



August 2013

A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY GIRL ~ *Jody Phillips*

On June 25, 2013, a very special lady celebrated a very special birthday. This is the day on which Margretta Sheeler Fries reached her 100th birthday, and it seemed as if the entire borough celebrated with her. Anyone who drove down Main Street that day surely noticed that the town's neon sign flashed in red letters: "ELVERSON CELEBRATES MARGRETTE FRIES DAY. HAPPY 100TH!" And Margretta certainly did celebrate!

Her birthday party began two days earlier on June 23, when her daughter Bets placed a sign outside her house at 24 East Main Street that read "Happy 100th, Mother." Brightly colored balloons danced in the summer breeze as inside the family gathered, getting Margretta ready for what she thought was a small birthday gathering of friends and family in the social room at the back of the Elverson United Methodist Church just down the street. Her lovely purple dress (her favorite color) and her birthday crown made her look like a queen as she graciously accepted birthday greetings from family members and close friends.

Promptly at 2 p.m., her family brought her to the church where even more people had gathered for the reception. Sitting in an over-stuffed chair, with a table full of gifts and cards beside her, she was soon

surrounded by well wishers. She seemed to know everybody and greeted all by name.

About 2:20, Elverson Mayor Arleigh Hegarty stepped forward, facing the party attendees; and I, representing the Elverson Historical Commission, stood next to him holding a black cane. He announced that he



had a proclamation for Margretta and that the Elverson Historical Commission also wanted to honor her with a special gift. As he turned around to face Margretta, she said to him rather sternly, "You turned your back to me." Arleigh looked sheepish as he admitted doing so, and slowly sat down on the folding chair next to her, leaned toward her, apologized and asked, "Is this better?" Margretta quickly replied, "No. Not really. I think you should kneel." So Mayor Arleigh Hegarty got down on his knees and knelt in front of the Birthday Queen for the Day. Margretta nodded in approval and then told Arleigh to sit back down in the chair,

which he did. At this point, just about everyone in the room was laughing and definitely paying attention.

Arleigh then arose and introduced me as I had a special gift for Margretta. I asked if I should kneel too and Margretta replied, "No, you're OK." So I sat down and offered her the black cane she had been holding. I explained that this cane was being presented to the oldest resident of Elverson Borough in the tradition of the Boston Post canes that were given by the "Boston Post" newspaper to 431 New England towns in the early 1900s. Each cane, which belonged to the

town, was to be held by the oldest resident of that town until he or she either passed away or moved out of town. After I read the inscription on the top of the cane, "Presented to the OLDEST CITIZEN" of Elverson Borough, PA by the Elverson Historical Commission," Margretta graciously accepted the cane, softly saying "thank you" as everyone cheered and clapped.

Then Arleigh brought out a black leather folder, opened it and began to read his proclamation, which declared Tuesday, June 25, her 100th Birthday, as Margretta Fries Day. Margretta was overwhelmed. Still holding her cane, she bowed her head for a second or two, dabbed at her eyes with her hankie, and then flashed a big smile. She had no doubt at this point that everyone in the room considered her to be a very special lady indeed.

A beautiful cake was presented to her and placed on her lap. There were three candles on the cake, a One followed by two Zeros. She blew them out with one breath and all sang "Happy Birthday to You." Margretta may have been singing the most enthusiastically.

Margretta opened birthday cards from Willard Scott, famous Network weatherman, and President Obama plus many other cards from her friends. Flowers, jewelry and food items soon replaced the packages on and under the table at her side. Guests came and went all afternoon.

On her actual birthday two days later, friends were invited to stop by her little house on Main Street to visit with her again. I stopped by twice – once to show her photos and later to give her prints of her favorites. By the time I returned with the pictures, it was mid-afternoon and many photos had been dropped off. Her front room was full of friends and family. We all had a wonderful time visiting and looking at the pictures. I felt honored to be invited to share iced tea and cake with the family and got to know Margretta even better as we sat around her big kitchen table exchanging stories.

