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Hood River News KALEIDOSCOPE

Wednesday, February 13, 2013 **B1**

In the name/ ANR Local couples share stories

and secrets of their success

Ewings learn and grow over 55 years

By BEN MCCARTY News staff writer

It took a little while for Royal and Joan Ewing to get in sync, but once they did, nothing could pull them apart.

The Odell couple, which this year will celebrate 55 years of marriage, met at Northwest Christian University in Eugene in the 1950s.

At the time, one of Joan's friends was dating Royal, and Joan was initially unimpressed with the man she would eventually marry.

"She kept saying, 'He's really smart," Joan said of her friend's opinion of Royal. "Well, I just thought of him as being really hick-ey. He wasn't exactly fashionable. He just wore jeans and a short-sleeve shirt. He didn't really seem to care about looking natty or campus-ey."

However, after a year away from school due to a battle with TB "the whole scene had changed" by the time she got back, and eventually she and Royal wound up together.

They were married in December of 1958, and began what would become something of a whirlwind tour of the American west.

They started in Tacoma, Wash., when Royal was named pastor of church there.

Their journey took them to California for Royal's graduate studies, back to Northwest Christian, then to more ministerial work in Salt Lake City, and then to New Mexico where they would spend 20 years before moving to Odell in 2003.

During that span they had three sons who gave them 11 grandchildren. Their family is flung across the globe, with one son working in theme park design in California after spending time in China, another in Texas and another working as a Boeing engineer in Italy.

"I'm from the hills of Idaho and she's from Mosier and our kids are all over the world," Royal said. "We never thought we would have the privileges our kids let us

They've learned plenty of lessons over their 55 years together, with the big one being to not expect everything to be sunshine and rainbows all the time.

They are proud that each of their kids have been married for over 25 years.

"They saw us working on it," Royal said of getting through bumps in the road in a marriage.

"We didn't expect it to be all sweetness and light," said Joan. "Or to be even able to understand each other not to be angry because we didn't understand each other. And to tell you the truth we are still working on that. Relationships that grow and thrive need work constantly."

In their time together Royal has worked as a pastor and construction worker (even helping to dig the foundation for one of their homes in New Mexico) while Joan had done everything from helping

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The 'Picking experience' grew into steadfast love

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA

News editor "We enjoyed spending time together, and we had the same goals," Mary Ellen Picking said of the

longevity of her marriage with Chuck Picking,

The childhood sweethearts grew up in Odell and celebrated 65 years of marriage on Jan. 18.

we got

The couple owned an orchard What a bummer! But Carol's father came to my rescue by making me a loan. I never gave the missing purse another thought until the following evening (Saturday) when my mother came home from work and inquired about the carnival. When told about the lost purse. Mother read me the riot act. 'Tomorrow right after breakfast, I'm driving you up to those people's home; you will retrieve your purse,' was the ultimatum. I did not sleep much that night. The next morning I awoke and looked out the window, and what a surprise! It had snowed during the night, 14 feet or so, oh boy we won't have to go, I thought. "I skipped down the stairs, only to discover Mother had a new plan. We'd walk. A mile and a half we

went into marriage believing it was a lifetime parents showed us good examples," said Mary Ellen, who is 85.

friend, Carol, and I a ride in his car. married everyone Unknowingly I left my purse in the car. The mistake was discovered when we were preparing to leave commitment, and both our for the Odell Grade School Harvest Carnival. No purse meant no money for all the fun activities.

and wholesale fruit business in

Odell. They have two children, son

Bradford and daughter Holly Pick-

ing Jones, and two grandchildren.

which celebrates residents' love

stories each Valentine's Day. For

the occasion, Mary Ellen wrote

about the couple's first meeting, as

middle schoolers, and the encoun-

ters that led - literally stop-and-

start — to their engagement nine

Picking family was in late October

1939. Vernon Picking gave my best

"My initial introduction to the

years after first meeting:

They now live at Down Manor,

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Life's many changes kept things interesting for the Kollases

By ESTHER K. SMITH News staff writer

The constant in Paul and Maria Kollas' life together has been its inconstancy - from the very beginning of their marriage in 1962.

They met in 1961 in Biloxi, Miss., while both were serving in the U.S. Air Force. Just after they were married. Paul left.

"I was assigned to a post in Australia to set up a new station, and Maria still had six months or so to finish up in the Air Force before she could join me," Paul said. So when I met her on the airplane, she said, 'I don't feel like your wife anymore!

"That's really where our marriage started," Maria said. The couple lived there four years, and their first son, Geoffrey, was their

"most treasured souvenir."

After that they went back to Mississippi for another three years or so, where daughter Mitzi and son Timothy were born, and the couple was separated again.

"I went off to Korea, by myself," Paul said. "It was an isolated tour; it wasn't my choice that was 13 months.'

The family's next home, and one of their favorites, was Albuquerque, N.M., for a couple of vears. Then it was off to Germany for the next eight years.

Maria was born and raised in northern Germany, in Bremen, so that was familiar turf for her. The young family started out in Wiesbaden for a year or so, then a town off the Belgian border for another couple of years, then up to Hannover for the rest of the time. Paul was working in the radar field, and didn't get much free time.

"It was an intense job; I was in maintenance, and maintenance gets stepped on by operations people!" he said. "But Maria worked for MWR (Morale, Welfare, Recreation), and she arranged bus tours and so on."

"I took service families on several trips to Holland, and Berlin when it was still divided — that was really outstanding," she said. "We went on one together."

