

Senior Stars: Sally Harrison

By Karen Miller

Sally Harrison came into this world with a bit of flair, arriving on Christmas Eve 1940. And her life has been full of flair ever since.

Sally had a younger sister Charlotte and brother Johnny. All three children were taken in by their birth mother's sister Ruth; Sally and Johnny were later adopted by Charlie and Freda Biggs. Sally didn't see her sister Charlotte again until both were in their mid-twenties. Unfortunately Charlotte met an untimely death in a car accident in San Diego in 1967.

Here's a little bit of history from Sally about the early days around Vernonia: Sally's real Grandma Lee, her birth mother's mother, and husband Shorty, collected milk for a living from farmers around the region in the 1930's. The Lee's lived on Lone Pine Road. During that time the Klu Klux Klan had a presence in Vernonia. The KKK were a far right supremacy group who historically had expressed themselves through terrorism and were known for their white costumes, robes and masks designed to be outlandish and terrifying and to hide their identities. Grandma Lee also worked to hide HER identity when she crossed the Nehalem River at night to a KKK occupied field and removed material from their crosses, brought them home and made clothing for her children. Sounds like a plot from a first rate suspense movie!

Times were tough living on North Street for Sally around the age of five. She recalls some big apartments where she remembers margarine in bags where you squeezed color into the margarine, bottled sour milk, and one bare light bulb hanging down. Due to these living conditions, the local welfare came and dispensed the children. The Biggs, who were in their forties, adopted Sally and Johnny, Ruth kept Charlotte.

Charlie Biggs was a navy veteran of WW I. Sally remembers that Charlie's mother Ruby Biggs wasn't much in the cooking department, but boy could she ever bake sugar cookies!

Sally remembers that from around the age of nine she would go berry picking—long hours and hard work I bet! Sally made fifty cents per flat--\$30 to \$40 dollars a day with her partner in crime (as she



Sally Harrison, age 5.

describes it) Rosie McCoy. Rosy, do you remember you and Sally rolling around in poison oak hoping to get out of berry picking? Maybe Sally was just tired of eating those tuna sandwiches her mother made for her—every day!

Sally fondly remembers that she loved school, even with her Miss Keyser memories. I bet everyone who went to school around that time has their "Miss Keyser Memories." Like this: Apparently, at least in Sally's eye, Miss Keyser wasn't very nice--actually she was mean to one of Sally's classmates, Phyllis Meyer. To try to appease Miss Keyser, Sally stole (with good intentions we see) two dollars out of her father's billfold and bought a box of heart candy to give to her. When Sally gave her the candy, Miss HEARTLESS gave it back to her, telling Sally to go home and tell her mother what she had done. Sally, with hurt feelings,

got off the bus and threw every last candy into the thorn bushes along the road. Then she wrote her own note: "Dear Miss Keyser. I punished Sally. Sincerely Yours, Mrs. Biggs." And gave it to her teacher.

Apparently Miss Keyser figured out the truth. As a result, Sally's mother made Sally retrieve every last candy from the thorn bushes and made her eat every last one. And to this day Sally hates chocolate.

Well kudos to you Sally—you went on to win the 8th grade principal Paul Gordon Outstanding Student Award for the girls---Bill Howard won the award for the boys that year. Sally remembers that Principal Paul Gordon was shot and killed in a hunting accident in the early 1950's.

Sally graduated from high school in 1959—Sally was Memolog Editor, Dance Committee Chair, and Class President. Flair indeed!

Sally went on to study at beauty school in Portland for two years and opened a beauty shop back here in Vernonia, behind where Shay

Junction into Portland. Well, always thinking Sally would pocket the money and thumb a ride instead. Now I hardly believe a 50's beauty like Sally had any trouble getting the passing truck drivers to hit the brakes and help her reach her destination.

Back to the Vernonia beauty shop. One day Sally was closing up when two gentlemen were leaving the tavern next door at the same time. One was telling the other how he "hates Vernonia." Sally promptly broke into the conversation, telling him, "...if you don't like Vernonia, then get the hell out!" I don't know what happened to that guy, but the other--well before the evening was out Sally had cut his hair and within one month and six days they were married.