She told me to please come and visit her again, but not on Sunday afternoon when the Nascar races are televised. She admitted that she loved watching Jeff Gordon race so if I was there when the races were on, then I could watch the races with her! She then admitted that she had always been a tomboy,

ready for any adventure that crossed her path. She confided that she used to love to visit Charlie Livingston's ice house in the summertime and climb on the sawdust-covered ice blocks. Chuckling, she recalled that one time her foot slipped and she lost her shoe in one of the cracks between the blocks. She couldn't go ice climbing after that – but she always found something fun to do. She participated in many school, church and community activities as she grew up and throughout her adult life. Even as recently as 2011, at the age of 98, she submitted stories for "The History of Our Community – Elverson, Pennsylvania." They are succinct, well-written and fun to read.



That afternoon, the room radiated with warmth and love and I could easily imagine many of these same people sitting around this same table fifty years ago, celebrating another special birthday – Margretta's first half century!

Margretta has lived in the same house in Elverson for her entire life. She was born there and her three children, Frank, Bets and Sonny, were all born there as well. She has lived by herself since

her husband passed away in 1987 but is rarely alone as friends and family members visit often. She is warm, interesting and witty. She feels blessed, enjoys life and still looks for a new adventure every day.

Note: I have returned to visit Margretta twice since her birthday. She keeps her cane right beside her, next to a basket which holds over 100 cards, a news clipping featuring her birthday celebration and her well-worn crown. On our first visit, she introduced me to her Saturday "Angel," who was just preparing to leave for the day. Different angels visit every morning to keep her company and prepare her lunch.

I asked her whether she had a favorite birthday card, suggesting that maybe the one from President Obama might hold special meaning for her. "No," she replied. He didn't even sign it himself. A machine did." No, she valued the cards with personal, hand-written notes. I then mentioned that one of the highlights of her party for me happened when she asked Arleigh to kneel. "Well," she exclaimed, "I had to. He was leaning so far forward, I thought he might miss the seat and fall!" This comment surprised me. I thought she had

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW ELVERSON BOROUGH?

Jody Phillips

Evidently, I succeeded in making the contest easier this month as five Elversonians submitted the correct answer within the three-day time period that determines eligibility for the grand prize of a \$10 gift certificate at the Elverson Deli. Ironically, the winner was also the first person to answer the question. His answer was in my e-mail box before I retrieved my Newsletter from my personal mailbox. Congratulations to David Hellman, of 26 Parkside Drive. Of course, he knew that I had taken a picture of the upper half of the sign for the Parkside community, which is located at the corner of Parkside Drive and South Chestnut Street. The other early winners were Caleb Ober, Barbara Yocum, Donna Daprile and Betsi Pershall - in order of their submission time. They will enjoy a free beverage of coffee, tea or a soft drink from the Deli. By the way, I asked my neighbor to draw the winning name. Thanks, Jerry!

Don't forget to accompany your beverage with a piece of one of Kevin's delectable, home-made pastries. The other day he was featuring a very generous piece of blueberry cake. The blueberries were big and ripe and the topping looked divine. I would have succumbed to temptation except I was on my way to a hike and didn't want to eat that much right before I walked. I almost bought a piece to eat after the hike but was pretty sure the blueberries wouldn't survive the 95-degree heat. I plan to come back another morning as he bakes this delicious treat often.

Back to the sign. Parkside is a Stoltzfus-built community of 34 single family and carriage homes on the south side of South Chestnut Street, adjacent to and just south of Livingood Park. These homes are newer than those in Summerfield, having been built between 2004 and 2007. They feature the same geo-thermal package and Superior Walls that may be found in the newer Summerfield homes, but their exterior walls are covered with cement siding, which is very strong and durable. Their floor plans are similar to those of their sister community on the other side of the hill.

August's photo might be a little more of a challenge but not for those who really know Elverson Borough. You might have to look around you though. Here's a hint. This is at eye-level for a person of average height. Good luck!

Remember that all correct answers received on the three days after the newsletters arrive in residents' mailboxes are eligible for the grand prize. Send your answer to Jodysfritz@gmail.com and good luck!



Continued from p 2

asked him to kneel for a different reason and hadn't even noticed his precarious position and I don't think too many others had either. But Margretta had. She watches out for others and she's pretty observant - skills she has perfected over the 100+ years of her life. I left shortly thereafter, still chuckling at the image of Mayor Hegarty kneeling in front of "Queen" Margretta.

