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FREE ~ GRATIS

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Reflecting on the life of an *almost* centenarian

by Judy Harrelson

As the New Year unfolds, I reflect upon my life and appreciate how lucky I am. For one thing, I'd like to say how grateful I am for my mother, Nenie as she's fondly known.

Mum is 98 years old, or rather 98 ½ as she now reports. (kids say half and by 98, the half years are important too!) She still drives a car and works for Save the Children. She writes letters when she's passionate about something in the community. Mum even organized a very successful Christmas party for her entire apartment complex of 34 flats.

Nenie was born in New Jersey but lives in England and that's why I go visit frequently. She may not be as physically fit, although still drives and goes out shopping on her scooter, but mentally she's on the ball and frequently gets into long discussions, sometimes heated, with my husband and putting the world right!

She's been through the Great Depression, Prohibition, WWII, she went to college during FDR's election, and in fact, campaigned for his re-election. As you see in the picture, which is Mum in 2007 at her 70th Reunion pointing at herself campaigning while at Skidmore College.

Mum learned to program computers when they were the size of a room and using punch cards. About the same computing power as we have in our briefcases today. In Princeton NJ she worked with some of the top scientists at the time and met some of the most famous, including Niels Bohr. She found out later that they were working on the atom bomb. She was once introduced to Eugene Wigner as "the famous Cornelia"! Mum lived around the corner from Einstein when he worked with advanced studies at Princeton.

One time, during Prohibition she accompanied her older sister to a speakeasy. So that was illegal twice, as Mum was underage too! Prohibition was repealed while she was in college.

In 1947-48, Mum's first trips to



Pointing at herself from 1936 FDR re-election at her 70th college reunion in Skidmore.



Riding on her scooter at home in England.

Europe were by charter plane and they flew to Gander in Newfoundland, Ireland, and finally to Paris. Took about 30 hours. Whew, and we complain today about transatlantic flights that take just seven hours today.

In 1953 she was working in Princeton when she learned that an English chemist was being sent over to work with them for a year. Mum and her best friend, were both single and in their 30's so made a pact — if he was short he was hers, if he was tall he was Mum's Well, he was short, but Mum got him anyway!

would have central heat — very rare in those days of late 50's in England.

So now Mum has lived in England longer than she lived here. I am grateful to have such an alert and active mother, who happily shares stories about her fascinating life. She says she's very lucky and had a wonderful life. I've learned so much from her. Thanks, Mum.

We are now planning her 100th birthday celebration.

Judy Harrelson, along with husband Mike, owns Glass & Window Warehouse in Siler City.

Population Growth

the elephant in the room that everybody ignores

PROSPERITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by Tim Keim

Perhaps the most important but least addressed factor underlying all the simultaneous crises that humankind now faces is population growth. It is least addressed because it forces us to explore the most fundamental human activity—reproduction, a very tender subject able to provoke every fear humans try so gamely to subdue. In an often threatening world, humans have always sought to increase their numbers and land holdings to defend family, tribe and ethnicity. This ancient strategy is no longer viable.

Until the dawn of the 20th Century, world population was less than a billion. Since 1900, our population has sky rocketed and now stands at 7 billion and climbing. The care and feeding of 8 billion people will prove a daunting task. Enormous changes in political and agricultural structures will be essential to accomplish the task since already a billion people or more are without sufficient water and food. I've traveled to areas where these problems are chronic, and it is a spine-chilling sight to behold!

We Americans, accustomed to such blessed abundance, are more than a bit complacent as we gaze at the televised pictures of the bald-headed, swollen-bellied children of Africa and shake our heads. The Midwestern United States is still in the grips of a drought that destroyed the majority of our corn and soybean harvest last year and threatens to shut down commerce on the Mississippi River. Such complacency in the face of present facts and future threats to food and water supplies could produce the same conditions here that we witness in the so-called Third World. Changing weather patterns imperil our ground and surface water, and thus our harvests.

Unlimited population growth shares a strange and ironic similarity to the disease that kills our families and neighbors in increasing numbers—cancer. Malignancy, whose uninhibited cell division, consumes our bodies, just as profligate human population is consuming our resources at rates that cannot be sustained. The whole world wants to live like Americans, but experts tell us that we would need the resources of three earths to produce such prosperity.

So, am I proposing draconian new laws to govern your divine right to reproduce at will? No. I'm just trying to get the conversation started.

We live on a finite planet that can only provide for a certain capacity of humans without endangering our survival. After examining the state of our oceans, rivers, farmlands and climate it is easy to conclude that the maximum carrying capacity of the earth has already been surpassed. Yet policy makers are mute. Religious leaders are mum. Business titans in hopes of endless future growth are struck dumb by

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Chatham community makes Bella Donna's move to East St. possible

by Donna Bianco

After working very hard for little return at my Thompson Street address because of limited physical challenges (parking, seating, etc.) the opportunity to purchase the Pizza Hut building was within my grasp. I found out it was available within two hours of it being shut down. I drove by to see if it was true and a CEO of Pizza Hut came out and greeted me and apologized for not being able to serve me. After pointing out the logo on my vehicle he stated, "Oh! You're the one." We both laughed and I asked him what they were going to do with the building. He told me the franchisee

was selling and after some discussion and phone calls, told me the price. From that moment on I was on a mission to somehow secure enough funds to purchase the building.

There were a couple of scenarios that unfolded over the course of the four months it took for me to actually purchase the building. Knowing that the franchisee was only dealing with me was uplifting and exciting. I had to find the funding. Banks were turning me down because my bottom line was tight, but I didn't quit searching. Leaving Thompson Street without any debt was a victory for me.

Then a wealthy gentleman from Cary was referred

to me and everything seemed to be in order for him to purchase the building and lease to me as well as loan me money for the up-fit. Leasing was not the perfect scenario but the location and size of the building was so perfect that, for me, it was an option I had to consider. Then about two weeks later he called and said he had to back down because a property in Italy had opened up and it was on his bucket list to purchase a home in Italy and retire there. Ouch! I was totally deflated but still determined. After talking to him the next day he decided to continue

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