



Caraway Ford Gonzales
405 E. Sarah DeWitt • Gonzales, TX 78629 • 830-672-9646

CONTACT THE EDITOR

Waelder woman attributes her spirit and longevity to staying busy, 'clean living'

By **Juliana Mathews/Cannon Correspondent**

Mrs. Irma Cobler has a presence about her, a light that shines from within. She possess a calm and charming demeanor that, I suspect, comes with seeing a century of changes unimaginable to those of us who've only been clinging to this spinning blue ball for less than half that time.

To look at her you would never guess that in a few short days, on February 11, she will be 100 years old. She is articulate and alert. She has bright eyes, and a full head of shiny hair of which I can only hope to have half as much of in a few years. She makes only light use of a cane. I told her she didn't look a day over 80, and I meant it.

When researching significant inventions and occurrences over the last century, I was amazed at the list of life-changing events Mrs. Cobler has witnessed: Two world wars, electricity, plumbing, cars, Prohibition, The Great Depression, radios, telephones, televisions, computers, internet, cell phones, fast food, microwave dinners, just to name a dozen or so. I asked her what top three events or inventions had the most impact on her life.

Mrs. Cobler was quick to put electricity at the top of the list. Where she grew up, in a country home about 8 miles outside of Waelder, they had no electricity or indoor plumbing. That changed when she was fourteen and they moved to town. Second place went to indoor plumbing — for obvious reasons.

There was a tie for third place: cars, television, and the microwave oven. Mrs. Cobler continues to make good use of all three. Living alone with her cat Ms. Kitty Kelly, Mrs. Cobler still cooks and cleans on her own. When she mentioned vacuuming her place regularly, I suddenly felt guilty about the current state of my own home.

With so much time under her belt, it's only to be suspected she has a long list of accomplishments. During her short five-year marriage that ended in 1944, she had four children, three sons of whom are still living. She has five grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, and five great, great grandchildren.

She was a nurse for almost twenty years. She's been a long-time volunteer at various organizations in the area, and a member of the Waelder New Millennium Lions Club for the last twelve years, earning both "Lion of the Year" and "Achievement Award" for her services.

And now she can add living 100 years to that long list of accomplishments.

I wanted to know how she's done it, and what I needed to do to live a long, happy, and healthy life, too. When I asked Irma Cobler what she believes has contributed to her longevity, she told me, "Clean living, plain food, and no drinking." So far, I'm on track with the 100-year-life plan.

But I had to know if she ate sweets. She sure does. This was more good news.

And that's not all that has kept her going. Besides clean living and plain food, she attributes her long and healthy life to staying active, a tight community of friends and family, volunteering, attending church regularly, and continuing to exercise her mind with games and crossword puzzles.

Mrs. Cobler is a busy woman, volunteering four days out of the week at the Waelder Community Center, attending church every Sunday, and playing dominoes with the younger folks at The Heights Retirement Community.

She is also a popular and charismatic woman. Two of her sons, Harold and Ernie, and her friend Sally, accompanied her to the interview. As people drifted into the community center, Mrs. Cobler paused our conversation to wave across the room to them.

She has to renew her driver's license on her upcoming 100th birthday. This is significant because Mrs. Cobler still drives a car. She drives to town, to the community center, and to her son Ernie's four miles away.

Before you become concerned about Mrs. Cobler's driving abilities, her son Harold was quick to assure me he and Ernie took her on a recent road test. She passed. Of course, she's been driving for 86 years so she ought to be pretty good at it by now.

Just as I was leaving, Mrs. Cobler tells me she never remarried after her divorce in 1944. Not only that, but she hasn't accepted a date in the 70 years since — and she is quite happy with that.

Up until she said that, I was on track with the 100-year-life plan as she'd outlined it. As a single woman myself, one who has recently experienced online dating, I can say Mrs. Cobler might be on to something with that last item. In addition to the clean living and staying active, I think being single for more than half her life may also have contributed to her longevity. Now, where did my cat get to?

Happy Birthday, Mrs. Cobler. May your light continue to shine for many years to come.



Waelder's Irma Cobler will be celebrating her 100th birthday Feb. 11. (Photo by Juliana Mathews)