Here is the wording of Mayor Arleigh Hegarty's Proclamation:

WHEREAS: Margretta Sheeler Fries was born in the Borough of Elverson on June 25, 1913, and has lived in the same house for the whole of the 100 years of her life; and

WHEREAS: Margretta Sheeler married Harry Fries in 1933 and raised three children, Frank, Betty and Ner (Sonny); and

WHEREAS: During her long and productive life she has demonstrated in many ways her dedication to the welfare of others and

has earned the respect and affection of people from all walks of life and all ages; and

WHEREAS: Margretta Fries has exemplified a love for her family and friends and must be commended for her life-long dedication to helping others in her community; and
WHEREAS: she has lived during the most eventful century of this world's history, and in her quiet way has been a force for good and a stabilizing influence on those around her during these turbulent years;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Arleigh M Hegarty, by the virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the Borough of Elverson, and on behalf of our Borough Council and all our citizens, do hereby extend our congratulations and best wishes to Margretta Fries on her 100th birthday and may she continue to share her love and joy with others.

FURTHERMORE: Let it be proclaimed that June 25, 2013 be honored as Margretta Sheeler Fries Day.

THE HISTORY OF THE BOSTON POST CANE

Jody Phillips

In August, 1909, Edwin A Grozier, publisher of the Boston Post newspaper, forwarded to the Selectmen of a large number of small New England towns, a gold-headed ebony cane with the request that it be presented, with the compliments of the Boston Post, to the oldest living male citizen of the town, to be used by him as long as he should live (or move from the town) and at his death be handed down to the next oldest male citizen of the town. The cane would belong to the town and not to the man who received it. (The number of canes sent out varies from 431 to 700, depending on which town's history you are reading.)

The canes were made from rare ebony shipped from Africa in seven-foot lengths. They were cut to cane length, seasoned for six months, turned on lathes to the right thickness, coated and polished. Their 14-carat gold head, which was two inches long, was decorated by hand and engraved with these words:

“Presented by the Boston Post to the oldest citizen of (name of town) - to be transmitted.

The Board of Selectmen were named trustees of the cane and were to keep passing it down into the hands of the oldest citizen. In 1930, women were declared to be eligible to receive the cane as well as men.

The Boston Post folded in 1957, but the memory of this popular newspaper lives on through the tradition of its historic cane. Over the years many of these canes, which were primarily given to towns in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island, have disappeared. Many were probably lost, some could have been destroyed in fires and others may have been stolen, as they were quite valuable. An ongoing effort is being made to retrieve as many of these historic canes as possible.

Being familiar with the old New England tradition, I decided to procure a personalized cane for the Borough of Elverson - and what better time to reward it than during the 100th birthday celebration of a long-time borough resident who was definitely its oldest citizen and had lived in the borough her entire life? Our cane is made of beech wood, not of ivory, and the gold-colored top is brass plated with machine-stamped letters. The inscription on the cane has been changed a little bit as it is being awarded in the spirit of the New England canes and not as a replica. Our cane is owned by the Elverson Historical Commission, which will set parameters or rules to determine eligibility.

It's a great tradition and suits our borough well. Hopefully it will continue for many years to come.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON AUGUST 28, 1963

Remembered by Carolyn Dandridge

August 28, 1963 was a very volatile time in our history. The racial problems were more open and frightening.

I was somewhat apprehensive and fearful but extremely determined to be part of this event. I even made sure I left all my personal identification at home in PA. My dad was kind enough to agree to take care of my three children even though he was not in favor of my getting involved.

Once we got to Washington and parked, we blended in with fellow pleasant and sociable people who were of all races and ages, arriving by busses from all over the country. I even had the experience of finding myself very close to a notorious small group dressed in all brown with uniforms, boots and guns, famous at that time, against all the things we were there to

celebrate. Shortly thereafter, the authorities came and removed them. That was a frightening start but the happy atmosphere and the excitement around me took over.

