

COMMUNITY LIFE

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 1996

Centenarian plus 2 has no aging secret

Beatrice Pringle says she's "just lucky" to have celebrated her 102nd birthday.

She doesn't know the secret to longevity, but wishes she knew.

By MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

Whoever said that life begins at 50 must have had Beatrice Pringle in mind.

Pringle recently celebrated her 102nd birthday at Grand River Village retirement community in Farmington, where she has lived since giving up her own home five years ago, at the age of 97.

At an age when most people are thinking about retirement, 62, she went to work as a cashier at Women's Hospital in Detroit. She worked there for nine years. She learned to drive a car when she was 97 and then continued to drive until she was 94.

So what's her secret for a long, healthy life?

"I have no idea, I wish I knew," said Pringle in a recent interview in her cozy one bedroom apartment.

"I'm just lucky, I guess."

Friends and family recently joined together at the center to celebrate her birthday. She was born on Dec. 28, 1893 in Ontario, Canada.

She was raised in Walkerville, long ago annexed by the city of Windsor. The east side neighborhood near the Hiram Walker Distillery once housed many of its employees, but Pringle's father didn't work there. He was a brick mason.

She was the eldest of five children. After graduating from Windsor Collegiate Institute, the only



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Make a wish: Bea Pringle recently turned 102 and celebrated the occasion at Grand River Village with family and friends.

high school in the area, her father sent her to Normal School in London, Ontario. There she boarded with an English family for one year and was trained to be a school teacher. She spent three years teaching school in Walkerville before she met her American husband.

"I met my husband at a dance on this side of the border," said Pringle. In those days, cross border commuters could buy 10 ferry boat tickets for 25 cents. A streetcar at the foot of Woodward Ave. would take visitors to various downtown destinations.

Pringle remembers visiting Kern's, Hudson's, Meadcomb's, Endicott's, the Washington Arcade,

Himmelhoch's and Sander's, where for 10 cents she could buy a wonderful soda. At that time, Vernors Ginger Ale had a plant on Woodward at the river and would sell a glass of draft ginger ale for 5 cents.

Her husband, Leo Borat, was a salesman and they had three children — Virginia, Bob and Beatrice. Now a widow, all of Pringle's children live in Michigan. She also has four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

When she turned 100 two years ago, her family hosted a big party in a hotel with many friends and family present.

"There were so many people there I hadn't seen in a long time,"

she recalled.

Although most of her siblings died in their 70s, Beatrice still has one living sister, Eva, who will be 100 years old this month.

"This past summer, she moved to Las Vegas to be with her daughter," Pringle said.

Grand River Village activities director Sue Koivula says Pringle is a true inspiration.

"She's sharp as a whip and she has a good memory. She can walk on her own and she doesn't take a single daily medication. She's a lovely woman."

At 102, Pringle spends her days

See PRINGLE, 13A

Teacher chalks up praise for state's education reform

As a guest columnist, I feel fortunate to be able to share with readers my thoughts on education every so often. Being a public school teacher, I am probably going to rattle a few of my co-workers.

Senate Bill 679 amends the state's School Code of 1976 and has some profound changes tucked inside its many pages. The House Education Committee reported its version to the full House in December. 'Choice' was not included in the House Education bill. However, it will probably be reintroduced in the new session of the legislature.

Allowing students 'choice' in the school district they choose to attend is a giant step in the right direction. Rep. Bill Bryant, R, Grosse Pointe Farms, would like to 'tap' the number of students a district could accept for 'choice' at 10 percent.

If students live on the border of two districts, for example, West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills, choosing a district closer to home makes a great deal of sense. Almost all use of 'choice,' I believe, will be made by students in such situations, simply because transporting youngsters is a problem with so many working parents.

Dr. Robert Maxfield, superintendent of Farmington Schools said, "In our school system we already have a number of students whose parents work for the Farmington Schools and pay tuition

See BLUM, 13A

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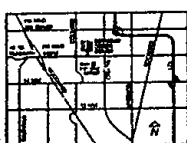
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