

What was Thanksgiving like in your house?

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Growing up as ranch kid, Garry King's Thanksgiving dinners saw eight children and the parents at the holiday table.

"We lived in the middle of nowhere in central South Dakota on a ranch with no electricity and no indoor plumbing," King said. "Life was different then. Mom would start cooking days ahead of Thanksgiving. With that many kids, she had to."

King's family raised turkeys and geese and slaughtered their own turkeys. With 10 people at the holiday table, the Kings prepared two turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner.

"Sometimes we'd have only one turkey," King said, "if it was big enough."

Work on a ranch still needed to be done, so King and one brother would do their chores before the noon meal. Their job was to feed and water the calves, ducks, geese and chickens. When the ranch chores were done, the family gathered.

"The turkey was good and Mom made her own cranberry sauce," King said. "It was so much better than the canned stuff."

Afterwards, the King family would sit and visit. Without electricity, the family had no television.

"We had a battery operated radio," King said. "And the younger kids would

play games."

Cal Garretson grew up in the mid-1970's in Billings, Montana.

"My parents were divorced and we spent Thanksgiving with my dad," Garretson said. "Dad would take my brother and me to either a movie or to the YMCA on Thanksgiving Day. Later, we'd go to Tiny's Tavern for hot chocolate. Even though we were kids, the bar owner would let us in knowing it was Thanksgiving and make the hot chocolate for us."

"But my favorite Thanksgiving was when I was older," he said. "When my brothers and sister had children, we got together on a beautiful day and played NERF football. All my nieces and nephews thought I was so cool because I could throw so far."

Anita Phillips' family Thanksgiving dinner was interrupted for years. Her father, a pharmacist, owned his pharmacy in a small Texas town.

Phillips recalls that every Thanksgiving her father was called out to fill a prescription.

"We moved to Dalhart, northwest of Amarillo, in 1943," Phillips said. "Dad bought the pharmacy business there. Our family would have a traditional holiday dinner, but Dad would always get a call on Thanksgiving for a prescription to be filled. It was 1971 before we had an uninterrupted Thanksgiving dinner."

Jan Quinn can relate to Thanksgiving



COURTESY PHOTO

Ronda Paavilainen, kitchen manager at the Sheridan Senior Center, celebrates home baked pie from the kitchen of the Center. The Center will be open at 211 Smith Street on Thanksgiving day to serve a traditional turkey meal between 11:30 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

with a pharmacist. She worked for a phar-

macist in the small community of Hay Springs, Nebraska.

"It was a Mom and Pop store and the mall of Hay Springs," Quinn said. "They had everything: a liquor license, gift items, and veterinarian supplies."

If the pharmacist was called, so was Quinn. She would go to the store to help. "There would be babies who would get sick in the night," she said. "They would be dehydrated by Thursday and would need pedialyte to rehydrate them or antibiotics for ear infections."

Quinn took it in stride. "It was a small town and the community took care of the community," she said.

As a girl, Quinn's mother would invite people to Thanksgiving dinner who had no family or wasn't traveling.

"Sometimes it was a new teacher in town who wasn't traveling," Quinn said, adding that 10 to 12 people would sometimes be at their family holiday table.

While different in holiday memories, the Thanksgiving meal is the center of the day for many families and each with their favorite Thanksgiving food.

It was hot chocolate for Garretson, homemade cranberry sauce for Phillips and the turkey and cranberry sauce for King.

And what was Quinn's favorite part of the Thanksgiving dinner?

"White meat of the turkey," Quinn said. "It is the white meat, no doubt."

CENTER STAGE

Wet wipes and laughter: One caregiver's support group story

November is National Family Caregiver month. Thank you to all you wonderful peo-

ple that are providing care for a loved one, a friend or relative or maybe even a grandparent raising a grandchild.

Some of you may have heard me say this before, but I think it is worth repeating. In Rosalynn Carter's book "Helping yourself Help others" she says that there are only four

kinds of people in this world: Those who have been caregivers, Those who are currently caregivers, Those who will be caregivers,

Those who will need caregivers.

That pretty much covers all of us, doesn't it?

