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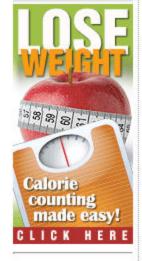
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birthday party

BY BARBARA SHERMAN

Ron and Eleanor

party Dec. 12.

Highet, owners of the

About 75 friends and relatives came from Canada, Indiana, California, Colorado

Boulevard in Portland.

the restaurant's original

convention at Jantzen

Beach shortly after it

longtime friends.

not only run the

opened, and they became

Now Ron and Eleanor

restaurant, they have 120

franchises all over the

U.S. and one coming in

birthday party, and the

the occasion.

restaurant was packed for

Japan; last year, they asked Elsie if they could throw her a 100th

owner, Lester Highet, the

and other places to celebrate at the restaurant on Barbur

Elsie, who is a longtime

King City resident, first met

father of Ron, in 1950 when

she asked him to cater a meal for 300 for her sorority

Original Pancake House,

threw Elsie Battaglia one heck of a 100th birthday



Elsie Battaglia is already planning 101st

Friends, fun and family fill the entire day on Dec. 12

The Regal Courier, Dec 29, 2011, Updated Dec 29, 2011

on January 29th at the Auto Show

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FAMILY REUNION - Elsie Battaglia's two sons, Gerald (left) and Robert Warnock, came to visit her in December before her 100th birthday party Dec. 12. Despite losing their dad early in life, both went on to earn their doctorates and enjoy successful careers. ADVERTISEMENTS



as they entered the restaurant and then sat at a place of honor at a table with family members, including her sons Gerald and Robert Warnock. The pink beribboned invitation said it all, capturing the "modern inventions" that have occurred over Elsie's lifetime:

"From my pigtails being put in an inkwell... to ballpoint pen ink all over my fingers;

"From wood stoves... to microwave ovens; "From ice boxes... to Frigadaires... to ice cubes falling from the

refrigerator door; "From my Quinnie Horsey on the farm... to my Pogo Dog and Smokie

Kitty; "From my horse and buggy accident... to whizzing around in my pink VW

"From listening to Crystal sets... to laughing at Jack Benny... to looking at

pictures on a phone; "From Prohibition... to bathtub gin... to gin and raisins every morning;

to watching the first African American President on TV; "From getting married at 16 and widowed at 23;

"From having the two most remarkable sons ever... to the most amazing four grandchildren to ever be born;

"To the most extraordinary and awesome great-grandchildren ever..."

During the breakfast at the Original Pancake House, a steady stream of

photos of Elsie throughout her life played on a video, and several relatives and friends told "Elsie" stories. But no one tells her life story better than Elsie does, starting with her

school in Gresham before her family moved to Portland, where she attended Franklin High School. However, on the way to finishing high school, Elsie got married. Elsie could almost be called the original groupie: A friend of hers played

birth in Boring, where she grew up; she attended her first year of high

in a band, and she went to one of his Friday night sock hops with a friend to hang out; playing in the band that night was a University of Oregon student

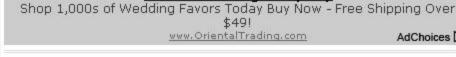
in Portland for the weekend. "He was just darling," said Elsie, who gave him her phone number. The cute guy, Bob Warnock, called Elsie at 10 p.m., which made her grandmother "very leery," but he was invited over.

we talked for 15 minutes, and he asked me to marry him. I said yes, because I thought it was a college line. We dated for six months and got married. It was a wonderful romance. "My father-in-law owned the Rex Arms Apartments at 12th and Southeast Morrison. We went there to manage them when I was a bride."

Elsie, who was all of 16 at the time, said, "I lit a fire in the fireplace, and

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birthday party

Friends, fun and family fill the entire day on Dec. 12 BY BARBARA SHERMAN

Elsie Battaglia is already planning 101st

The Regal Courier, Dec 29, 2011, Updated Dec 29, 2011

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baby boys, but when Elsie

was 23, Bob, who had had

The couple had two

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child, died. "Three months later, they came out with penicillin," Elsie said.

