

Middletown Day's Pioneer: The Johnson Family, "Alyn & Paula Johnson"

Paula Johnson was born in Lowell, Massachusetts to Paul and Anita Montmarquet in 1938. When she was 6 months old the family, including older brother Skip, moved to San Francisco where they lived until 1950 when they moved to Kentfield. Two years later, when Paula was 14 years old, her parents bought the Cobb Mountain Lodge. She "cried the whole way over the mountain and kept on crying for two weeks."

The move was a big change. At that time there were only about 50 people in Middletown and no stop lights. She took the school bus every day from Cobb to where the high school was located back then on HWY 175. There she played volleyball and basketball.

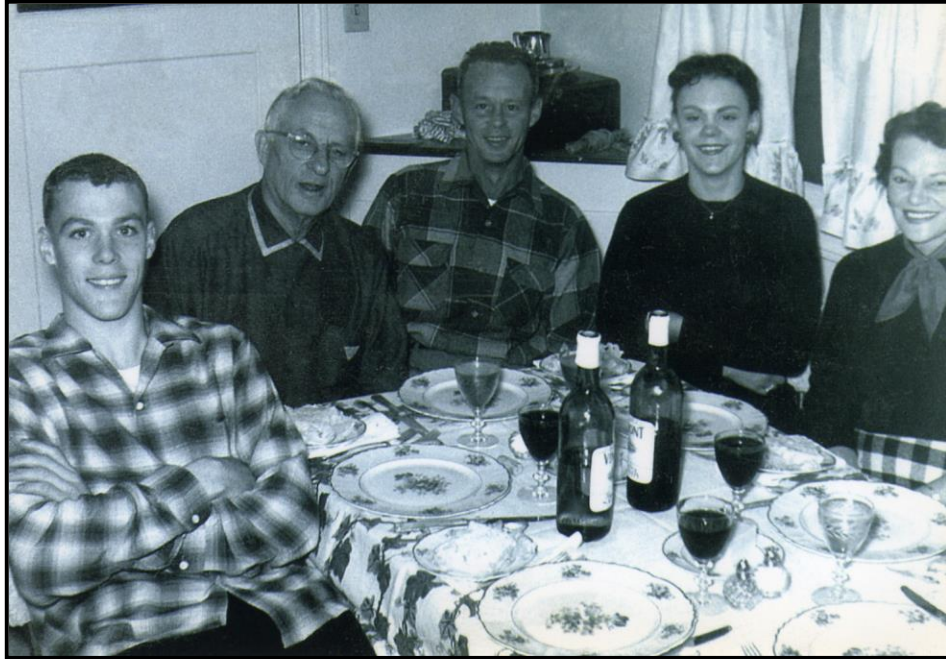
A couple of years later her dad, Paul, sold the lodge and opened the Food Center a grocery store, located where the Cow Poke is today. He and Ed Barceloux were partners for 4 or 5 years until Paul got on with Golden State Dairy (pre-Foremost and pre-Clover) delivering milk. Anita worked at the post office.



Food Center Grocery, located where the Cowpoke is today

Roy "Alyn" Johnson, on the other hand was born in 1935 in Colorado to Edna "Mae" and Roy Johnson. When he was 12 or 13 his mom and step-day Roy Bennett moved the family to Middletown. He grew up on Shady Grove Rd. on the edge of town where the family stayed with Mae's step-brother, Floyd Kibby.

Paula and Alyn met in high school where he was 3 grades ahead of her, but they didn't actually start dating until she was a senior and he had already graduated.



Paula's brother, grandpa, husband Alyn, Paula and Paula's mother

When Paula graduated in 1956, she attended a business college in Santa Rosa. It was through the college that she was placed in San Francisco as a secretary with Matson Navigation, a shipping company. She booked lots of folks on cruises, though she's never been on a cruise herself. At this time, Alyn was driving for a different shipping company in San Francisco, American President Lines.

Paula and Alyn were married in 1958 in the old St Joseph's where the rectory is now. That same year, Alyn was drafted into the Army. He was stationed in San Francisco where he served as an Honor Guard for the next two years.

After his discharge Alyn returned to his old job. A year later they welcomed their first child, Shelly (Johnson). Lisa (Calogianes) came along in 1963 and six months later they relocated the family to Middletown because Paula's dad needed a driver and a partner at the dairy. The following year they had their first son, Jeff. Wendy (Forcucci) followed in 1967 and KeriAnn Griffin in 1970.



Alyn & Paula's youngest Keri at her wedding with husband Tim Griffin



Alyn working at Clover Dairy

When Paul retired Alyn bought the dairy. Though he worked 7 days a week, he still found time to serve on the school board.

Alyn wasn't the only one working hard. The kids remember driving with their mother all over town while she also delivered milk. All the kids played 2 or 3 sports each and while Alyn was working Paula made sure to get all the kids to basketball, volleyball, softball, football, and baseball. And, once the kids were a little older, she worked for Dr. Don Johnson, DDS in Lakeport.

When they weren't working and when the kids didn't have a game, the family enjoyed spending time with each other paying pinnacle.

The family also had horses in spite of the fact that Paula is scared to death of them. When Shelly and Lisa were in the 8th and 6th grades, their grandfather Roy gave them their first horses. A few times the horses got out on the highway and it was always Paula who had to round them up.

Alyn finally retired after 30 years at the dairy and Paula stopped working at the dentists office after she got "tired of the drive."

Alyn was an officer in the Lions Club. He was an avid golfer and a member of the Men's Club at Rob Roy (formerly Cobb Meadows, then Hoeberg's, and now Black Rock). And, he could often be found playing poker and dice in the backroom at

Nobles (where the storage closet is now) with Harry Krall and the gang. He also served as a member of the West America Board of Directors. He passed away in 2009.

Paula was a Lioness. She enjoyed gardening and her passion for her faith. She would go on Wednesdays and Sundays to St. Joseph's Catholic Church and would often help out with funerals. The family would go to the Stone House for Breakfast on Sundays after church with Nana, Paula's mother Anita. "No church, no breakfast." After the kids grew up, they didn't *have* to go to church anymore, but it was "strongly recommended."

Paula is a lady full of surprises. When interviewing her I did not expect to discover that she spent 4 or 5 years writing for the Time Star with Vicky Egger and Dave Stoneburg where she headed the *gossip* column which she named the Steam City Blues in honor of the Geysers. Nor did I expect to find out that for the past 20 years she has had a keen interest in emergency scanners. She got her first one from her father-in-law. "It used to drive Alyn nuts." And, she even confided to me that she once took her own blender into Noble's for Middletown Days. She's my new idol.



Thank you Johnson Family for sharing your Middletown History with us!