There were celebrities from politics, labor, sports and religious representatives of many denominations. I was impressed by how tall Bill Russell was and remember seeing Harry Bellefonte, Sidney Poitier, Lena Horne, and many others I can't recall now. There were many people getting off a myriad of busses dressed similarly in overalls.

We walked together past government buildings where people were staring down at us with somber faces. It was hard to know what to expect. The marchers however were on a joyful mission, a sea of thousands and thousands faces full of energy and hope.

We ended up at the far end of the Reflecting Pool opposite the speakers at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. The entire area was packed with people from all over the country and all over the world. There were several speakers including the wonderful voice of Mahalia Jackson as well as a moving speech by Congressman John Lewis. Most of all I remember Dr. King's moving "I Have a Dream" speech. It filled our hearts with hope and joy and we were all overwhelmed with emotion.

As far as I can recall there were no instances of disruptions even though the authorities were prepared with riot gear, police from all over the area and troops from military bases near and far.

Fifty years later this is still one of the most deeply embedded memories of my life.



BETULA'S BOTANICA AT OUR ELVERSON MARKET

Moninca Dech

Tag...you're it! This reminds me of a fun game that I played as a child with my brother and friends...but in this case I've been volunteered to present the first in a series of vendor profiles. And I'm grateful for the opportunity... the Farmers' Market at Elverson is a wonderful venue for the surrounding communities to shop a variety of farmers, bakers, crafters and other producers of food products. We work tirelessly to provide healthy and nutritious alternatives to the mass produced products offered in larger chain stores. In turn, your support provides a means for us to care for our families and to expand our small, local businesses while adding color and texture to our neighborhoods.

Five years ago, my two daughters and I had our lives turned upside down when their father was diagnosed with and shortly thereafter lost his battle with leukemia. As most families experiencing a devastating event such as this, time is needed to grieve and heal. It's difficult, but the human spirit is strong and finds ways to not only cope but also to flourish. For me it came in the guise of a soap making book...one of the few books since becoming a mother, which I've read cover to cover! A spark of curiosity turned into a quest to create soap...not sure why because I had always used liquid soap or shower gels; perhaps it was the "cold process" soap making neatly combines science with art and allowed me to control the entire process starting with using natural ingredients. I immediately bought all the supplies and tools needed to get started. Then it all sat in a box deep in my closet...for a year. Life is funny that way...the timing still wasn't right to pursue my new interest...good thing because since then it's become an obsession!

Betula's Botanica was started in 2010 with only 4 soaps but because of the ongoing support from family, friends and a small band of loyal customers, I've been able expand to over 30 es-

sential oil blends which are duplicated in all my products ranging from artisan soaps, sugar scrubs, mineral bath salts, and healing balms etc. Over the years, my customers have motivated me and even have suggested ideas which have become best sellers... like Lavender & Lemon!

After successfully selling soaps at our family garden center, I was invited to attend a local farmers' market, and have since increased to 3 weekly markets including Elverson, along with seasonal craft shows or specialty events such as holistic faires. The markets afford me an opportunity to communicate with and educate customers about the health benefits of using natural body care products. They know all of my products are carefully made in small batches with premium natural ingredients and when necessary, that I can respond to personal needs. In turn, I am grateful for the ongoing feedback and camaraderie that develops over the seasons. I've found this to be especially true in Elverson where it's not unusual for customers just to stop by and thank me for being there but also take a keen interest in all the products. All of this in a gorgeous park setting with the sounds of beautiful music drifting along with the warm summer breezes.

My ongoing business goals are to continue expanding my exposure in retail storefronts, and increase my ecommerce sales. But my immediate goal is to offer soap making classes during the upcoming off season. Follow Betula's Botanica on Facebook for more information or at www.betulasbotanica.com!

But for now...fortunately we still have several weeks of shopping at the Farmers' Market at Elverson and all the goodness that it and the vendors offer. Make us one of your weekly stops...you and your family will be glad you did!



