

THE MEAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF MEALS ON WHEELS CENTRAL TEXAS



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“It Would be Rough If I Didn’t Have Help”

Here are two things you need to know about 96-year-old Gareth Pollard: first, while serving in the U.S Navy during World War II, he narrowly dodged death not once, but twice, both on the same day. And, on a much safer note, two years ago, he decided to teach himself how to play the piano.

During the war, the thought of living to a ripe old age was extremely wishful thinking. Mr. Pollard served as a Flight Engineer and backup gunner on a Martin PBM Mariner flying boat. He and the rest of his squadron would patrol the South Pacific searching for the enemy. On one such mission, their plane got strafed by machine gun fire and Mr. Pollard was hit by shrapnel. Hours later, as he was being treated for his injuries in the sickbay of a ship, an enemy plane on a suicide mission crashed into the American vessel next to the ship he was on. Mr. Pollard was later awarded a Purple Heart.

He moved to Odessa, Texas after the war. Not long after, a friend who worked at the local newspaper and needed help with



Meals on Wheels Central Texas client Gareth Pollard in his East Austin home

a downtown delivery route asked for Mr. Pollard’s assistance. That’s how he met his future wife, Joy - delivering a newspaper to the flower shop where she worked. “I found a sweet girl and we just hit it off,” he recalls with a smile. The couple was married for 68 years and had three children together.

But it’s his mother that Mr. Pollard credits for his long life. “She was quite consistent in what we would eat and when we would eat. So I learned to eat things that were grown in a garden and weren’t packaged. And I think as I got older some of those habits stayed with me,” he says. He and his wife loved cooking together. “We used a wok and we would cut all of the things and stir them in,” he recalls.

Sadly, Ms. Pollard passed away two years ago. Now her husband lives alone in their East Austin home with their 12-year-old dog, Scout. Mr. Pollard’s cooking days are over. “I try not to use the stove,” he explains. Instead, he relies on our hot, nutritious lunches delivered by dedicated volunteers. “[The meals] mean I stay alive. It would be rough if I didn’t have help,” Mr. Pollard says.

He adds “another thing that is

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“It’s Fulfilling to Help People”

Larry Rogers admits it—he began delivering meals to score points with a woman he liked. “She was a volunteer and I wanted to date her. I thought if I joined her, I could impress her,” he recalls with a laugh. And his strategy worked—just not the way he planned.

That’s because the target of his affection “moved on to greener pastures,” Larry says. She left and he kept the meal delivery route. Not long after that, Rose Rowland, an old high school friend of his, started working for Travis County, the same place Larry works. “Larry said ‘hey, I do Meals on Wheels on Friday, do you want to join me.’ I started and I got into it,” says Rose. The two would deliver

meals and then go eat lunch together. “Lunch became dinner, and dinner became weekend dating, and the rest is history,” is the way Rose describes their budding relationship. The couple eventually got married and still delivers meals together every Friday.

They drive to clients’ homes in their bright yellow convertible Ford Mustang. More often than not, the car’s top is down as they navigate their meal route. “The clients love it. They’ll ask us to turn up the radio and wave as we drive away,” says Rose.

She and Larry plan to keep volunteering for us as long as they can. “For me, it’s fulfilling to help people. I love greeting



Rose Rogers (center) and Larry Rogers with Meals on Wheels Central Texas client Ethel Hardeman

people, bringing a smile to them, giving them a hug if they’ll accept one,” says Rose. “I consider what a great thing Meals on Wheels is and I just want to do anything possible to support it. That, and I love spending time with her,” Larry says as he points to Rose. His strategy worked, indeed.

MOWCTX Up for Major Awards

The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce has named Meals on Wheels Central Texas a 2018 Business Awards Finalist in the **Customer Service** and **Non-Profit** categories.

Winners will be announced at an awards program on Thursday, August 30, at the JW Marriott Austin hotel.



“It Would be Rough If I Didn’t Have Help” (cont.)

nice about Meals on Wheels is the people who bring them. I live alone. It gets pretty quiet around here. So I always look forward to the person bringing the meal because I get a little visiting out of them.” Mr. Pollard also appreciates the help our PALS (Pets Assisting the Lives

of Seniors) program provides his constant companion, Scout: free basic veterinary care and nail trimmings.

Speaking of Scout, he’s usually the only audience Mr. Pollard has when he practices the piano. When asked why he decided

to learn how to play a musical instrument at 94, he says “I have a curiosity about life. I always want to learn more.”

You can watch a video of Mr. Pollard playing the piano by visiting <http://bit.ly/2Ktxh1T>.