"That probably would

rheumatic fever as a

have saved him." Elsie continued to work for her father-in-law as the Rex Arms property

selling duplexes and six-plexes," said Elsie, who could be called one of the original real estate flippers. "The real estate market was good." While raising her boys and working, Elsie also started the first Oregon chapter of Sigma Phi Gamma International Sorority in 1940.

"Then he got me into a six-plex, and I started buying, fixing up and

BEHERE.

BE ORANGE.

The organization was founded in 1920 as a non-academic friendship sorority with the purpose of promoting true friendship among women throughout the world, to work for higher standards among young people

and to perform service work whenever possible, according to its website.

Elsie founded the Gamma chapter; she later switched to the Lambda Nu

chapter and is now in the Iota Delta chapter, whose members have a combined total of 300 years of service. "It saved my life," Elsie said of the time she founded her first chapter. "I was so lonely after my husband died. A young widow was fair game in those

days. Women didn't want their husbands around me, but the last thing I

wanted was a man. "When I got into the sorority, it was a godsend. It gave me a purpose and friends. I jumped in it with both feet and eventually became the international president."

Once her boys became teenagers, Elsie thought they needed a father figure, even just to learn how to tie ties; 10 years after being widowed, Elsie

met and married Sam Battaglia. They eventually divorced but remained friends, and he died 21 years after they first got married. Elsie, never one to let grass grow under her feet, took up golf and didn't just learn to play, she also operated a golf course with some friends.

"Before that, I couldn't afford it or spend the time it took," she said. Elsie was living in Ocean Park, Wash., at the time and couldn't find

recruited some women and started a bridge club. Then she started a chapter of Sigma Phi Gamma. Someone wanted Elsie to start a nine-hole women's golf club at the local municipal course and offered them free lessons, but after the pro insulted

"We got lessons somewhere else and started playing golf," Elsie said. "Then the lease for the golf course came up, and no one wanted to take it over. Our group decided we could mow the grass and sell concessions and

run the course ourselves." With a few of the women's husbands to help with mowing, the group made so much money in a year that they "retired" from running the course and all had their golf fees paid for the next year.

Elsie spent 25 years going to Desert Hot Springs in the winter, where she enjoyed the weather, played golf and made good friends. In 1992, she took the gold medal in the Palm Springs Senior Olympics. "I'm not very proud of it," she said. "It's a nine-hole course, and anyone

Elsie, who had moved to the Highlands, moved into King City in 1995. She started to lose her eyesight and finally had to give up driving and golf, but in 2007 Elsie met Claudia, who helps her with day-to-day activities and joking refers to herself as "Elsie's seeing-eye dog."

who was standing and breathing after walking around it got a gold medal."

Elsie is willing to share her secret for what she believes has kept her going strong for so long - every morning she eats nine white raisins that have marinated in "good quality" gin.

Elsie claims the concoction keeps away aches and pains, including an old collarbone injury that occurred when as a child she was riding with her grandfather in a horse and buggy. The horse got spooked, and the two of them fell out of the buggy and landed in a ditch.

Elsie broke her collarbone, which she mentioned to doctors when she

was in the hospital recently. One of the doctors smiled and said, "Elsie, we don't hear about too many injuries from horse-and-buggy accidents around here."

If Elsie has one lament, it might be that she didn't choose the right birth date.

"I was born at home, and the doctor came to the house, but there was no birth certificate," she said. "Years later, I got a job at the state Board of

Health, and they told me to type out a birth certificate and have the doctor sign it. I could have put any date on it, and Social Security was just starting, so I thought about the advantages of being born in different years. "I ended up putting down my real birthdate, but now I wish I had changed it by one year so I would turn 100 on 12/12/12 instead of 101." Nevertheless, Elsie is already planning for her party on 12/12/12, and it's

going to be a big one. << Prev. Page 1 | 2

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