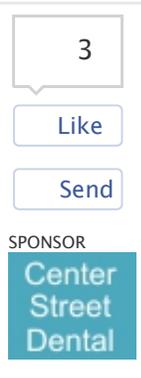


## In Sight: 100 Years

By Daryn Slover

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Not many hookers have never encountered a police officer.

Leota Seaward hasn't.

"I remember Leota telling me a story about what she did for a living and she said she was a hooker," Turner Town Manager Eva Leavitt said.

Seaward loves to tell the story and chuckles every time. "I was surprised to hear those words come out of her mouth," laughed Leavitt.

Leota Seaward of Turner points to the shirt given to her by friends at her high school Alma mater, Erskine Academy. The shirt reads "Happy 100th Leota! Class of 1929."

– Daryn Slover/Sun Journal

Seaward retired from the Priscilla Turner Rug Factory after 20 years as a rug hooker. She has been telling the story ever since — to the town manager, during her trips with seniors, to a journalist. Just not to a policeman.

Seaward drove a car until she was 98 years old and not once was she ever pulled over by the police. Her driver's license expired on her 100th birthday.

One of three children, Seaward was born on Oct. 6, 1910 in Vassalboro and was raised on a farm in South China. She was named after the daughter of the doctor who delivered her. "My mother really liked the name Leota," said Seaward, the current holder of the Boston Post Cane as Turner's oldest resident.

Seaward remembers working in the hay fields with a rake and horse, attending a one-room schoolhouse and tossing powder onto the clutch of a Ford Model T each time to make it start. She has fond memories of taking a horse and sleigh across a frozen China Lake to her grandmothers house for Thanksgiving.

As a freshman at Erskine Academy, Seaward learned to recite the Preamble to the United States Constitution, something she can still do to this day. She is the oldest living graduate of Erskine, graduating as class salutatorian in 1929.

Seaward cannot get up from her living room chair much but her mind is still incredibly sharp, said her 80-year-old daughter Bunny Gilbert. Each morning, Seaward puts on her necklace, earrings and bracelet and would like nothing more than to go to work. "I would love to get up and go to work," she said.

Seaward celebrated her 100th birthday Oct. 6. More than 100 people, including U.S. Rep.

Mike Michaud, D-Maine, came to her party at the Turner Village Church. Friends at Erskine Academy gave Seaward a pink sweatshirt that reads "Erskine's Energizer Bunny" on the back.

Seaward gives her doctors the credit for her long and healthy life.

"It's the good doctors we have today," Seaward said.

Gilbert points to the choices her mother made. "She never smoked, she never drank, she worked hard," said Gilbert of her mother. They both share the same birthday.

"She's remarkable. It's always a pleasure to see her (Seaward) when she comes in," Leavitt said.

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