The Farmers' Market

Weekly * Saturdays *



MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY NEWS

Tapping Fee Change Scheduled

Crustless Tomato Pie

Submitted by Kay and Ed Turner

- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch
- 1 [15oz] container ricotta cheese
- 4 large eggs
- ½ cup chopped basil
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup sliced green onions
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 lb sliced tomatoes



Whisk cornstarch and milk in large bowl.
Whisk in remaining ingredients, except tomatoes.
Pour into nonstick 10 inch skillet with oven safe handle.
Top with sliced tomatoes.
Bake at 375° for 35 – 40 minutes until set and puffed.

At its June meeting, the Municipal Authority Board approved an increase of the Tapping Fee from \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00 to be effective January 1, 2014. This is the first increase in the Tapping Fee since the Municipal Authority was established in 1984.

The Tapping Fee is paid by any homeowner or business that requests connection to the public sewer system. Users must buy in to the system. The purpose of the fee is to help reimburse the Municipal Authority for facility costs not covered by user fees.

Even with the increase, the Tapping Fee for Elverson is considered low compared to area municipalities. The adjustment is the result of a detailed review by the MABE engineer at Hydraterra Professionals of the cost of various projects and improvements made to the Elverson Borough Wastewater Treatment Plant and systems.

MABE wanted to alert homeowners of this planned increase so that any homeowners who are considering connection will have the opportunity to connect prior to the increase. Interested homeowners should contact MABE at 610-286-8876 or by email to mabe@elversonboro.org.

More information on Tapping Fees and the laws governing them can be viewed at the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association website at www.municipalauthorities.org.



HELP US PLEASE!!

Esther Prosser

There's a lot going on in this little town we call Elverson and so we need many of you to jump in and help. Some of us are getting tired and old (I say just some) so more recruits are needed. *For what, you ask?* I'm glad you asked. We have the following openings (and the pay is great). I'm sure you'll find something in this list:

- ♦ Tree Commission member (one of our members moved out of Elverson) - a bi-monthly commitment helping to plan for the care of our street trees
- ♦ Elverson Halloween parade committee person—line up help, advertising, antique car organization, photographer, miscellaneous jobs—a seasonal job with about 4 meetings from September to October. *Have you watched the parade and thought—this could be better? Help us make it better!*
- ♦ Elverson Borough Newsletter writing and formatting—you know we can improve this!
- ♦ Flower pot planting and watering—we need your green thumb!
- ♦ Elverson Day committee member (monthly meetings begin in January) - *this is just plain fun.*

We need your skills, energy, ideas and time! Contact me at esther@stoltzfus.com or 484.269.7153.

OUR THANKS TO THE ELVERSON BUSINESSES BELOW WHO SUPPORT THIS NEWSLETTER. If you would like your business included, please contact Esther Prosser, esther@stoltzfus.com. 484.269.7153.

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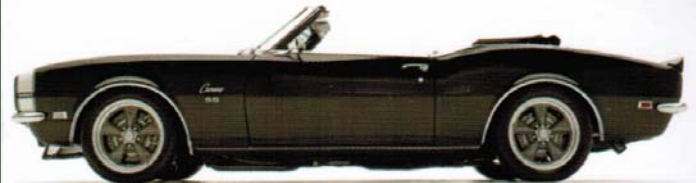
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DATES TO REMEMBER

◆ **The Farmers' Market at Elverson**
Every Saturday

9 am to 1 pm - Livingood Park Gazebos

◆ **Elverson Halloween Parade**
Wednesday, October 16 - 7 pm

Submission Deadline is August 15th
for the September issue to brenda@stoltzfus.com, 26
East Main Street
or 610-286-5115. Remember to check out the news-
letter *in full color* online at www.elversonboro.org.

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THANK YOU ANTHONY!

Bob Broderick

Elverson Borough is blessed to have a fine young man like Boy Scout Anthony Malcolm, a member of Troop 37. Anthony identified a need in our borough that would satisfy the requirements for attaining the rank of Eagle scout. I'm happy to report that Anthony did much more than the original plan he submitted. He built and replaced all of the picnic tables in our pavilion. He was innovative and designed and built a special picnic table that is sized for younger children. And yes, you guessed it, he didn't stop there! He power washed the pavilion, the adjoining children's playground, and cleaned the area surrounding the sliding boards. Going the extra mile is a trait of leaders and achievers, and Anthony is a great example of what our scouting program produces. Thank you Anthony!

