

## Volunteers with a passion to teach even more

BY LOIS BELL  
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — One may not think of sharing a passion, interest or talent as volunteering, but it can be. Meet three volunteers who share their passions with others as an instructor, a mentor and a guide in literature, craft and spiritual exercise.

**Aaron Holst,  
Third Thursday Poet**

"I had taken creative writing in high school and some college classes but never got around to doing any creative writing unless it was related to my job," said Holst. "There was always this ungratifying feeling."

After a 28-year career as a firefighter, Holst decided to pick up his pen and follow his creative writing muse. He enrolled in a nine-week creative writing workshop. Some of the participants

continued to stick together and meet monthly sharing a common passion: the love of working with language.

"We like the challenge of finding ways to make ordinary things extraordinary. I stole that from Ted Kooser, a poet laureate," Holst said.

Holst sees himself as a team instructor with fellow poets.

How does the Third Thursday Poets bring a new person to writing?

"We don't have lectures, maybe presentations and outside speakers," Holst said. "It's a matter of making them (new poets) feel comfortable and inviting them to take the risk of sharing what they have written. We are very accepting."

A meeting facilitator will introduce a prompt for writing. The group may be invited to write about what they see, do or feel.

"The challenge is to find ways to express your project that is unique," said Holst.

**Tom Lawson,  
woodcarver**

Tom Lawson saw a carved wooden Welsh love spoon when he was stationed in England. A young man would carve a spoon and present it to the father of a lady he wanted to court. Lawson was entranced. He grabbed "some wood" and began to teach himself to carve while sitting in the shade next to the Oxford Chanel watching boats pass through the locks. His first project was a spoon.

"It wasn't a great success," said Lawson. "My second piece was oak and has a key hanging from it."

Lawson seems more satisfied with his second project.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Tom Lawson's passion for woodcarving takes him to a spiritual place and to mentoring new artisans. Lawson is a member of the woodcarvers group that meets at the Senior Center on the first, third and fifth Saturday mornings of each month.**

When Lawson came back to the states, he joined a woodcarvers group in Sheridan.

"This group in Sheridan is the first group I've ever been with," Lawson said. "There was a bunch of us new people there at all at one time."

Lawson mentors and encourages new carvers by answering questions and giving pointers. Some of his protégés remain with the woodcarvers group today.

For Lawson, carving is a spiritual experience.

"I get in there and stop thinking about other things," Lawson said. "It's a spiritual connection. Like anyone who wants to do artwork, you get there."

**Dan Aldrich, Tai Chi**  
"The two biggest tenants

of Tai Chi are relax and sink (relaxing your joints, relaxing your muscles). Feel the support of the earth. Find the neutral zone," said Dan Aldrich. "The four tenants of Tai Chi are: Be even, upright, balanced, uniform."

Aldrich's connection to Tai Chi goes back to the early 1990s.

"It started a long time ago when I was in Asia. I saw people doing Tai Chi in the public square," said Aldrich. "When I got back, I didn't know anyone here (who did Tai Chi) until I ran into Mick Anderson. Mick learned it from a student of Chen Man-ch'ing, the originator of the form practiced at the Senior Center."

With Aldrich's encouragement, Anderson started the Tai Chi class at the Senior

Center.

"I think I probably was the most consistent student," Aldrich said. When Anderson died, the other participants asked Aldrich if he would continue teaching what he had learned from Anderson.

Aldrich sees himself as a guide in the Tai Chi class on Tuesday mornings offered free at the center.

"Tai Chi is taught one-third for health, one-third for meditation and one-third for martial arts," said Aldrich. "My passion is for meditation and health. There is room for more."

Aldrich sums up the passions these three volunteers and others like them have for volunteering their gifts: There's always room for more to join in.

