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## HEALTHY LIVING

JANUARY 2019

# Lived life his own way

At Valpo Care & Rehab local resident turned 101 in Dec.

*Publishers note: We regret to inform our readers that Burnett "Barney" Kaiser passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 13, 2019. We choose to run this story in its entirety and pay tribute to a man, who had led a full life.*

by Steve Euvino

The year was 1917. President Woodrow Wilson received congressional approval to declare war on Germany, plummeting this country into World War I. Forty-eight stars dotted the American flag, as women in New York State were granted the right to vote.

That same year, Burnett "Barney" Kaiser was born in Crown Point on Dec. 12.

Now, fast-forward 101 years to Valparaiso Care & Rehabilitation Center, where Kaiser is a resident. A birthday party, complete with cake and Elvis impersonator, took place in the facility's main dining room.

Nancy Nielsen, director of marketing at the Valparaiso care center, noted that even at his age, Kaiser "is able to do a lot on his own."

Kaiser, who has led a full life, from trucking to golfing to fishing. He offers this advice for the younger generations: "Stay young." As for living beyond the century mark, he counsels, "Be careful."

Kaiser moved to Gary following his wedding, spending his later years in Valparaiso. He was the owner-operator of a steel hauling company.

A widower, Kaiser and wife Mary were married 63 years at the time of Mary's death in 2004. The couple had two children, June Pismos, a former teacher, and Leroy Kaiser. Also making up the family are six grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren.

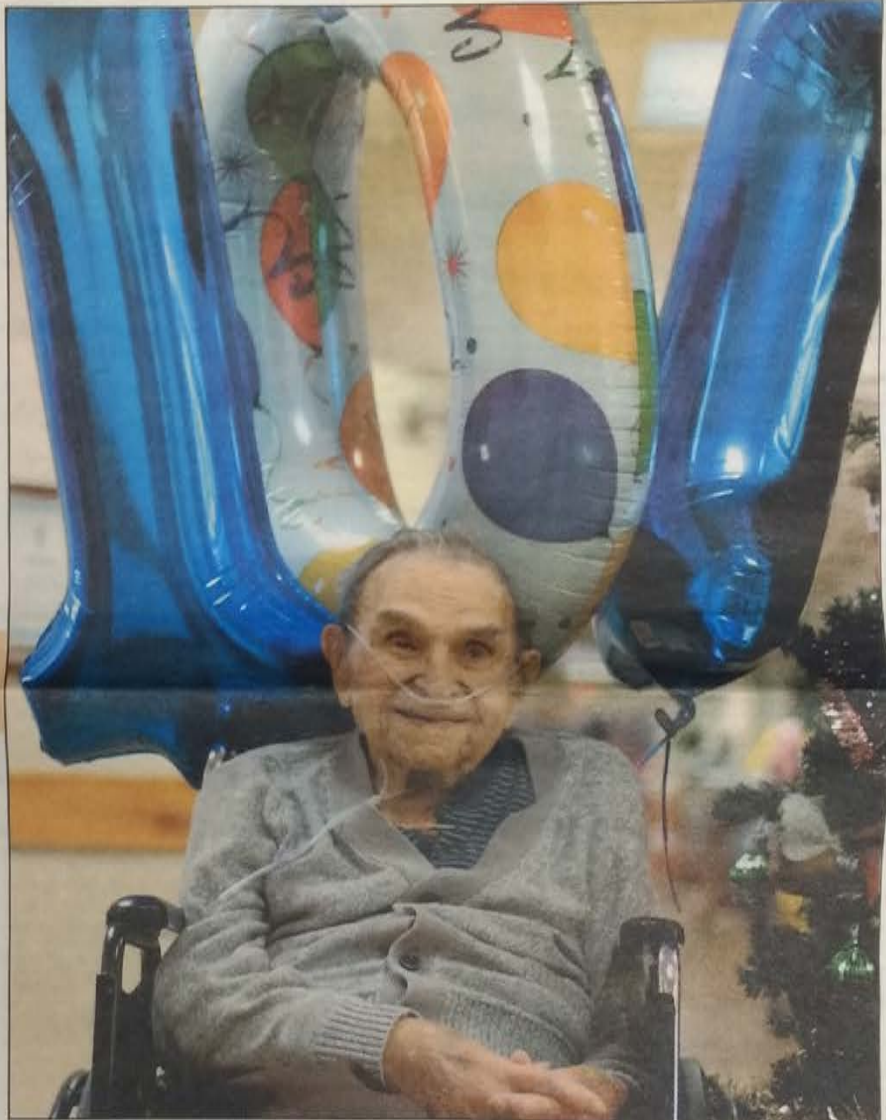
An avid sportsman, Kaiser loved golfing and fishing, including ice fishing. He also bowled until he was 90 and golfed until age 96. He had six holes-in-one on the golf course, with his last one coming when he was 92. His first ace came at age 86.

A man who enjoys cats and playing cards, Kaiser joked to Nielsen that his favorite hobby is "chasing the girls."

Pismos noted that her father has been "active his whole life. He always helped out when he could. His philosophy was, 'keep going until you can't go anymore.'"

After retiring from his trucking company when he was 64, Kaiser worked at the former Supervisors Club (now River Point) in Hobart, in charge of the driving range. He later worked at the Duck Creek course in Hobart.

The oldest of three children - and the only surviving member - in his family, Kaiser "has lived a long, productive life," his daughter said. "He has lived it his own way."



Valparaiso Care & Rehabilitation Center honored resident Burnett "Barney" Kaiser in December on turning 101. Kaiser was born on Dec. 12, 1917 in Crown Point.

## The Centenarian population has grown

Want to live to be 100 years old? More people are living longer these days. A 2012 estimate from the United Nations reports 316,600 living centenarians worldwide.

Locally, exact figures are not available, but, according to livability.com, of the 32,123 residents of Valparaiso, 14.97 percent are age 65 and older. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 15 percent of all Hoosiers are age 65 and older.

Nationally, the centenarian population has grown 65.8 percent over the past three decades, from 32,194 people age 100 or older in 1980 to 53,364 centenarians in 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau reports. About .0173 percent of Americans live to be 100.

According to everydayhealth.com, centenarians can help teach us how to live healthy and long lives. Most centenarians are thought to have a genetic advantage that allows them to live healthier, longer lives than other people. Research has shown that more than half of centenarians have close relatives who have also lived to a very old age. In fact, some centenarians have lived long, healthy lives despite "doing

everything wrong" when it comes to following a healthy lifestyle.

According to the New England Centenarian Study (NECS), a study of centenarians living in and around the Boston area, certain lifestyle factors tended to be more common among centenarians, including:

- **Not smoking.** Although they grew up in an era where the risks of smoking were not well known, substantial smoking is rare among centenarians.
- **Maintaining a healthy body weight.** Very few of the centenarians enrolled in the NECS were obese, and nearly all the men had body weights that were considered lean.

• **Exercising regularly.** In a study that examined the genetics and lifestyle factors of a group of Okinawan centenarians, researchers found that these Japanese centenarians exercised fairly regularly throughout their lives...

- **Eating a healthful diet.** The Okinawan centenarians tend to eat a very healthy diet, low in calories and high in fruits and vegetables, fiber, and good fats, like omega-3 fatty acids.

