

# The SheridanAires: The magic of music

BY LOIS BELL  
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN —“Music brings you to places that bring you joy.” This is the experience of Jane Perkins who directs the SheridanAires singing group at the Sheridan Senior Center. Perkins has been loving the job for 12 years.

The SheridanAires shine this time of year not only for others but also for their members. The choristers presented their annual Christmas singing program at the Senior Center earlier this month and participated in the Sheridan College’s inauguration of the Whitney Arts building.

“Singing with the SheridanAires warms my heart,” said SheridanAires member Sharon Rasmussen. Rasmussen, a soprano, has been singing with the group for eight years.

Rasmussen tapped into the magic of music early in life. As an elementary school teacher at Highland Elementary School, she brought her second-, third- and fourth-grade students to sing for veterans at the Senior Center. They

brought the magic for her students and to the audience.

“The Senior Center was always one of our main places (to sing),” said Rasmussen of her choral students.

When she retired, Rasmussen joined the SheridanAires. She had an extra bonus by joining: her sister, Dixie Babilla, was already a member of the SheridanAires when Rasmussen joined the group.

New to the group, Ginger Morris joined the SheridanAires earlier this year. She sang for the first time with them in their Spring Follies earlier this year, another time of year that is a highlight for the SheridanAires and the loyal fans who appreciate them.

“I hadn’t sung for over 20 years,” said Morris. “What’s unexpected for me, is I laugh at every rehearsal. I have fun and the group definitely lifts my spirits. I always feel better after (the rehearsals).”

The group’s 2016 winter concert venue embraced the theme, “The Magic of Christmas” touching on the very point that these three



COURTESY PHOTO

The SheridanAires, the Sheridan Senior Center’s singing group share the magic of music this season. Some of the members rehearse their fa-la-las. Pictured, back row from left, are Sharon Rasmussen, Karen Steir and Agnes Blaney. Front row, from left, are Jacky Jones and Arlene Herrbold.

ladies observed: music this time of year can be especially magical. Perkins got it right. Music can bring not only audiences to places of joy but also for musicians. “The SheridanAires’ musical abilities are as

diverse as our age ranges,” said Perkins of the members whose ages range from 58 to 93 years of age. Each member brings their unique vocal talents, some with training and some who wish just to sing. The goal of the

group is to have fun.

Layered among the fun, singing and socializing is a powerful tonic. One member especially connects with the music through the SheridanAires, said Perkins. Perkins observes

that the participation and the music helps this member stay rooted as they battle health issues.

“When you’re involved in a music group, you are part of a musical family,” said Perkins. “The musical bond is a magical bond. It’s a different feel.”

This year, the SheridanAires were invited to be part of the magic of the musical inauguration of the Whitney Arts building at Sheridan College, a new experience for them.

“It was wonderful,” said Rasmussen. Rasmussen said the audience gave the SheridanAires a rousing applause.

It was not only the audience who responded warmly to the SheridanAires. Rasmussen said that after they sang and went into the warm-up room, the Buffalo High School singing group gave them an enthusiastic applause there.

“It felt great that they appreciated us,” said Morris.

Perkins said that the SheridanAires were glowing after the appreciative reception at the inauguration. The SheridanAires not only shared but received the magic of music this season.

“It connected us to the spirit of Christmas as well as the message of Christmas,” said Rasmussen.



Why does Billie Johnson come to the Senior Center?  
“Because of the people that are here. This is my social hour!”



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SENIOR HEALTH

## Oh my! Omega: The ying and yang balance

The Omega. No, we aren’t talking about the Greek letter; we are talking about a type of dietary fat. The omega fats are not only healthy sources of fat; they are necessary for normal physiological functioning. In other words, your body needs them to stay healthy.

Dietary fats, similar to carbohydrates, are often demonized as being “bad” for you. Like anything, balance is the key. While there are types of dietary fats we encourage people to limit or avoid (too much saturated fat and trans fats), the human body needs fat. Without a balanced intake, human health suffers. Dietary fat plays crucial roles in a healthy body; these roles include:

- providing energy
- manufacturing and balancing of hormones
- forming cell membranes
- Forming the brain and nervous system



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- transporting fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, & K)
- providing two essential fatty acids we cannot make ourselves — omega-6 and omega-3

Let’s focus on the last point — we need to obtain omegas through our daily diet. As dietary fat goes, the omega-6 (along with the monounsaturated fats like olive oil and avocados) are healthy types of fats. This means they improve overall health when consumed in the appropriate amounts and ratios.

When we look at the modern diet, we note an overconsumption of the omega-6s and an under-consumption of the omega-3s. Why is this important? The omega-6 fats (found in flaxseed, canola oil, soybean oil, safflower oil, green leaves, meat from corn-fed animals etc.) free certain signaling molecules that promote inflammation, pain, airway and blood vessel constriction and blood clotting. While these responses sound unpleasant (and they often are), we need these mechanisms to function properly.

In contrast, the omega-3 fats (found in egg yolks, cold-water fish, shellfish, etc.), have the opposite effect. These fats reduce blood clotting, pain, inflammation, dilation of blood vessels and airways. The omega-3s are also important for brain and eye development (especially during pregnancy), and reduce cholesterol. Some scientific research suggests a consumption of omega-3s may help preserve brain function; however, more research is needed to draw definite conclusions.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends eating fish (fatty fish like salmon, tuna, mackerel or herring) twice a week. The AHA further recommends consuming 12g/day for women and 17g/day for men of omega-6 fats. If your access to these fats are limited, supplements are often recommended; however, supplement sources should be monitored by a dietitian or physician. Think of the omegas as a “yin-yang” relationship. Both are critical to health, but we must balance the intake to optimize the benefits.

- It is recommended you talk to your health care provider before making drastic changes to your diet.

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SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- Cookie decorating and gift wrapping beginning at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 20, Dining Room, Sheridan Senior Center. No need to sign up in advance — just come!
- Bluegrass and \$2 Burgers Holiday Party, