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## At 99 he's still going strong

*On his birthday, Louie Givich has plenty of stories to share*

by **Emily Hamilton**  
**Mountain View Voice Staff**

Louie Givich has a story for everything. He can describe exactly how Mountain View looked the year he was born, in a house where two palm trees now stand next to an In-n-Out Burger. He remembers the bootlegger's building and who all his neighbors were. And that was 99 years ago.

"I remember everything," says Louie, who just celebrated his 99th birthday. He was born on June 19, 1911. He says that back then his family -- which he describes as "very poor" -- didn't make a big deal of celebrating birthdays.

"Maybe my mother would make a cake or something," he says. "We never had candles or anything."

This year, he enjoyed carrot cake -- his favorite -- at his Mountain View home where he still lives with his wife, Ada, 88. At the June 18 celebration were the program director and supervisor from Meals on Wheels, their regular Meals on Wheels driver, and Vice Mayor Jac Siegel, who presented the birthday boy with a certificate from the city. He also got to open cards and a few gifts. Though he initially waved off the balloons, he enjoyed the festivities.

Louie is an entertainer. He shows everyone around his second-story apartment, from which one can see the two palm trees near the site of his childhood home. For 99, he is surprisingly active. He walks on his own and doesn't have a hearing aid. He explains that even though he has a Buick, he doesn't drive anymore. He loves to tell the story of that car.

"I got the first Buick in Mountain View," he says. Apparently this took some convincing of the dealer.

Louie knew everyone in town. He was a barber and opened Louie's Barber Shop on Castro Street. He says his hair-cutting days began when he grew tired of his brother's unkempt 'do. He had two younger siblings, both of whom have already passed away. But the career that began when he was just a boy had a huge effect on his life story; it's how he met Ada.

"I was duped!" he protests, though hardly angry about it anymore. Ada's brother-in-law was a regular client at his barbershop, and offered to take Louie to the racetrack on Armistice Day, 1946. Louie who would be driving was planning on bringing some friends, but found out the day of the event that he would have to accommodate two other guests: Ada and her sister.

"I just loved him right then," Ada remembers of their meeting.

Louie and Ada were married less than two months later, on Jan. 2, 1947.

"No one can be better to me than she," Louie says.

The couple has no children, but "we practiced like hell," Louie says, smiling.

Just prior to meeting Ada, Louie served in Hawaii during World War II. He still carries his honorable discharge in his wallet. The ink is fading.

When he came home, he eventually became a real estate broker with another successful business on Castro Street. He also did some developing of his own. Now he just owns the building they live in, and they rent out the first floor.

Louie's two favorite hobbies were fishing and 49ers football. He used to have season tickets to the Candlestick Park games, which Ada says she never really enjoyed. Sometimes his two hobbies would come together on the "Deltas" where he would run into 49ers players while fishing. He remembers Joe Montana asking him where the best spots were.

When asked what his birthday plans are, he responds matter-of-factly.

"I'm going to sit here like I did yesterday, last year, and hopefully for many more years," he says. Ever since his was 14 years old, his goal has been to live to be 113.

"Anything with 13 in it is my lucky number," he says.

Also at the age of 14 he seemed to have hammered out the principles by which he would live his life.

"When I was 14 I made an oath to never steal, cheat or lie," he says. "I call a spade a spade. My father was lied to and lost everything he had."

Ada seems to admire her husband's honesty.

"You're a good man," she tells him. "You're a good husband. I wouldn't want to trade that for anything."

With no serious health issues to date, he seems to be well on his way to reaching that goal of 113 years.

"I look pretty young for 99," he says.

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