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## 100 Years of Living

By Cathy Dausman



Although he no longer drives, 100-year-old David Skilling still has a valid California driver's license. Photo Cathy Dausman

and family.

Skilling was born in Eugene, Oregon. His family - five siblings and their mother - moved to Oakland when Skilling was a child. He graduated from the old University High School, served two stints in the Navy, graduated from UC Berkeley, and worked 32 years for Alameda County, where his sister worked.

Getting a job with the county, Skilling says, was "a lucky break for me." He moved his family to Moraga 47 years ago, and lives in the same house today.

"I like my own company," he confides, adding that he gets hot lunches from Meals on Wheels. To entertain himself he reads or plays cards. Neighbors look in on him and his children call regularly. He tries to walk daily, and says he doesn't feel much different than he did at 90, although he admits that now "it is harder to bend, I can't move fast, and I can't play [on the floor] with my great-grandson."

Ultimately, though, Skilling is practical: "At my age, I don't look more than a month ahead," he says. "I'm fortunate that I can live by myself and enjoy it."

David Skilling does not look like a centenarian. Yet the proof is on his driver's license, which is still valid. "I gave up driving at 98," he says, and gave his son his car. Skilling loves the reaction he gets from those who see an old birthday banner still tacked to his living room wall. He thought that would be his last party, but his family gathered again on Fourth of July weekend and included a 100th birthday celebration for him at their annual picnic.

The guest list included 40 family members and 20 local friends. "I never knew anybody close to 100," he admits, but he attributes his longevity to a philosophy of "everything in moderation" plus good family genes.

Skilling's mother lived into her 80s; his sister died at 98. "My kids think I'll live forever," says Skilling, who retired at age 60. He has three grown children, a son and two daughters, who are themselves in their 60s. He has six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, "so far."

A doctor once told Skilling he had the body of a 74-year-old man, long after he was 74. A burst appendix at age 17 left him with a blood clot in his leg, which doctors warned might travel to his head, but it hasn't happened in 83 years. He used to play tennis and bridge, and bowled on a league for 30 years. Now Skilling plays word games with neighbors

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