

## **Dottie Cronin**

### **Becomers Mystery Person of the week - April 15, 2007**

Dottie started her life in Maplewood Mo., on the outskirts of Saint Louis. She attended grammar school and Jr. High in Maplewood and graduated from Maplewood High School. She was a member of Maplewood Baptist Church, from Cradle Roll until the time she was married and was baptized there when she was about seven years old.

Most of her early years were spent in the Masonic Orders. Her father was a Mason and Shriner. Her mother was in The Order of Eastern Star, the couples' Masonic Organization. She remembers setting up dinners for the Masons and Eastern Star members as a small child. As a teenager it followed that she would join the "Order of The Rainbow for Girls", the young ladies Masonic Organization. She was the Worthy Adviser of Rainbow, the top elected office.

By the time she was 18, World War II had started and she was old enough to participate in USO dances held at the local high school. She was also part of a group of Masonic Teens and Adults that would sing and put on shows for the based in soldiers at Jefferson Barracks Army Post, outside of St. Louis.

Her mother and father owned a two family flat. They lived on the lower floor and the Miller family lived upstairs. The Millers had a nephew that visited in the summer when Dottie was about 14. Her older sister and the nephew, George, dated some that summer. As the years passed George continued to visit his aunt and uncle each summer, getting closer to the sisters. One summer he returned to his home in Oregon, to announce to his mother he was going to marry the younger sister. His mother said "But she is just a baby." His reply, "Oh, but what a baby."

George and Dottie corresponded by mail through the following year and when he returned, he asked her to marry him. They were married three weeks later. This was April of 1943.

He and his Mother had come to Saint Louis for a vacation by train, knowing he wanted to marry the girl. The honeymoon was spent driving back across the country to California, where George had a job at North American Aircraft, in a very old Ford. George, Dottie and his mother.

Shortly after they arrived in California, George was drafted into the US Air-force. He had to report to San Diego for basic training about a month after they were married. From there he was stationed in Denver, CO., where he worked on airplanes.

By that time George had purchased a "Cream Colored Convertible." They drove their neat convertible to Denver, where Dottie got a small apartment in town. On weekends she would pick up a load of Soldiers, including George, of course, and they would all go for a picnic on the river that was to the east side of town.

They spend two or three months in Denver and George was transferred to Louisiana. This time Dottie drove the "Cream Colored Convertible" back to California, where her in-laws were living. She then took the train and visited her family in Saint Louis, sitting on duffel bags and then traveling on to Louisiana. In Louisiana they bought a very, very small used travel trailer and lived off-base until George received his orders to go to Okinawa.

By the time they left Louisiana, Dottie was pregnant and decided to go back to California to stay with her in-laws. So it was just the very pregnant lady and her mother and father-in-law, living 1500 miles from home, with no husband. She survived and built a special

relationship with her mother and father-in-law, whom she called "Mom and Pop" that lasted through out their lives.

In November of 1945, with the war just ending and her husband over-seas, Dottie gave birth to a daughter they named Jacqueline Ann. George did not see his daughter until she was six months old. He became a civilian in the spring of 1946. Three years later they had a son they named George Harold II.

Jackie and George II have been a real joy to her at this present period in her life and she couldn't do without either of them or her precious son and daughter-in-law, Jerry and Melissa.

As a family the early years in California were spent at Calvary Baptist Church, where George and their daughter were baptized on the same day. George II was also baptized at Calvary Baptist Church.

They were also very involved in the YMCA, The Junior Women's Club of Gardena, (She was President of this philanthropic organization and the past presidents still meet once a month for lunch, today, over 50 years later,) and the Girl Scouts, where they instilled family values and a love of camping. It was an idyllic "Happy Days" kind of lifestyle.

As the children grew older, Jackie asked to join Job's Daughters. This is a young female branch of the Masonic Order. Contrary to what the media portrays. Masonic Orders are philanthropic, fundamental Christian groups and are a great way to build a moral God loving family.

In those days to be a "Jobie" you had to be sponsored by a Mason in your family. That was no problem as Jackie's grandfather had been a Mason, but George chose to join the Masons and be her sponsor. George II joined Demoley, the young men's branch about three years later. George and Our Lady continued with their Masonic Affiliates by joining The Order of Eastern Star and White Shrine of Jerusalem and becoming Top Dog in each group. They also held National Offices in both orders.

George worked at North American Aircraft in Hawthorn for 30 years. When aerospace had a gigantic layoff he transferred to Anaheim and continued at North American Aircraft Anaheim, North American-Rockwell, Rockwell International and now Boeing Aircraft, where he retired in 1976.

They had lived in the Gardena house for 30 years. They sold the house to George II and took up permanent residence in Anaheim around 1974/5. The year is unclear, as George II was in Viet Nam and Melissa was living in the Gardena house with her mother and father-in-law, commuting back and forth between Anaheim and Gardena.

George and Dottie had bought a 28 foot travel trailer they had moved to Anaheim. They lived there on the weekdays and returned to Gardena for the weekend or for Masonic events. It was parked in a mobile home park near Ball Road and Anaheim Blvd. They lived there for a while and when they decided to take up permanent residence in Anaheim, they moved up to a single wide mobile with a double wide living room in the same mobile home park.

They joined Garden Grove Community Church shortly after they took up permanent residence in Anaheim. Two of Dottie's great grandchildren and her grandson Jeff were baptized by Rev. Jim Kok, at the Crystal Cathedral.

Ever the entertainers, George, Jackie's husband Jerry, and nephew George built an addition to make the "coach" a complete double wide, enlarging the kitchen and master bedroom. George was close to 65 by then and between building the addition, going back and forth to Gardena, caring for his senior mother, who was still quite active, and loving their family, they took long bicycle rides. It was not unusual for them to ride from their home at Anaheim and Ball to the Santa Ana river bed bike trail, for a nice ride.

After retiring from North American Rockwell in 1976, they took a six month vacation across the United States in a van converted RV they lovingly called Little Arvy. They toured the eastern seacoast just before the bicentennial celebration of '76, seeing all the preparations and enjoying the country.

Her beloved, George, passed into eternal life and was buried in the Crystal Cathedral Cemetery on May 16, 1996. Rev. Kok officiated at his funeral and has shown loving kindness to her and her family ever since.

Daughter Jackie, has two sons, two grandsons and a granddaughter. Son George has four sons, two of them twins, and a grandson.

Dottie continues to volunteer at Real Help and serves every chance she gets, as long as she has a ride. Her eyesight is no longer the best and she lost her drivers license in December of 2006. Although she was 82 at the time, she still pointed a large Mercury Grand Marque in the direction she wanted to go and went. She is still active in Eastern Star and White Shrine in Gardena and is game to go anywhere or do anything. Born on December 22 1923, Dotty Cronin is an amazing woman.

Her special gifts are Service, Hospitality and Love and the greatest of these is Love.