



Madeline Hobson (right) appears longtime friend Delores Gildea, secretary of the Tuesday Tryers league at Laurel.

“Bad Girl” Madeline Hobson still ridin’ and rollin’ at 91

The oldest member of the Tuesday Tryers league at AMF Laurel maintains a most active life at age 91 and insists that “retirement” is a word she doesn’t understand.

Madeline Fitchett Hobson, born in North Hampton County in Cape Charles, Va., February 21, 1912, is one of two brothers and three sisters. Only one of her beloved sisters is still living, Mrs. Corrine Gibbons of Hyattsville. Madeline’s family moved to Norfolk, Va., in 1924, where she received her education at the public schools.

She embraced Christ at an early age, attending First Baptist Church of Berkley, Va., and later joined Queen’s Chapel United Methodist Church in Beltsville. Madeline is a member of the Adult Sunday School and Shut-in Ministry.

She makes beautiful dolls and ornaments to decorate the church Christmas tree each holiday season. Each year, Madeline crochets nearly 100 hats for the church’s homeless street ministry in the

District. She shops thrift and discount stores for heavy winter coats each fall and then donates them to that same ministry.

In 1938, Madeline moved to the District. It was at this time she drew from the training she received from her mother in clothes designing. What began as a clothing design business evolved four years later into “Interiors by Madeline,” an interior design business. She employed six women as seamstresses and managed this business until she moved to Beltsville in 1974, where she still lives.

Shortly thereafter, in semi-retirement, she began her solo career and continues today as an interior design subcontractor for some of the most prestigious interior decorators in Maryland, Virginia, and the District. However, she now limits her designs to window dressings, bedding, and pillow coverings.

She had the distinct opportunity and honor to design interiors for some of the most exclusive residences and embassies

in the area. In fact, this very special lady was requested to provide decorations for the Green, Red, and Cabinet rooms of The White House during President Ronald Reagan’s tenure. Many of her designs often were featured in *Interior Designs* and *Architectural Digest* magazines.

Two years ago, Madeline joined the Gold Wing Road Riders Association of Maryland and is the oldest member in the state. She’s a motorcycle co-rider with her adopted nephew, Hampton Conway of Beltsville. She has traveled to rallies in Ocean City, Fort Wayne, Ind., and other locations to be a part of the activities. This July, Madeline will head to Madison, Wisconsin for “Wing Ding XXV.”

She seldom rides long distances today and instead chooses to follow in her 1992 white Lincoln Town Car, which she regularly uses to go bowling, shop, visit nursing homes, and attend Bible study gatherings and motorcycle association meetings each month.

Each spring, Madeline hosts a garden party for about 40 of her closest friends—the only requirement is that they must be at least 70 years old.

Madeline enjoys gardening, antiquing, hunting local yard sales, and, of course, bowling. Until this year, she was a member of two leagues, but they began to interfere with her traveling. She went on a Caribbean cruise last fall for 11 days and said she had the time of her life. She plans to take a Hawaiian cruise in the summer of 2004.

A member of the Tuesday Tryers since the mid-1970s, Madeline averages 115 and has a high game this season of 148. She scored a 208 game approximately four years ago—“when I was young”—and has the award pin to prove that she’s tossed at least one 500 series. She’s pleased to report that her “Bad Girls” team recently left the league basement by winning seven games in two weeks.

“I put a hex on our opponents!” Madeline joked before saying her many goodbyes, departing the center, placing her 10-pound bowling ball in the trunk of her huge vehicle—one that included a Gold Wing Road Riders Association of Maryland window sticker—and swiftly driving away.

Sharon Conway, Madeline Hobson’s adopted niece, was the primary contributor to this article.