

Centenarian credits 'cold showers' for long life

Jutta Siefken never imagined she would live to be 100-years-old, but the German woman who lives part-time in Halton Hills and Germany, reached that milestone last Thursday.

In honour of the occasion, her family hosted an open house for her on Sunday with many friends and family members from Germany and Canada, including all three of her children — Jobst, Elisabeth and Anne-Marie.

Siefken, who lives about four months of the year in a home in Rinteln, Germany on the Weser River that has been in her family for 400 years, stays with her daughter Elisabeth Treviranus and her husband Gerhard for the rest of the year at their farm south of Georgetown.

During the Second World War Siefken, pregnant with her third child, and her other children, were forced to leave their home and her husband's travel agency in Kenya where they had lived for several years.

"We lost everything," said Siefken who returned to Germany. While her husband Theodore was away at

war she raised her three kids on her own and took in many other children during and after the war.

When asked for her secret to a long, healthy life, Siefken, whose husband died in 1964, said she didn't know, then added, "I think to have a nice cold shower every morning."

She's been doing that ever since she was a child.

Siefken also credited the care she gets from her three children.

She said she likes to keep busy, and has been very active. She rode her bicycle regularly in Germany until she was 90-years-old, even after she was hit by a car and injured while riding at the age of 84.

"I missed it very much when I had to give it up," said Siefken, who has three children, eight grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

She also loves to read, and enjoys doing crossword puzzles.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

Board honours Gardiner

Halton District School Board Chair Ethel Gardiner was given the board's Award of Distinction at last week's board meeting.

A longtime teacher and currently in her fifth term as board chair, the Georgetown resident was surprised by the honour.

Milton Trustee Erica Andrew praised Gardiner for her dedication to student learning, her peace-keeping and guidance duties as board chair and her role in developing a policy governance model for trustees.

"I really feel like I should be retiring after that," Gardiner said in reacting to Andrew's kind words. The board chair received, as a gift, a symbolic school bell that she long coveted and which used to be given to award winners; they now get a crystal apple.

Gardiner was a teacher for 39 years, 29 of those in Halton, the majority, 18 years, at Robert Little School in Acton. She also taught in Northern Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. She is currently in her third (three-year) term as trustee.

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