

Wheel connections: veteran to veteran

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Roy Vandeventer's morning starts with a passenger pick up at 7:45 a.m. Vandeventer, a driver with Goose Creek Transit, has a shared background with his first rider. Both Vandeventer and rider Vickie St. Clair are U.S. Army veterans.

St. Clair, who does not drive, is taking the bus so she can volunteer at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center Building 86. Vandeventer and St. Clair have a special connection that only people with military experience can have.

St. Clair takes the bus to shop, to volunteer, to appointments and for trips to the Sheridan Fiber House for her knitting and crocheting supplies. She is one of the 146 veterans that relied on GCT for their transportation last year.

Vandeventer is not the only veteran who drives for Goose Creek Transit; Bill Jordan, Dwight Thompson and Ron Winters are also veterans.

"I take passengers to Sheridan College and a high school student who volunteers at the Dog and Cat Shelter," Vandeventer said.

And while all GCT drivers transport all riders, these four have a unique connection to veterans.

Jordan is a U.S. Navy veteran. Jordan finds that his military service helps him connect in conversations with veterans riding the bus.

"We talk about services we're getting from the VA," Jordan said. "(Being a veteran) certainly opens up some doors for conversation. Any veteran is going to feel that you've got some lines of communications; they feel more relaxed. It's conversation that you can especially have when there's only you and the rider on the bus."

Both Vandeventer and Jordan appear to be men of action. Part of Army Special Forces, Vandeventer saw combat service in Vietnam. Following three years of active duty, he was in the Army Reserve for 20 years. While in the reserve, Vandeventer held a 51H assignment as a construction foreman where some assignments took him overseas on pipeline projects. His private life career was with Montana-Dakota Utilities as a construction line foreman building power lines.

Following his naval service, Jordan was



COURTESY PHOTO

Goose Creek Transit driver Roy Vandeventer shares a unique connection to veterans, such as Vickie St. Clair, who rely on Goose Creek Transit for their transportation. Vandeventer served in Vietnam with the U.S. Army and is one of four drivers with GCT who are veterans.

a gas and electric service technician and in marketing for MDU. Both men held careers that kept them moving.

Then Jordan retired.

"I had just retired and knew I wasn't going to sit on the couch," Jordan said. "I always knew that driving a bus would be fun."

Jordan applied when a driver position came open and was hired.

Vandeventer applied for a driver's position at the recommendation of his wife.

"My wife retired four years ago, and suggested that I find something to do," Vandeventer said. "My wife thinks it's pretty nice I get out of the house a couple of times a week."

Unlike bus transportation in larger metropolitan areas that have fixed routes,

Goose Creek Transit is Sheridan's public door-to-destination bus service for all ages. For veterans, GCT provided 15,924 rides just to veterans and military personnel age 19 years and older. The number of veterans who ride GCT under the age of 60 years has increased from 34 percent in 2015 to 41 percent in 2016.

"Most of our veteran (riders) now are coming from the Vietnam era," said Steve Ainslie, Goose Creek Transit director.

Fifteen percent of the veteran passengers in 2016 were female.

Both Vandeventer and Jordan find the work rewarding and see the value to others in their work.

"They so appreciate the service," Jordan said of the riders. "With a town the size of Sheridan, the bus service is a plus. A lot of

people we transport would be shut-ins if we didn't have the bus. At the end of the day, it's rewarding to know what you've done."

Vandeventer agreed.

"The driving for veterans and others is very rewarding. Those in wheelchairs would be stuck in a house," Vandeventer said, referring to the GCT fleet having handicap accessible vans.

When passengers reserve their ride, they can explain what their needs are to ride, such as those in wheelchairs.

St. Clair said riding the bus also gives her the opportunity to get out and on occasion to meet other veterans on the bus.

"If it wasn't for them, I'd be stranded," St. Clair said of the bus service.

These veteran drivers are making "wheel connections" for their fellow veterans.

CENTER STAGE

Looking forward to getting outdoors

Unless you're a fan of winter outdoor sports, it can be extra challenging to think of creative ways to burn calories and stay in shape that don't involve bundling up and



ERIN NITSCHKE

our opportunities for curing cabin fever increase exponentially.