Most of us have had our share of some type of informal caregiving experience and then there are those that have chosen a career in caregiving, such as various health care providers. What about the spouse or adult child that never thought

they would be a caregiver and now find themselves the main caregiver in someone's life?

How can we support them? Caregivers should not go through this alone. They need all the help and support they can get (many caregivers do not yet realize this)! Most spouses do not think of themselves as caregivers - they are "just the husband/wife" and adult children at times feel they are "giving back" to a parent because at one time that parent took care of them.

Caregiving can be rewarding but at the same time exhausting.

Sometimes just talking to another person experiencing something similar makes you feel better. In our weekly caregiver support groups this is a very healing experience for caregivers... they share their experiences. They may have thought they were in a unique situation but more times than not, they discover that others have experienced something very similar.

A caregiver shared a

story this week in a support group we offer at the Senior Center. It was frustrating for the caregiver at the time it happened but by the time she shared it in support group, she was able to laugh. I'll try and recount the story she told:

She had a package of wet wipes in the bathroom and when she walked into the bathroom, her loved one had taken every wipe out of the package and had them laid out flat on the floor, hanging from every available empty space in the bathroom and then some! She asked why this had taken place and her loved one said "well, they are all wet so I set them out to dry!"

That would make perfect sense if you went to get a tissue and discovered that the entire package was wet - and for someone with dementia, it made perfect sense. For the caregiver, it was added stress and work so being able to share the story at the caregiver support group made the event just a little bit easier to deal with.

We know that as caregiv-

ers there will be constant change in our life. We have to get used to change because as soon as we learn and start to get comfortable about one level of care and what the needs of your family member are, your family member changes! Sometimes we question our ability to be a good caregiver because of all these changes and it's hard to keep up. It's also very difficult not to take personally the things your loved one with dementia may say.

Come join us on a Monday at 10:00 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. at a caregiver support group. I can almost guarantee you will feel better after hearing others share their stories - you may even learn a tip or two about caregiving! Give yourself a gift and give me a call at (307) 672-2240 and let's talk about how we can support you in your important caregiver role.

STELLA MONTANO is the Director of Family Caregiver Services 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.



"Good meals and fellowship!!"
~ Dwight French



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Thu -	Traditional Turkey Dinner	No soup bar on Thanksgiving
Fri -	Baked Fish	Mexican Chicken Soup
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*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue -	Crafts	1:00 p.m.	Art Studio
Wed -	Bridge	12:30 p.m.	Community Room
Thu -	Thanksgiving	11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	* Center Holiday Hours*
Fri -	Dominoes	9:30 a.m.	Dining Room
Sat -	French Toast Breakfast	7:30 to 9:00 a.m.	Dining Room

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street
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SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- The Senior Center will be serving a traditional Thanksgiving meal on Thursday, November 24 at 211 Smith Street during its regular meal hours 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

- The Senior Center's SheridanAires Winter Concert is coming! This popular annual event will perform on two dates: Thursday, December 1 at 1:30 p.m. A \$2.00 suggested contribution at the door is requested for the matinee.

- The SheridanAires evening performance is Friday, December 2 at 6:00 p.m. Dessert will be offered (no dinner this year). A \$6.00 suggested contribution is requested for dessert. Please call 672-2240 before December 1 to let us know you are coming.

- Christmas Luncheon Party Tuesday, Dec. 6 at the Open Range Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. Participants are responsible for paying

for their lunch; the price is \$8.95 plus tax and tip. There will be a "White Elephant" gift exchange. Wrap an item you no longer need or want but do not put your name on the package. Sign up by Dec. 1 at the Senior Center front desk or by calling 672-2240. The Goose Creek Transit bus will pick folks up at their home for the regular bus fee. Call 675-RIDE (7433) for bus reservations by Dec 1. Participants must schedule their own rides directly with the bus to the restaurant and back home.

- The Senior Center new hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Weekend and holiday hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The building will be open at 7:30 a.m. on select Saturdays that breakfast is served. Check the Senior Center website's Center Stage newsletter link for dates for breakfasts at www.sheridan-seniorcenter.org.

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