

Braun, Charlotte "Mimi"

1

By Andy Johnson

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A lot happened the year Belleville's newest centenarian, Charlotte "Mimi" Potts, was born.

In 1901, Queen Victoria died, U.S. President William McKinley was assassinated and the first radio transmission was sent across the Atlantic Ocean.

Potts, however, doesn't feel as old as her birth-year suggests.

She celebrated her 100th birthday on Sunday surrounded by friends and family who described her as a feisty, spunky, generous woman. They say she is a devoted fan of PGA golf, has a good sense of humour, appreciates scotch and sherry, hates milk and loved to travel.

The sharp-witted, century-old woman shows no signs of slowing her pace, and her niece's husband, Wolf Braun, said she's got a few good years in her yet.

"She'll probably live another 10 years. She takes no medicine, other than some vitamins and she has hardly ever been sick. In the six years she has lived with us she has only been sick once," said Braun.

Potts moved to Belleville six years ago to live with her niece, Lynn Braun, and her family. She has never married, and her family attributes some of her longevity to that fact. Potts jokingly agreed it might be part of the secret of why she's lived to long.

"Probably, it helped didn't it?"

she said with a mischievous smile. The living room coffee table showed proof of Potts' popularity. It was covered with letters and cards from well-wishers, including the Prime Minister, Governor General, Queen Elizabeth, and local politicians extending their congratulations.

Her niece, Lynn, said she has always had many friends, and they were expecting guests from Toronto who travel to Belleville every year to share Potts' birthday with her.

Potts said she has learned one important lesson in her life which she would like to pass along.

"Be kind to everyone because then they will treat you well, won't they?" she said.

Potts was born and raised in Smithfield, near Brighton. She graduated from high school in Brighton before moving to Toronto to do secretarial work

at a golf course. Then the intrepid single woman moved to Detroit, Michigan, to work as a secretary at an automotive manufacturer.

Potts lived in the Motor City until she retired at the age of 65. She returned to Toronto, and, not ready for full retirement, she began doing temporary work at Toronto's city hall.

The position became full-time and Potts stayed for another 10 years before accepting full retirement.

Potts shared Sunday's events with her four-month-old, great-great nephew Theo Tietzen Braun, who was born 10 decades after she was.

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