

Carrying the baton: Bringing quality concert performers to Kendrick Park

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — He's a familiar face among summer concert-goers, handing out Popsicles to attendees of all ages at the Tuesday evening concerts in Kendrick Park. David Kuzara is not only carrying on a summer tradition of welcomed cool treats at the park concerts, but has been carrying the baton of organizing the program.

"The way I got into this was fun," Kuzara said. "I ran into Alan Bourne in

Wal-Mart and asked him if I could help with the concerts."

Bourne had been a co-organizer of the concert band series for years.

Kuzara wasn't anticipating Bourne's response.

"Would you like to run it?" Bourne asked.

"I thought he was kidding," said Kuzara, but he took on the position and has now organized concerts in the park for nine years including handing out free ice cream treats — a tradition started by Bourne.

The 2016 schedule is pub-

lished, the culmination of work that began last fall.

"I begin contacting bands in the fall, and then by January or February things start to come together," Kuzara said. "By April or May we finalize the schedule."

This year's schedule features five bands from around the country and music from community bands directed by residents Diane Knutson and Pat Malone.

"Diane organizes the local musicians and works with the other band directors," Kuzara said. "She's a big part in this."

Kuzara schedules bands, acquires the park permit, helps with equipment setup, manages sound equipment, trouble shoots and manages parking designation for performers and attendees. He also buys the ice cream he hands out at each concert.

"Each year I try to outdo myself from the year before," said Kuzara, who strives to bring in quality performers.

Kuzara admitted he has taken a few lumps but he's learned a few tips along his journey. Technology helps Kuzara in his band selection.

"I can audition a band via the internet and view them via YouTube," said Kuzara. "I know what I'm getting."

Initially, Kuzara searched out each band himself. He knew of some and scheduled bands unknown to him. A challenge to Kuzara is to keep costs within an \$8,000 budget. He does this by trying to locate bands en



COURTESY PHOTO

Beginning June 28, the band shell in Kendrick Park will be the site for eight community concerts on Tuesday evenings through August. Concerts in the Park organizer, David Kuzara, began work on the 2016 schedule last fall. It will feature three community band concerts and five traveling bands. Kuzara has organized the free concerts since 2008.

route from one large venue to another where Sheridan is on their route. This gives Kuzara some negotiation room.

"Most bands book their large performances on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays so Tuesdays could work into their schedule," Kuzara said.

Through the years, he discovered an agent in Nashville who schedules bands. The partnership has been beneficial to the Kendrick concert series.

The concert series has gained some recognition outside of Sheridan.

"The Marshall Star Band heard about me and contacted me," Kuzara said.

The band is scheduled

for July 12 following the 2016 Sheridan Rodeo Boot Kickoff in Kendrick Park.

"This year, we've got good bands," said Kuzara, emphasizing the 'good' with pride.

On the evening of each concert, Kuzara sets up the sound systems in the band shell for the performance that begins at 7:30 p.m.

"But I have to stay until the band is packed up," said Kuzara. "I'm the one who has to turn off the lights."

Does Kuzara have a most memorable concert event?

"My most memorable events are the special concert for Bill Avery's 90th birthday and the Air Force and Army bands," Kuzara said. Kuzara referred to a musical tribute to Avery

who was a key community organizer of concerts in the park since 1950.

The free concerts are made available through support by the John and Dorothy Duncan Trust, First Interstate Bank, the Sheridan Recreation District and contributions through the Sheridan Arts Council.

Kuzara is pleased to do something for the community in his area of expertise, music. Kuzara is a vocalist and concert harmonica player.

"I used to think they were very special people," said Kuzara of the event volunteers who preceded him.

Kuzara is now one of them.

OPERATION INDEPENDENCE
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Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

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*Home Delivered Meals

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CENTER STAGE

Embracing independence

As the development director for the Sheridan Senior Center, I get excited when the time rolls around for our annual Operation Independence Campaign.

We are so thankful that your contributions and support help those who utilize the center's services to find comfort, strength and camaraderie.

There are many, many great stories that we hear and see take place every day!

