

## 75 years singing for God

BY LOIS BELL  
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — “My 11th birthday was December 8, 1941. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, Sunday. I didn’t get to have my birthday party as we were all listening to the radio. It upset me greatly,” said Leonard Hurst. “In those days, I would get a card from my parents and kids that came to the party that said we’ll get you something nice for Christmas. It was still the Depression then. I didn’t get to get my birthday party then. I was really mad at the Japanese.”

Hurst didn’t realize the war would open an unusual opportunity for him.

“Men started to enroll in the services,” Hurst said. “The wives would leave to live close to their soldiers. We needed singers in our church choir. I could sing soprano then so they made me a full-fledged member of the adult choir at the age of 11.”

And Hurst has been singing ever since.

“From sixth grade to seventh grade, I sang soprano at church and in the school chorus,” said Hurst. “When I was in sixth grade, I was



COURTESY PHOTO LOIS BELL

**When men left civilian church choirs to fight in World War II, 11-year-old Leonard Hurst was invited to sing in his church choir. Hurst is entering his 75th year of singing for God.**

singing the highest soprano. Then, in junior high, in seventh and eighth grades, I was singing the lowest bass. My voice continued to change.”

Hurst was raised in Rawlins and joined the Navy after high school. He continued to sing at church services during his tour from December 1950 to

November 1954.

“One time we were in Sasebo, Japan, for Christmas,” Hurst said. “The ship invited orphans there for Christmas dinner and we sang Christmas songs. Some of the Japanese orphans new some of the songs and sang along with us.”

“One of the things I’ll remember forever was that we gave them ice cream,” Hurst said. “None of the orphans had ever tasted ice cream. They really liked that. That was really something.”

Following his service in the Navy, Hurst was hired as a butcher with the Safeway grocery store chain in Billings. He then transferred to Sheridan with wife Katie in 1954. They joined the First Presbyterian Church quickly upon arriving in town.

“When I joined the choir here there was only one tenor so I switched to tenor since I could sing those notes,” Hurst said. Katie sang soprano. And they brought their four children along to sing together at church.

“Sometimes we (the Hurst family) were the choir,” Hurst said. “Sometimes there were bad storms and people couldn’t get in to church

but we could.”

Hurst has realized he is approaching a very special anniversary in his life: this year marks the 75th year he has been singing in a church choir.

“He’s always the first one to show up for choir, usually before the director or anyone else,” said Pastor Doug Melius who has known Hurst for 18 years. “That’s a measure of his devotion. He’s very faithful to it. He not only sings in the choir but does solo pieces. He’s really dedicated to it and enjoys using his voice.”

Hurst enjoys using his voice outside of church. He is known to break out in an impromptu a cappella rendition of the song “Danny Boy” or a vocal recognition of someone’s birthday especially at the Sheridan Senior Center that he loves to frequent. Hurst is also a member of the Senior Center’s volunteer board of directors and sings with the Senior Center’s SheridanAires choir.

What does Hurst think of noting a 75th anniversary of singing in the church?

“I was kind of surprised when I figured it out. I thought I may have to stop but I won’t,” Hurst said. “Singing is something I like to do. I hope people don’t get too tired of it. I still have my tonsils.”

### CENTER STAGE

## The wonders of water

**W**ater is the largest component of the body and makes up 50 to 70 percent of our total body weight. Water is also a primary component of many important physiological functions that

take place inside the human body each day. Our bodies rely on the presence of water for processes such as regulating body temperature,

protecting vital organs, providing assistance with vitamin/nutrient absorption, and blood volume maintenance — not to mention it provides consistent hydration necessary for athletic performance and exercise.

When tackling this topic in my classrooms, the questions and comments that arise are:

- Do I really need 64 ounces of water each day?
- How much is too much?
- What do I need to sustain my workouts and how do I know if I’m hydrated “enough”?
- Water is “boring” — what are some alternatives?
- Can you get water from food?

As all things in health and fitness, a one-size fits all approach is not effective; therefore, the answers to these questions are not black and white. However, some basic principles apply that can help you determine what your individual needs are.

• First, when it comes to personal hydration needs, let thirst be the guide.

• Second, the amount of water each person needs depends on several factors including the types of foods and beverages consumed throughout the day, sweat rate, waste excretion, metabolic processes and respiration. Further, when providing water intake guidelines, we have to keep in mind that a person’s size, weight, activity level, and environment influence water loss.

