight children. The family then moved to Flawil, where his father owned a dairy product retail-wholesale business. It came quite natural that Max later learned the trade of cheese maker.

Having completed the obligatory military service, Max caught the travelling bug which first took him to Denmark, then to the United States, and later to Australia and New Zealand.

New Zealand held a special attraction for him, thanks to the enthusiasm of a geography teacher at school.

Max worked in various jobs during those years of exploration, like garage service attendant in San

Francisco, and cheese maker in Oregon and on the wharf in Sydney.

After the death of his brother Fritz, Max was called home to Switzerland. There, he fell in love with Rosina, the young German girl working in the Fuhrer household. Max and Rosina married in 1955 and together, they emigrated to New Zealand.

They settled in Carterton in the Wairarapa, where Max worked as a cheese maker and in the dry season studied at Massey College for the New Zealand cheese maker diploma.

During their two years in Carterton, the two first children Fritz and Anna were born.

A Danish cheese maker friend convinced Max to move to Eltham to be his assistant in producing Blue Vein and also the first real Gruyère cheese in New Zealand. In Eltham, the third child Ernst was born.

In 1959, Max accepted the position of assistant production manager at the Tip Top ice cream factory in Johnsonville. As a consequence, the Fuhrers moved to Linden, where with the births of Rosi and Max junior, the family was completed.

To complement the income needed to sustain the demands of a growing family, Max produced, packed and dispatched Borafume on a part-time basis for Chempest, a small chemical firm.

In the early sixties, Max bought a milk run in Johnsonville and later a fence making franchise, which he soon turned into his ownership.

At an auction in 1968, Max purchased a derelict poultry farm and modest house in Ohariu Valley, transforming it over the next few years into a pleasant country home, where they welcomed friends and the Wellington Swiss Club for get-togethers.

In 1976, with the help of Swiss Club volunteers, one of the chicken sheds was converted into magnificent clubrooms, including kitchen and an automatic bowling-alley. The club retained the privilege of this meeting place for well over 20 years.

Being Swiss, the Swiss Club meant a lot to Max. He served as president and together with Rosina as patrons over many years.

One of the special pleasures for Max was to choose the right cheese for the many fondue evenings. Thank you Max for everything you did for the club!

During a European holiday in 1983, Max suffered a major heart attack. Thanks to a very advanced medical system in Germany, Max survived the attack and he was blessed with another 30 years of a very active life.

When the Ohariu Valley property became too much of a physical burden, Max and Rosina decided to relocate to Grenada Village and to a less demanding life style.

In retirement Max enjoyed walking, reading, gardening, story telling and together with Rosina was involved in cancer society driving, meals on wheels and their local parish St. Peter & Paul in Johnsonville.

Together, they also supported the Open Home Foundation by opening their home to several needy children, offering them safety and protection for a period of time.

Max is deeply missed by his friends and family and is survived by his wife Rosina, five children, 15 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, one brother and three sisters.

By R & L Wederich

The Wellington Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand extend their deepest sympathy to Rosina and the Fuhrer family.