



Margot Hewitt  
and  
Dr. Melany Dyer

## Old Orchard Farm

Love of home, family, their Shuswap farm and animals were key inspirations for Margot Hewitt and Dr. Melany Dyer when they established the “Old Orchard Farm Endowment Fund” with the Shuswap Community Foundation. It is their wish that the proceeds from the fund will support initiatives that celebrate or enhance the natural environment, cultural heritage, and the arts in the Shuswap. As well, they want the fund to support animal welfare.

Sadly, Margot died in January of 2009 after a long battle with cancer.

Margot Hewitt and her life partner, Dr. Melany Dyer, bought the old Newman house on Blind Bay Road in 1988. Margot knew the Shuswap well, as her family has deep roots in the area. She spent many memorable summer vacations with her family at the lake.

The Newman house was lovingly restored in 1989. In 1992, Margot and Melany bought the land across the road that had been an old apple orchard. They decided to raise sheep and in May, 1994, they started building fences and farm buildings to accommodate their burgeoning flock of Dorset sheep.

Margot had tremendous compassion for animals. In addition to the sheep, Old Orchard Farm is home to adopted dogs, cats, donkeys and retired ranch horses.

Melany says their vision was to maintain a rural atmosphere and to create a “green buffer” between Blind Bay and Sorrento. It would seem dreams such as these are sometimes hard to maintain. Margot’s commitment to preserving the ecological integrity of the Shuswap extended beyond the boundaries of her own farm. She was an influential community leader who helped shape a vision for the South Shuswap as founder of the South Shuswap Property Owners Association and as a longtime member of many CSRD committees.

Margot had an amazing capacity for knowledge. During her career as an educator, Margot taught students from kindergarten to grade 12. She was a music teacher, Learning Resource Teacher, a District Co-ordinator of Special Education, a Vice-Principal at Shuswap Junior Secondary School and a Principal at North Shuswap Elementary. Margot was well loved, respected, and appreciated because of her intelligence, her vision, and her absolute commitment to quality public education.

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Margot was also a highly experienced choral singer. In Vancouver she was a member of the award winning Gallery Singers, The Vancouver Bach Choir, The Vancouver Chorale, The Minnesingers and several church choirs. After moving to the Shuswap she sang in Aura Chamber Choir, Shuswap Community Singers and most recently with the Monashee Chamber Singers.

Dr. Melany Dyer's family emigrated from the UK to Ontario where she was raised and educated. In 1985 she moved to Vancouver, establishing a general practice. Upon the purchase of the old Newman house, she left Vancouver and opened a practice in Chase in 1989. In 1998 she became an influential participant in a government pilot project, creating a group of seven medical clinics that modeled a new paradigm in providing primary medical care in BC.

With Margot's diagnosis of cancer in 2002, Melany resigned from her work to care for Margot and to be a part of Margot's quest to obtain the best possible treatment. During her own battle with cancer, Margot worked with other cancer patients by giving encouragement and providing information about treatment options. Margot also took an active role in dealing with her own cancer. She outlived her initial prognosis of only a few months to live and went on to enjoy six very full years. Throughout her treatment, Margot worked for the School District on special projects when she was well enough. She was also able to act as substitute principal at her beloved Shuswap Junior Secondary School, now Shuswap Middle School. Margot also travelled during this time, camping across Canada in her VW Camper Van, visiting her sister in Scotland and fulfilling a life-long desire to see the Grand Canyon.

Old Orchard Farm continues to thrive. Melany and Margot had an Environmental Farm Plan and a Bio-diversity Plan completed in 2008. Their vision is to retain and enhance the rural character of the corridor between Blind Bay and Sorrento.



Margot Elizabeth Hewitt,  
June 2, 1949 - Jan 30, 2009



Old Orchard Farm sheep.