• Third, when it comes to exercise, aim for a 1:1 fluid replacement to fluid loss ratio with the goal of avoiding a total weight loss of greater than 2 percent during exercise (this is most likely in serious athletes and/or those who live and train in very hot temperatures).

• Fourth, everyone sweats at different rates; consider drinking about 8-16 ounces of water each hour (on the higher end if it’s hot and humid). For prolonged exercise (greater than 90 minutes) try taking in a fluid with some sodium (Gatorade, for example). This will help balance electrolytes lost through sweating. A caveat, 30 minutes on an elliptical does not necessitate the use of Gatorade or other sports drinks! The human body will not become dehydrated or electrolyte deficient in 30 minutes to an hour.

So, how can you improve or support “euhydration” on a daily basis?

- Keep water with you at your desk or near you during the day.
- Replace one caffeinated beverage a day with water.
- Infuse water with fruit if plain water isn’t palatable.
- Drink water throughout the day — no need to down 8 glasses at once.

For more information and the ability to ask one-on-one questions about your personal needs, join me at the Sheridan Senior Center on Sept. 6 at 5:30 p.m. for light snacks, refreshments and a down-to-Earth conversation about the importance of water, signs of dehydration and methods for preventing dehydration and, finally, edible sources of water. Yes, water consumption isn’t limited to a glass of pure water. Many foods are high in water content, so don’t just drink your water — eat it.

**DR. ERIN NITSCHKE** is a health and human performance educator, NSCA Certified Personal Trainer and ACE Health Coach & Fitness Nutrition Specialist. To contact Erin please email [erinmd03@gmail.com](mailto:erinmd03@gmail.com). 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

• The Senior Center’s annual AutumnFest Dinner and Dance is Sep. 16 in Dayton. This year, tickets are being sold in advance as of Sept. 1 at the TRVCC and at the Senior Center. The suggested contribution is \$9 per person for dinner. No charge if you come for music only.

• Senior Center Labor Day Holiday hours on Sept. 5 are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch will be served in the dining room at 211 Smith St. during its usual hours, 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Home delivered meals will be delivered. For more information on home delivered meals, call Shirley Knisley at 672-6079.

• The Senior Center’s Green Boomerang Thrift Shop can use volunteers! Call Haley Rougeau at 672-2240 for more information.

• Eat your water! Secrets and strategies for staying hydrated for optimal health with Dr. Erin Nitschke, Sept. 6 at 5:30 p.m. This is a free community presen-

tation for all ages offered in partnership through the Sheridan Senior Center’s “When I’m 64...or more” life planning lecture series. No advance signup necessary.

• Ladies only billiards at the Senior Center beginning Sept. 7, every Wednesday at 2 p.m. in the Rec Room.

• Strategies for Weight Release, Tuesday evenings 5:15-6:15 p.m. at the Sheridan Senior Center. Pre-sign up by Sept. 8 is encouraged. Note the time change. There is a fee for this class (not free as previously stated). For more information, call 672-2240.

• Cowboy Poets and Pickers Fri, Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center. Soup supper included. Suggested contribution for entertainment.

• Diabetes Education and Empowerment Class begins free six-course program. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Sept. 13 -30, 1-3 p.m. Must sign up in advance by calling 672-2240.



Come to the Senior Center and play pool with Joe Skatula! Joe says “I come here to enjoy the people and super staff.”



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 - Egg & Sausage Bake

Mon - Hawaiian Chicken

Tue - Pot Roast w/ potatoes, onions, carrots, gravy

Wed - Boneless Pork Chop

Thu - Cheese Tortellini

Fri - Hot Turkey Sandwich

Sat - Legerski’s Beef Vegetable Pizza

Meatball Soup

Pork Gumbo

Mexican Chicken Soup

Lentil & Sweet Potato

Cream of Mushroom

\*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue - Tai Chi 8:30 a.m. Community Room

Wed - Ladies Only Pool 2:00 p.m. Rec Room

Thu - Nails Polished by Maxine 9:00 a.m. to Noon Day Break

Fri - Bridge 12:30 p.m. Community Room

Sat - Pinochle Dbl Deck 1:00 p.m. Lobby

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 7 days a week

211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801 (307) 672-6079  
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240

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