

Mining for treasure: Ready for the 2016 Keystone Awards

BY LOIS BELL

SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — A team of volunteers is digging deep for information on Sheridan's 2016 Keystone honorees. Their objective: to script a tribute video on each honoree to be shown at Sheridan's sixth annual Keystone Awards on April 21. Videos on each honoree are part of the Keystone Awards evening, interwoven with live entertainment.

The Keystone Awards honor residents for their contributions to shaping Sheridan County. Three to four honorees are selected each year. Since 2011, individuals from a wide variety of experiences and contributions have been honored.

Writing a script for a Keystone honoree video can be compared to looking for treasure. You know that "thar's gold in them thar hills," but it doesn't just jump into your pocket.

There is the Keystone committee composed of sub-committees who prepare for the Keystone

Awards each year. One group is a video sub-team whose mission is to weave the story on each honoree that will be shown in video on the evening of the event.

Each team member is assigned to one honoree. They mine for the story, they mine for photos that support the story and they mine for the honoree's favorite music. They interview, interview, interview until they feel they've hit a complete pay seam.

Barb Blue returns for a third year as a member of the honorees tribute video team. Blue was asked to write again this year.

"I feel it's an honor to be asked to write their story," Blue said.

Where does Blue start? At the top of Blue's notes she has the following question: How do you describe the essence of a person's life?

"I start with interviewing the honoree," Blue said. Like her volunteer team members, Blue will interview the honoree, their friends, family and colleagues for the story.



COURTESY PHOTO | LOIS BELL

Uncovering the contributions by volunteers who have shaped Sheridan County is much like a treasure hunt with a guaranteed prize. Barb Blue is on a team of three volunteers interviewing and crafting scripts about the 2016 Keystone honorees — Judy Taylor, Jack Pelissier and Esther McKenzie. The scripts will be the backbone for tribute videos that will be kept cloistered until their premiere showing at the Keystone Awards on April 21.

Interviewing honorees is a skill. Most are not accustomed to having the spotlight turned on them. Blue starts an honoree's interview by asking them why they are being honored. It's not unusual for the initial response to be that they don't know, indicating that honorees didn't think what they did was so special.

"They are humble," Blue said. "When you are interviewing, the challenge is to get them to open up and to share those stories that they haven't thought about in a long time."

This year, Blue is writing the script for 2016 honoree, Esther McKenzie. The script team began the process last fall after the honorees were announced.

For Blue, the challenge is finding the inspiration and wanting to do a good job. She feels she's hit pay dirt when other people start sharing stories about the honoree.

"Other people give the best insight to the individual," Blue said.

She gathers information then waits for inspiration. "I just have to let the

inspiration come on its own. I can't force it," Blue said.

Periodically, Blue watches the Kennedy Center Honors to orient her creative process. The Keystone Awards format is inspired by the Kennedy Center Honors.

"I especially like the Kennedy Center Honors about Tom Hanks," Blue said. "It inspires me."

The Kennedy Center Honors is an annual honor given to those in the performing arts for their lifetime of contributions to

American culture.

Each video is held to a five-minute finished product. Team members must be word-efficient focusing on the contributions of the honoree.

Each script includes the narrative and cues for what photos are shown when and when to bring in the honoree's favorite music for the background.

The script, music and photos are digitized and handed over to a professional videographer. From that point, no one sees the video until the evening of the event.

"That evening is the first time I'll see the finished video myself," Blue said, adding that she holds her breath. "I want the story also to be funny, to make people laugh. You know that the person and their family will be watching it so you want your best work out there."

She listens to the audience's response.

"Do they laugh where I wanted them to laugh?" Blue said. "But I especially watch the honoree's reaction. It makes me feel proud."

So far, Blue has been pleased that she's delivered a gift, much like precious ore, to each honoree she has had the honor to write about.

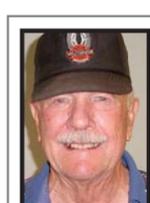
CENTER STAGE

Locked or unlocked? Oh, how times have changed

The first 18 years of my life, our house was never locked unless we went out of town.

Whether it is 2 p.m. in the afternoon or 2 a.m. in the morning it was the same as far as locking up was concerned. The house was always open and everyone had access.

As a teenager I attended many dances locally and at neighboring towns. It was after midnight when I would get home. I would open the front door or the back door without a key



BOB HUFF

and go up to my bedroom which was upstairs.

I never knew that we had a key to either the front door or the back door. One time I asked my

mother about this. She told me that the key to the back door was hanging on the nail on the back porch. When I investigated, what I found was a skeleton key that would probably work in about 10 percent of the doors in town. That was a real security situation that prevailed.