### CENTER STAGE

## Continuing a lifelong love of books



**BARBARA HILL**

gifts long before I could actually read the words in them. I'd sit in my favorite chair

I've had a love for books since

I was a very young child. I remember being thrilled to get new brightly illustrated books as

and pretend to read, making up my own story from the wonderful pictures on each page. As I matured, married and had young children to attend to during the day, my reading times would be at night after I'd read to them then tucked them into their cribs or bunk beds at night. Often I'd spend much of the night reading. Now that I'm retired, I can read whatever book I'm currently enjoying whenever I please. (One of the many benefits of retirement!) Historically-based

fiction was my favorite for a while. I especially liked "Nicholas and Alexandra" by Robert K. Massie (which, by the way, is in our Senior Center library). More recently I prefer novels with stories set in England, Ireland or Scotland, written by either Rosamunde Pilcher or Maeve Binchy. (During my years as the international customer service manager for a company involved in the petro-chem industry I was fortunate to spend time in those countries).

It's no different for me now. I'm in my 78th year and still love the "feel" of a book in my hands, "seeing" the characters and experiencing emotions evoked from the pages described in wonderfully crafted words as I read the stories within each one.

Perhaps you do too? Oh, I know you can now read the same stories on a device called a Kindle, or even on your smartphone, but if you're like me it won't "feel" the same.

In our library I have arranged the hardback books in alphabetical order by author to make it easier for those of us who have favorite authors we especially enjoy reading. I'm working on arranging the paperback books in groups according to authors as well. I hope to add some large print editions as they

become available.

I have also designated a shelf for nonfiction books, and have recently begun a shelf for Christian or inspirational books.

If you have books that are in good condition and would donate them to the "SC Library," please do so. Just put them into the boxes provided near the book shelves and I'll be happy to arrange them onto the shelves. I do ask that we all use good judgment on what books you donate.

So, stop by the "library" in the lobby of our Senior Center and find a book to enjoy. There is no limit on how long you can keep it... in fact, if you want to keep it forever or pass it on to a friend, do so! If you return the book, just put it into the box provided for returns or donations and I'll happily place it back on the shelf.

Oh, who am I? I'm your volunteer "librarian," Barbara Auman Hill. I put "librarian" in quotation marks, because I'm not really a trained or degreed Librarian. I'm just someone like you who loves books, loves handling them, loves reading them and likes to see others do the same. Happy reading!

**BARBARA HILL** is the Senior Center's volunteer librarian. 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

• Trying to figure out your direction in life? Join us on Tuesday, May 3, at 5:30 p.m. for an interactive activity in helping you start figuring out what you want to do with your life. This presentation is offered free

to the community through the Senior Center's "When I'm 64... or more" life planning lecture series. A light meal will be provided. Join us in front of the dining room stage at the Senior Center, 211 Smith St.

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www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

**Fun and Food**  
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD MON- FRI

Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

	Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Sun -	Beef Tips over Egg Noodles		
Mon -	Boneless Pork Chop		Italian Chicken Soup
Tue -	Oven Fried Chicken		Sweet Potato Soup
Wed -	Baked Steak Teriyaki		Chinese Chicken Soup
Thu -	Chicken Enchilada w/ Salsa		Creamy Cauliflower
Fri -	Cheese Burger Deluxe		Vegetable Chicken Soup
Sat -	Baked Italian Pasta		

\*Home Delivered Meals

A Few Activities at the Senior Center this Week:

Mon - Bikes for Checkout	Call for Details	672-2240
Tue - "When I'm 64...or More"	5:30 p.m.	Dining Room
Wed - Pool Tournament	9 a.m. to Noon.	Rec Room

Thu, Fri & Sat

"The Man Behind the Cheap Mask" with the Young at Heart (YAH!) Players  
1:30p.m. all three days Dining Room \$2 suggested contribution per person

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.,  
7 days a week 211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801  
Home Delivered Meals - call by 10 a.m. (307) 672-6079



### DO YOU OR A LOVED ONE NEED ASSISTANCE?

**Our mission is to help people stay active,  
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- We provide professional non-medical in-home assistance for seniors.
- We provide short term or long term care for as little or as many hours as needed. We accept private-pay and Long Term Care insurance for payment.
- We do not accept Medicaid or Medicare. Owned and operated by Wyoming natives from Sheridan.
- We are headquartered in Casper and are open in Casper, Laramie, Sheridan and Buffalo.



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