

# Passing the century mark

## Hosler's formula: Luck plus faith

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Turning 100 is just another item to be added to Stanley W. Hosler's long list of accomplishments — next to working under Milton Hershey, celebrating 71 years of marriage and riding motorcycles until he was 90 years old.

The Brethren Village resident still cooks for himself in his efficiency apartment and drives a shiny gold PT Cruiser.

"They call it 'The Gold Chariot' here" because of its perfect-looking silhouette, said Judy Groff, the wife of Hosler's nephew.

Hosler, affectionately known as "Hos" by family and friends, attributes his long life to luck, hard work, healthy eating and his faith in God.

"God is the reason I'm here," he said. "At least he has something to do with it," he added, laughing.

Born Aug. 9, 1911, to Walter and Daisy Hosler, he was the oldest of 12 children, one of whom died as an infant.

Three of his sisters are still living, as is his brother Galen, 88, who recently moved into Brethren Village with his wife, Alta.

Growing up, Hosler was expected to help run the family farm in Elstonville. Despite Hosler's wishes, his father would not allow him to further his schooling after he'd finished eighth grade at the Chestnut Grove School in Manheim.

At 19, Hosler met Elsie Zerphy at a spelling bee. The two married



Stanley Hosler

five years later and took jobs working for Milton Hershey at Hershey Estates.

Hosler spent his first seven years at the estates working in the chicken hatchery. After that, he and Elsie were house parents for orphan boys who worked at the Estates and attended Milton Hershey School.

Hershey frequently visited the couple during the nine years they worked at the Estates.

"He'd come to see me every now and then," Hosler said. "He'd wan-

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na see how things were going."

To Hershey's disappointment, Elsie soon found a job teaching at Manheim Central, which led the couple back to Salunga.

Hosler and Elsie did not have children; however, they considered Elsie's students their own.

"People ask about kids, and I say, 'Yeah, my wife had 30 of them,'" he joked.

Hosler then got a job at the S.H. Heistand Feed Co., which later became Agway.

He also served as a deacon for 20 years at Hempfield Church of the Brethren, which he still attends, and volunteered at the Salunga Fire Company and Manheim Auto Auction.

After retiring in 1975, Elsie and Hosler spent their winters in Lakeland, Fla. The two shared a passion for motorcycles and even took a 500-mile motorcycle ride to New England two years in a row.

Hosler remembers wanting a bicycle as a boy, but his father wouldn't let him get one.

"I thought to myself, when I get married, I'm gonna get a bicycle," Hosler recalled. "Instead, when I got married, I got a motorcycle."

His first bike was a Harley Davidson that cost him \$15. Over the years he collected five different motorcycles.

Hosler and his wife moved into Brethren Village seven years ago. Elsie died in 2006 at the age of 93.

Even after Elsie's death, Hosler's large family of nieces and nephews continued to visit him. Around 150 family and friends joined Hosler at Brethren Village on Sunday to celebrate his latest milestone.

Hosler now spends his time latch-hooking wall hangings, riding his red scooter around the apartment complex and watching "Jeopardy" and "Wheel of Fortune" on Saturday nights.

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