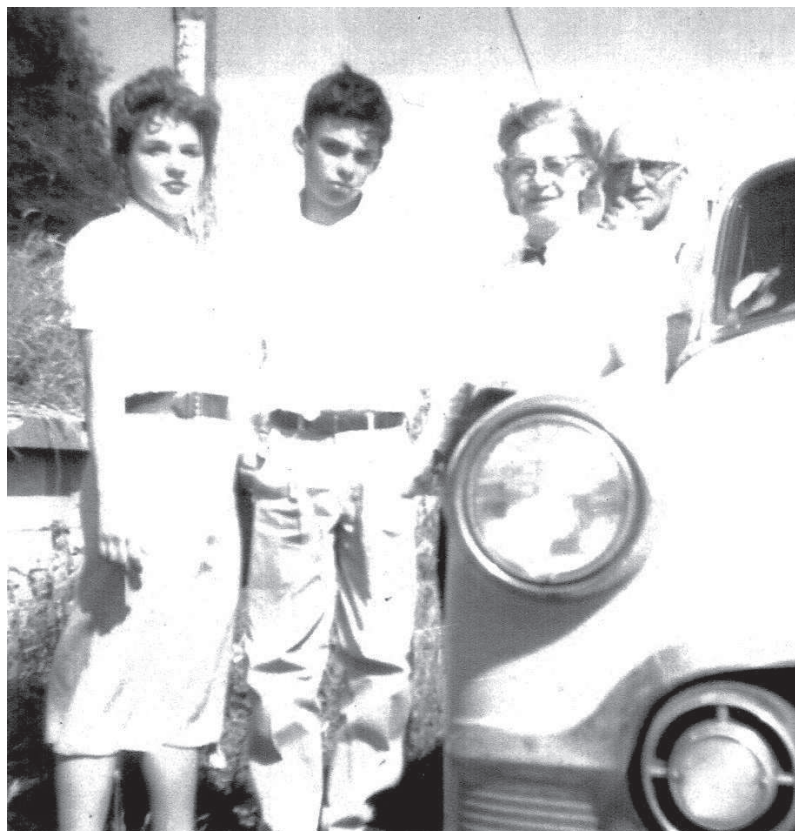
Sally and Del Harrison were married for over forty-nine years. Del was a timber faller from Astoria and, Sally proudly boasts, a trophy winner at the Vernonia Jamboree. Sally's beloved Del passed away in 2010.

Some of you will remember vibrant Sally, always one for flair, starring in Vernonia's melodramas in the 1970's. One of Sally's personal favorite performances: "Aunties Absentee" with Caroline Keasey as the heroine and Sally as the Old Grandma. In that one, Sally's chair tipped over backwards. One of the other performers, Sam Poetter's father, tried to help her up and pulled her wig right off her head.

How many of you readers have fond memories of those days with Sally?

Of Sally's other life accomplishments she notes that she was Mayor of Vernonia

from 2005- 2011 and survived both floods in 1996 and 2007. Sally recalls that when she took over as Mayor she and the City staff helped



Sally with brother Johnny, and Freda and Charlie Biggs.

Park now stands. More on that shop later.

While going to beauty school, Sally's mother would give her the \$1.38 to take the bus from Staley's

continued on page 14

STORAGE. TOP

Need more room?

See us for the lowest prices **GUARANTEED!**

Debit/Credit now accepted

Authorized U-Haul Dealer

Boxes and Supplies Available

5x10 \$39 10x10 \$69 10x20 \$99

RV Storage \$149

Outside storage available
Totally fenced and gated
Padlocks Available

We can make your reservation
Pick up here or anywhere

58605 Nehalem Hwy South • P.O. Box 292
Vernonia, Oregon 97064
(503) 429-7867

10-6 Tue-Sat
12-4 Sun

You can Look and Feel GREAT too!

This is a SIMPLE and EFFECTIVE weight loss program!

THINERGIZE AND THRIVE

Are you concern about health issues like High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol and/or Type 2 Diabetes?

Do you have a WEIGHT PROBLEM that you haven't been able to solve? Would you like to feel better, have more energy and be healthy??

*Lose up to 2-5 pounds per week!!

*20,000 doctors have recommended this program with outstanding results.

*A personal Health Coach to support and educate you through the program at no additional cost.

*Learn how to lose weight and keep it off for the rest of your life!!

Call today to find out more!!

I've lost 84 pounds in just 6 months!!

Bethany Martinez
Health Coach ID# 721557263

(503)429-0490
bethany.martinez3@gmail.com
www.ThinergizeandThrive.tsfl.com
Also find me on Facebook!!