

## Seniors get off their rockers, go out and experience life

The image of an older adult sitting on the porch in a rocking chair is long gone.

Today's older adults are more active, engaged and in control of their health.

Throughout the Sheridan County community, the "active older adult" population is supported through programs that give an extra edge to good health and to meet life's changing challenges. We are a community that can be depended on to provide a place where their lives



SANDY SARE

can be enriched, they can develop new skills and interests and make friends.

Community can be defined as "a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common: a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals." Recently, the Sheridan County YMCA identified four individuals that belong to a special community within our organization and established a Heritage Membership category. The community these individuals belong to is one where all members have celebrated reaching at least the age of 90. The four members are respectfully 90, 92, 92 and 99 years young with a combined 80 years of being active Y members.

I recently had an opportunity to visit with these Heritage Members and get some insight on how they continue to embrace strong values, a sense of direction and purpose, and a constant commitment to their own health and well-being.

When asked what their prescription for living such a fulfilling life is, a common reply was how active they not only were in their lives leading up to their 90s, but more importantly remaining active now. Hard work was part of their upbringing and in a sense all felt that hard work led them to the choice of remaining active through exercise. Their motivation to continue to exercise is simply the enjoyment and ability to feel good during and after

their workout. Another important aspect is the opportunity to have regular social interaction with a variety of people. They all expressed concerns about the sedentary life the younger generations are leading and wondered what their motivation will be to remain healthy and active. Leading a sedentary life is not an option to these individuals. Several continue to enjoy traveling — both stateside and internationally. They strongly felt their ability to have the strength and endurance to enjoy their chosen activities comes from regular exercise, activity and social interaction.

All shared their daily motto with me:

- "Nothing in excess but primar-

ily don't smoke and moderate use of alcohol."

- "Keep moving — even with the aches and pains."

- "Value having different interests and continue to want to try new things."

- "Always be active and enjoy being friendly."

I'm sure you'd agree all great words to live by.

Individuals such as these four are often the driving force behind Sheridan's organizations, working toward continuing to strengthen the community. It is enlightening and a privilege to share in their busy lives — if they slow down long enough for you to catch them.

SANDY SARE is the Sheridan County YMCA membership director.

## AP-NORC Poll: Adult caregivers overwhelmed and undertrained

WASHINGTON (AP) — Adult caregivers looking after aging relatives and friends have little training for their stressful roles but still find the experience rewarding, according to a poll released Thursday.

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey finds that long-term caregivers don't just provide rides to the doctor and run errands. Nearly half perform some kind of medical care, from changing bandages (30 percent) to inserting catheters or feeding tubes (6 percent).

Only 47 percent of those say they got most or all of the training needed for their often delicate tasks.

Despite all the challenges, more than 9 in 10 call their care-giving experience worthwhile, even if they also find it stressful (77 percent), and overwhelming (52

percent).

"It's a labor of love, but it can be stressful," said Cheryl Johnson, a factory supervisor from Bay Minette, Alabama, who along with other family members is caring for her elderly mother and stepfather. "Nobody can ever be prepared for that." Her mother has liver disease.

The poll of people age 40 and over who have either provided or received long-term care offers a glimpse into homes across the United States where aging and disabled people are being cared for by an ad hoc army of relatives, neighbors and friends.

It highlights how long-term care remains a major unmet need for government programs and private health insurance.

The lack of training for caregivers is a shortcoming in the health system, said

Judy Feder, a professor at Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy.

"Caregivers are taken for granted and they are invisible in the system," Feder said. "It's bad for them, it's bad for care recipients, and it's bad for the system because there's evidence that if you engage them, it improves the quality of care."

According to the poll, most caregivers are also trying to hold down jobs.

Johnson said her employer has been very supportive. "There have been times when they said, 'Cheryl's got to go home,'" she said.

Nearly half of caregivers say it's moderately or very difficult to balance work and caregiving. Men are more likely to report that their employers are not at all supportive.

Some switch to part-time jobs; others say they've endured serious repercussions.

Eight percent say they were excluded from job growth opportunities, 7 percent had their roles or responsibilities changed, and in rare cases, some report being fired or asked to resign. (The federal Family and Medical Leave Act only applies to larger employers.)

In Hastings, Nebraska, a small city where the Kool-Aid powdered soft drink was invented, Anthony Wollen says self-employment allows him to balance caregiving with work. A landscaper in his late 40s, Wollen is helping an older friend who's recovering from knee surgery.

He's had to wrap and unwrap his friend's leg and change her dressings, Wollen said.


Caregivers also help with medications, doing blood-pressure checks and giving injections.



JUSTIN SHEELY | THE SHERIDAN PRESS

### Selfie time

Volunteer models Terri Hayden and Paul Hayden snap a selfie on stage for the Green Boomerang's Fall Fashion Show Saturday at The Hub on Smith. The secondhand store supports services and programs at the Hub on Smith, formerly known as the Sheridan Senior Center.



**FUN AND FOOD  
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD**  
Mondays - Fridays  
Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

**Salad Bar Available  
Mondays - Fridays**

No Salad Bar on Saturday or Sunday

\*entree only offered for Home Delivered Meals

**ENTRÉE CHOICE\* or SOUP/SALAD**

Tue- Turkey Filet  
Wed- Broccoli Beef/Brown Rice  
Thu- Parmesan Fish  
Fri- Hot Turkey Sandwich  
Sat- Teriyaki Steak  
Sun- Country Ribs  
Mon- Beef Fajitas

**UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS**

|                              |                   |              |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Tue- When I'm 64...or more   | 5:30 p.m.         | Café         |
| Medicare 101 with Kim Kantor |                   |              |
| Thu- Cribbage                | 12:30 p.m.        | Café         |
| Fri - Table Tennis           | 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. | Fitness Room |
| Sat- Texas Hold 'Em          | 12:30 p.m.        | Café         |
| Sun- Double Deck Pinochle    | 12:30 p.m.        | The Hub      |
| Mon -Cardio Dance.           | 8:00 a.m.         | Fitness Room |

Lunch Service Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street  
Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079

Loan Closet, Outreach, and Administration Services, 672-2240, Mondays - Fridays.

Help at Home Services, 675-1978, 232 North Brooks: Mondays - Fridays.

Day Break Adult Care Services, 674-4968, 241 Smith Street: Mondays - Fridays.

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**SENIOR HAPPENINGS**

- Shopping Sheridan Days for Tongue River Valley residents are available every first and third Thursday of each month. Trips go to Albertson's or Walmart. We can shop for you, with you or leave you on your own. Take advantage of this great way to get your shopping done. Call ahead to reserve your spot at 655-9419, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The shopping bus will leave Dayton at 12:30 p.m., pick up riders in Ranchester at 12:45 p.m. and return to Ranchester at 3:45 p.m., and to Dayton at 4 p.m. The cost is \$8 for a round-trip ride.
- Conversations in History with Helen Laumann, Oct. 11, 10:30 a.m. "The Beginning of the Wrench Ranch in 1882."
- Laying of the new cornerstone with the Sheridan Dayton Masons #64 will take place Oct. 14. Look for times in local media or call 672-2240.
- Medicare Part D Open Enrollment begins Oct 15. Help is offered by appointment, 672-2240.
- On Oct. 17, join The Hub on Smith on a trip to the Ranch at Ucross and Ucross Foundation Art Gallery in the Clear Creek valley. The group will depart Heritage Towers at 10:30 a.m., 211 Smith St. at 10:45 a.m. They will leave the ranch at 3:30 p.m. Sign-up and pre-pay at the front desk by Oct 12.