"I did get to go skiing three or four times in eight years, in the Alps," Paul said. Having grown up in Hood River, he learned on "lit-

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Faith and respect are the glue that holds the Riveras together



By ADAM LAPIERRE News staff writer

For Jorge and Gavina Rivera, faith is the glue that has held their marriage together through the trials and tribulations of the last four decades.

The two longtime Pine Grove residents celebrated their 40th anniversary last month in similar fashion to their January 1973 wedding in Michoacán, Mexico: a humble gathering surrounded by those who matter most — family.

"Our wedding was small and simple," Jorge said. "Resources were not available in those days; we didn't have the means to buy anything fancy for the wedding. Our families were there and we were all happy; that was the important thing.

At their anniversary last month, Jorge and Gavina were again surrounded by family; but this time with six children and seven grandchildren of their own to add to the celebration of a long and happy life together

Traditions were strong in the small village where the two came from, so their first date, and the many that followed, were done in secret. After a few years of dating, they decided to get married. As the oldest of nine children, Gavina had a hard time convincing her father that marrying Jorge was a good idea

"It was normal for the father to be that way back then, especially since I was the oldest," she said. "It took a while, but Jorge was a good man and my father knew that.'

Like clockwork, 10 months after the wedding, their first child, Pepe, was born. Not long after that Jorge made a difficult decision that would end up changing their lives forever. He left his wife and child to find work in the United States.

"When I first came here I didn't

know anything," he said. "I didn't know anything about the U.S., about what to expect or how long I was going to be gone. I did it to find work so I could send money back home."

"When he left I felt like the world caved in on me," Gavina said. "It was a difficult time."

Jose made his way to Hood River that first year and discovered that several other families from his home state had found work and set tled in the area.

He returned to Mexico and the following year returned to Hood River with Gavina.

"At first we had to leave Pepe in Mexico with his grandmother," Gavina said. "That was another very difficult time.'

"We liked Hood River and found that we could both live and work here, which was very hard to come

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out at church to teaching. They still have plenty of interests to keep them busy, from being active at Riverside Church where Royal still occasionally takes to growing and changing. the pulpit and Joan chairs the mission board, to the Lions Club to SMART and Bible studies at Down of either one of us and I'm Manor

They've seen their interests evolve over the years, privileged to be exposed to and figure both they and life in such a way that it their activities will keep changes us daily."

"I hear people say 'I'm the same person I was 50 years ago,' and that is so not true happy for that," Joan says. "We have been given the

PICKING

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mushed up the road. It was not plowed. I knocked on the door. Mr. Picking came to the door. I started to stammer my speech. Vernon came up behind his dad before I barely got started. He told me, 'The purse is just where you left it on the back seat. I'll go get it.'

Mr. Picking insisted we come in the house and warm up. He told mother, 'I'll have the boys (first I'd noticed two more young fellows sitting

on a davenport) shovel out 1946. Carol still my best the car, they'll take you and you're daughter home.' Oh great! We won't have to walk back, I thought. Wrong. Mother firmly thanked Mr. Picking, but firmly replied, 'We walked up here, we will walk back!'

"I guess we might have made an impression on some of the Picking family. Three years later, Chuck, Vernon's older brother, came by and asked me to go to a basketball game. I was unable to go. Now skip ahead to August of

friend, her date Gilmer and his friend came by my folks' home to ask me to go to a rodeo with them. I went out to the car and who was sitting behind the steering wheel but Chuck.

"Third time must have been the charm. We started dating, became engaged in April 1947, married Jan. 18, 1948. Oh a post script, Carol married Vernon August 1950 (They settled in Corvallis). Those Picking boys were charmers, and persistent, too!'

KOLLAS

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tle Cooper Spur, when it still had the rope tow."

When the time came for Paul to retire, deciding where to live was easy, they said: back to Hood River, where Paul was born. They have lived here since 1982.

Now that they don't have to change locations, they keep things interesting by walk together, hike and attend local theater and music events, and see their grandchildren when they can.

"And our youngest son has a farm near Sheridan; we love to go there and help out," Maria said.

She also works a few days a week at Tucker Road Animal Hospital, where she has been employed for 24 years, and Paul volunteers at Western Antique Aeroplane a constant.'

staying busy: They like to & Automobile Museum a half day a week.

The 51 years of constant change has been a good thing for the Kollases, Maria said.

"I think just seeing a lot of places, it just kept life interesting," she said. "Even though it was tough to have to be packed up and move every so often; to leave the people that you fell in love with — your friends — and move on. In a way you cling to each other, because that's

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by in Mexico at that time," Jorge said.

Since 1980 the two have been in Hood River permanently and have since raised a family of four boys (Pepe, Sal, Jaime and Jorge) and two girls (Gabby and Lindsy). Throughout all the difficulties in their lives, they credit just a few core principles as the keys to staying happy together.

Number one: Faith and him every day since. He has scripture. Number two: Respect for each other no matter what. Number three: Effort.

"Our belief in God and the scripture as a guide has been the glue that has kept us together," Jorge said. "Effort is also very important in that. You can have faith, but it you don't act upon it, it doesn't work."

"In the early days I felt fortunate for any time we could spend together," Gavina added. "I fell deeply in love with him and have respected

returned that respect, and, for me, that is why we have been happy together for so long."

As advice for young brides, Gavina said "Treat him with respect and loyalty so that he in turn treats you with the same."

"My advice to any husband is to be kind and respectful," Jorge said. "Although she is stronger than you in many ways, she is also much more sensitive. Never forget that."



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