Later our place at Banner was on Highway 87 at the foot of Massacre Hill, before Interstate 90. Many times in the morning when I was going to milk the cows, there would be a car or a hitch hiker in the yard, barn or driveway. They stopped there needing gas or a meal. Through all of that, we never came up missing a single thing although we never locked up. Luck was with us.

We had a couple of pickups, cars and a few tractors. Since we did not know when someone might have to move these outfits, the keys were always in their ignitions. It is a wonder that one of these outfits was not stolen.

I mentioned in previous writing that I worked on the dray one summer. We delivered ice if the resident was home or not. The residents houses were generally unlocked if they were home or not at home.

When younger, I went elk hunting every year. We hunted area 38, the northern Bighorn Mountain area. On Boyd ridge there was a cabin owned by Sonny Boyd. On the door was a note that read, "If you take some leave some." I do not believe that Sonny ever locked his cabin or lost anything.

Later I had a travel trailer that provided a lot of weekends with fun and shelter in the Bighorn Mountains. The trailer had a door that locked, but it was not very secure. Sometimes I left the trailer for a week or a more at a remote location on the mountain. I was never a victim of a break in. Back then, Blue Spruce Lodge

only charged \$20 a month to park a trailer in their secure lot by the lodge.

I had friends that lived in Evans, Colorado, next door to Greeley, Colorado. The crime rate was quite high there. If the friends were working in the back yard, the front door was locked. Vice versa if they were working in their front yard, the back door would be locked. That action was playing it safe, but different than I was accustomed to. Also their front and back doors had about three locks on them. A thief had to understand all of these locks to gain access to their house. They took no chance!

Times have changed a lot in my lifetime! There has always been those who had sticky fingers, but not as many as today. That is sad commentary indeed, but a fact of life. Locked or unlocked that is the question?

BOB HUFF grew up in Upton. He is a driver for the mini-bus managed by the Senior Center. Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan Community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

• **How do you start to organize all your stuff... your life?**

Back by request, join us for a free community presentation on April 5: "Downsizing Your Life – Part Two" with guest presenters Amanda Lawson of Caring Transitions and Shelley Kinnison of Real Estate Rehab. The presentation is on the dining room stage of the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St., 5:30 p.m. This presentation is offered free to the community through community partnerships under the Sheridan Senior Center's "When I'm 64...or more" life planning lecture series. Refreshments will be served.

• **View works of Sheridan artist Bill Wright (1926-89) with an afternoon excursion with the Sheridan Senior**

Center. Deadline to sign up is April 5. Payment reserves your spot. Call the Senior Center front desk at 672-2240 for costs, bus departure and arrival times and other excursion details.

• **Interested in a trip to Jackson Hole?** The Senior Center is organizing a trip May 25–28. The itinerary includes a tour of Teton National Park, a tour of the Jackson Hole Winery, and the opening night of the 2016 season for the Bar J Wranglers. Price includes round-trip coach bus with Arrow Stage Lines, lodging, breakfasts, dinners, entrance to the Park, and the Bar J Wrangler Show and dinner. A \$50 discount applies if you pay by March 31. An additional \$20 discount is applicable if you are registered with the Senior Center. Ask about trav-

el insurance. You can sign up at the front desk of the Senior Center at 211 Smith St. or sign up with a credit or debit card by phone. Call Lois Bell at 672-2240 for details and to sign up.

• **The second Healthy U! Chronic Disease Management** class is now registering for its upcoming six-week program April 7 through May 19 (no class on April 21). This session is being offered from 5:30–8 p.m. in the Community Room of the Senior Center. A light dinner will be offered at each class. There is no charge for the class but pre-registration is required as space is limited to 14 participants. Please pick up a registration form at the front desk of the Senior Center and return your registration to the front desk by April 1.

Sheridan Senior Center
"Celebrating 40 Years of Service!"
www.sheridanseniorecenter.org

Fun and Food
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD MON- FRI

Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Sun - Honey Glazed Ham		Happy Easter!
Mon - Chicken Enchilada		Beef Stew
Tue - Cheese Burger Deluxe		Cream of Cauliflower
Wed - Turkey Pasta Salad		Creamy Beef Soup
Thu - Rosemary Pork Roast		Mexican Beef Soup
Fri - Oven Fried Chicken		Spanish Rice Soup
Sat- Beef Vegetable Skillet		

***Home Delivered Meals**

Mon - Basic A.M. Moves	9:30 a.m.	Community Room
Tue - Bingo	12:00 Noon	Dining Room
Wed - Mosaic Class	9:30 p.m.- 11:30 a.m.	Art Studio
Thu - SheridanAires "Sing into Spring!"	12:00 Noon	Dining Room
Fri - Basic Computer	10:00 a.m.	Conference Room

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.,

7 days a week

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