It's April and while spring may not be in full swing yet, it's close. We can look

forward to enjoying outdoor leisure activities. When we think about "being active" and living an "active lifestyle" it is easy to mistakenly believe this means working out in a gym, going to an indoor activities center or taking an exercise class. While these are excellent options for getting in daily activity, the truth is, living an active lifestyle can include so much more.

In short, living actively transcends weights and cardio equipment. Yes, these exercise options are effective and serve to improve health and enhance performance, however, they aren't the only means of enjoying the ability to move. Further, not everyone is drawn to or motivated by gym workouts. A gym environment may feel intimidating, overwhelming and crowded. If

you're one of those people, and even if you're not, maybe it's time to spring clean your personal definition of physical activity and take a more simplified approach to your efforts to stay healthy.

What, specifically, am I suggesting by encouraging a simplified approach to remaining active? I am suggesting shifting the focus to those activities that typically fall outside of the rigidly defined category of "exercise." Believe it or not, there is a caloric cost to leisurely activities such as gardening, carpentry, evening strolls in the park, nature walks, bowling, playing with your grandkids and fishing. The best part is — this list is not all inclusive and is only limited by your own imagination and creative abilities. In other words, just get up

and move those muscles — whether spontaneously or as a planned activity, movement is what burns calories and keeps us strong.

As the days get warmer and the evenings stay brighter, capitalize on this time — we all know it flies by all too fast. Get up, get out, get moving and soak up some sun and Vitamin D! Redefining your approach to active living doesn't mean going backward or losing the gains you already made; it simply means this — take time to stop and smell (or plant) the roses.

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

Fun and Food
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD Mondays - Fridays
Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Tue - Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce		Creamy Chicken Soup
Wed - Chicken Enchilada		Beef Barley Soup
Thu - Sloppy Joe & Waffle Fries		Old Fashion Chicken Soup
Fri - Turkey Tetrazzini		Pork Gumbo
Sat - Boneless Pork Chop		No soup kiosk on Saturday
Sun - Beef Stroganoff		No soup kiosk on Sunday
Mon - Baked Potato Bar w/ Chili or Ham & Cheese Topping		Monday soup special

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue & Wed - Major League Baseball Season Opens, come toss a ball around with us!

Thu - Sheridan Aires Choir	9:30 a.m.	Community Room
Sat - English Royalty & Tea Parties	2:00 p.m.	Dining Room
Sat - DIY Greeting Card Workshop	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	First Congregational Church, 100 W. Works St.
Mon - Caregiver Support Group - day	10:00 a.m.	Brookdale/Sugarland Senior Center
Caregiver Support Group - night	5:30 p.m.	

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street
Building hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays - Fridays
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Weekends and Holidays
211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801
Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon - Fri

KEYSTONE AWARDS

Fundraiser supporting Senior Center Services WYO Theater, April 20

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SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- Afternoon Tea with certified etiquette consultant Treva Mayo will take place Saturday at 2:30 p.m. at the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St. Sign up by April 3 by calling 672-2240. The suggested contribution is \$15 per person. Gloves and hats are optional. The menu includes Elmwood Inn scones, water cress and egg salad sandwiches, Benedictine tea sandwiches, English garden sandwiches, lemon bread, mini-hazelnut cookies and Vaherie cookies. There is no limit on the number of people who can come. You can pay with credit or debit card if you call in your res-

- The public is invited to the ribbon cutting and tour of the newly renovated and expanded Goose Creek Transit Facility on Thursday from 1-2:30 p.m. Local dignitaries, the media, community volunteers, Senior Center staff and Wyoming Department of Transportation representatives will be in attendance.
- The seventh annual Keystone Awards are April 20. This is a fundraiser to support services from the Senior Center in supporting older residents living independently in our communities. Live enter-

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- Take a trip to Glacier National Park with the Senior Center! The trip is Sept. 9-13, but sign-up is required by May 1. Interested in more information or signing up? Call the Sheridan Senior Center for details, 672-2240.
- Visit the fall colors of New England this October by bus and by rail. Call the Senior Center at 672-2240 for details. Deadline to sign up is May 15.