As our Executive Director Carmen Rideout states, "Literally 365 days a year our services to older adults, elders, families and the Sheridan area community as a whole, are just too vital to take for granted." Today we hope to share some history and some philosophy with you, some perspective on our annual Operation Independence Campaign.

Operation Independence originated in 1975 (or there about) with a large group of people who saw the need for a fundraising effort that would support immediate programming and service needs for older adults in Sheridan County. The Senior Citizens Coordinating Council (the precursor

to the Sheridan Senior Center) built services for older adults that would help them live as independently as possible, hence the name Operation Independence. It was a mindset, and still is that no matter what a person's income level is, he or she will feel like they can use the services of the center because they also support them.

Many community members throughout Sheridan County have seen what having services for older adults, can do for families and have supported the need in advance. We are humbled by, and so grateful for, the many contributions that have been put forth over the past four decades. Here is to a campaign that means something to everyone.

We want to make sure that we help keep services for older adults for many years to come. We appreciate all donations and simply couldn't run our meals, transportation, Day Break, in-home, activities, volunteer, family caregiver support or outreach programs without them. Thank you for your time and thank you to that group who in 1975 created and organized such a successful effort.

This year's letter is heartwarming. It outlines the feelings and emotion that volunteer Pat King gets from delivering home-delivered meals for nearly 20 years. Pat said, "It's rewarding to know that you're helping someone in the community that maybe wouldn't

have food if we didn't offer this service to them." She loves visiting with people in their homes. Pat said she gets great satisfaction out of volunteering and helping others. "It makes you feel good, and it's rewarding!"

As you can see, Pat has given a major portion of her life to seniors and our community. Our goal is to make sure that we keep services she helped create for many years to come. We could sure use your support for Operation Independence...our goal is \$20,000. We appreciate all donations and simply couldn't run our meals, Day Break, transportation, in-home, activities, volunteer, family caregiver support or outreach programs without them.

We want to give everyone the opportunity to support the programs and services that celebrate, embrace and serve older adults for the betterment of our community.

You can also check us out on the web at www.sheridanseniorcenter.org. We would also love to have you join us for some fun this summer. We are underway with the construction on several of our program spaces and would love to give you a tour. We are proud of Sheridan County seniors!

RINDY WEST is the development director at the Sheridan 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

• **Color Your Plate!** June 29 at 6 p.m. in the Senior Center dining room at 211 Smith St. Learn about how the color of food tells you a nutrition message. Free to the community and presented by Georgia Boley, Senior Center dietitian. Sign up at front desk as the Senior Center or just show up!

• **Big Horn Canyon Boat Tour and Barbecue Lunch** with the Senior Center on Thursday, July 26. Sign up and payment is due by July 16. Transportation is available from Heritage Towers, the Senior Center and the Tongue River Valley Community Center. If you are registered with the Senior Center the cost

with transportation is \$80 per person and \$85 per person unregistered. If you provide your own transportation, the cost is \$47.50 for registered individuals and \$52.50 for unregistered individuals. Stop by the front desk at the TRVCC or the Senior Center to pay and sign up. Payment reserves your spot on the trip.

• **Deadwood History and Casino Trip**, Aug. 29 through Sept. 1. Trip package includes travel by coach bus, three nights lodging at Deadwood Gulch resort, welcome reception, \$56 in meal vouchers, \$40 in slot play, \$6 in Blackjack Match Play, free Slot Tournament entry and a one-day tour of the historic Deadwood and Lead

area. Cost is \$420 per person double occupancy. The deadline to sign up is July 29.

• **Check out the Senior Center menus** ad on this page for upcoming activities this week.

• **The Sheridan Community Land Trust has partnered with the Senior Center to offer six hikes this summer.** There will not be a charge. Folks will meet at the Senior Center at 9 a.m. and proceed to the hike sites by car pool or own transportation. Upcoming dates are: June 23, July 7, July 19, Aug. 1 and Aug. 24. For more information, call Jean Harm at the Sheridan Senior Center, 672-2240.

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