

Finding Aid to the Norma Zimmer National Fan Club Newsletter

Norma Zimmer National Fan Club

Norma Zimmer National Fan Club newsletter, 1978 — [ongoing]

.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Welk Collection 3

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is in off-site storage. A 24-hour turn-around is required to make the records available for use at the Institute Research Room. The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Frances Young, club director (Acc. 94-4).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Norma Zimmer National Fan Club Newsletters (Welk Coll. 3), Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo

HISTORY

The Norma Zimmer National Fan Club began about 1960. Frances L. Young of Allentown Pennsylvania has been the director since at least 1978 and likely longer. Its purpose is to maintain contact with the many fans of Norma Zimmer and keep them up-to-date with her life and activities. The main medium of communication is its quarterly newsletter.

BIOGRAPHY

Norma Beatrice Larsen was born July 13, 1923 on a dairy farm at Larson, Idaho and grew up in Seattle after her father moved the family west. She was singing in a church choir when a guest artist suggested she travel to Los Angeles and audition for a musical group. When she turned eighteen, she did just that. In 1944 she married Randy Zimmer. She sang with a succession of top vocal groups — the Norman Luboff Choir, the Pete King Chorale, the Ken Darby Singers, among them — and she appeared on most of the popular television variety shows during the 1950s as well as landing a small singing part in Bing Crosby's 1950 film, *Mr. Music*. She provided singing voice for the white rose in the 1951 Disney film "Alice in Wonderland". She also worked as a studio singer and performed on Welk's 1956 Thanksgiving album.

Norma Zimmer officially joined the Welk show as his Champagne Lady on New Year's Eve 1960. As the show's Champagne Lady, Zimmer sang one solo and often a duet (usually with Jimmy Roberts); she also frequently danced with Welk at the end of the show. Zimmer no longer performs publicly, though she does frequently join her fellow former castmates for many of the Welk reunion shows, broadcast on PBS.

Norma Zimmer also appeared in a number of the Billy Graham evangelistic crusades and wrote a book about her life, *Norma*, published by Tyndale House in 1976. (Based upon biographical sketch on Wikipedia)

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Norma Zimmer National Fan Club newsletters are complete from 1978 to date. The newsletter is issued quarterly. They vary as to length; however they consistently include a message from Frances Young (president/director) and from Norma Zimmer. They also include photographs of Norma, her family and other members of the Welk musical family. In addition there are occasional poems and other writings as well as new fan club members, and upcoming Welk performances. In more recent years several color photographic prints of Norma Zimmer are enclosed with each newsletter. (These snapshots are preserved in the Institute's general Welk Photograph Collection.)

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

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