

Living **50** Plus in *Cottage Grove*

Dorena local set to celebrate 100th birthday

When Mary Rigsby was a girl, she had her drinking water brought to the house by horse drawn carriages, the animals kicking up the dust of the road-less, utility-less neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Decades before the city would become the incubator for fame garnered by selfies taken with phones Mary says have no real use, she and her family made a home in LA. "There were no streets," she says. "You picked a piece of land and started building a house."

Mary was born in Los Angeles on September 10, 1917. Her father was a deputy sheriff for Los Angeles County and her mother stayed at home with the kids. The world, she says, has changed dramatically and not at all.

The biggest difference, according to Mary, is crime. There's more of it apparently. She also says parents "holler" at their kids more while her parents had the "best pruned tree in the neighborhood," with Mary and her siblings sent to choose their own switch when their behavior veered off course.

Technology, of course, has come a long way but you won't find a cell phone in Mary's pocket.

"I guess people have them but I don't," she says. "We had a telephone where you rang the crank and the operator would come on. Then, we had a receiver and you picked it up and the operator was there."

Her son, Larry chuckles at his mother's description and narrowly avoids a threat to have his mouth washed out with soap. "She doesn't have a cell phone because it's not a rotary dial, she can't use it."

Mary lives just to the left of Larry at the end of a long county road in Dorena. Her house is small; a living room, nestled next to a kitchen, holds the majority of her day. She still does her own housework, laundry and ironing. She readies her own meals and is part of the Dorena Sunshine Club--raising funds for families who experience a house fire, death or other crisis. She is up early with her dog, a rescue chihuahua named Sunny, who scuttles about her feet, knowing just when to dart out of her way to avoid a collision.

"She stopped driving at 90," Larry said of his mother. It was shortly after that, Larry and Betty moved Mary down to Dorena but she's lived all over the state.

Her parents bought land in Marshfield but soon found it uninhabitable and bought a farm in Bridge. In 1937, Mary married James Rigsby in Coquille and moved to Riddle.

"If James had lived one more month, we would have been married 62 years," Mary said. And while six decades seemed like a long time to spend with one person, Mary says, you get used to it. "It becomes habit and you fall into it."

It was James who convinced Mary to retire from her job as a bookkeeper.

"He said, 'We can never go anywhere because you're working.' So, I stopped working and he refused to go anywhere," she said. "He got his way."

If Mary has her way, she won't live to be 109 like her mother.

"I hope when it gets to being I can't do things for myself that the good lord takes me," she said.

On September 10, she'll celebrate a century and to mark the occasion, she's hoping to receive 100 birthday cards. If you'd like to send a birthday greeting, please address all cards to Mary Rigsby P.O. Box 127 Dorena Oregon, 97434.



PHOTO BY CAITLYN MAY/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Mary Rigsby, pictured with her dog Sunny, will celebrate her 100th birthday on September 10. She'd like to receive 100 birthday cards for the occasion.

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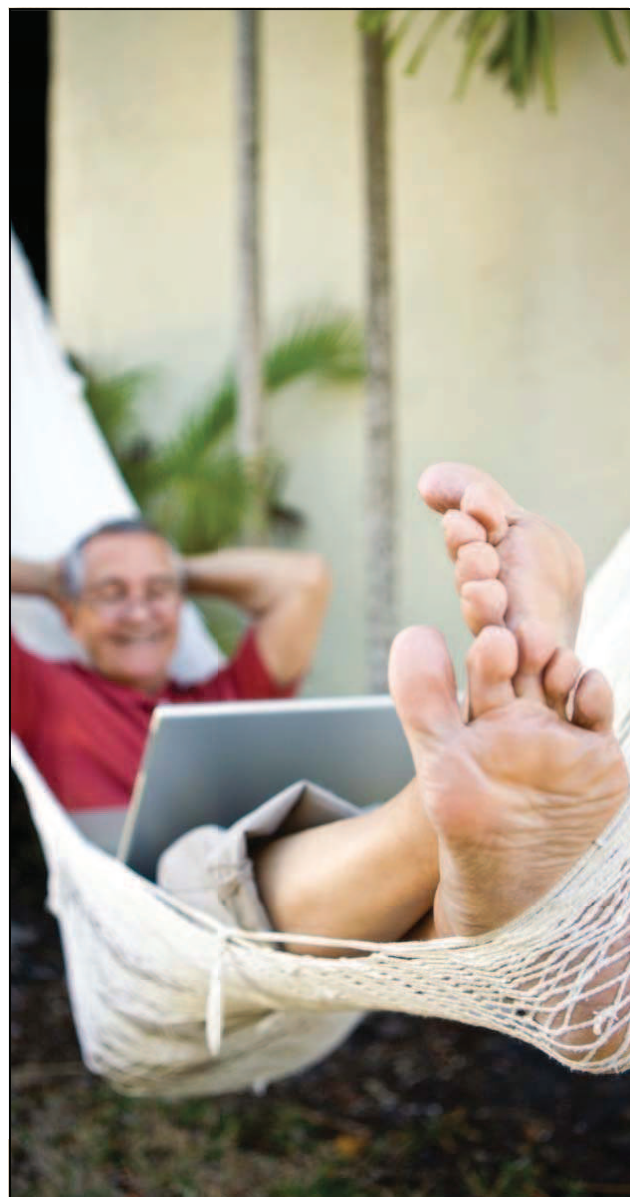
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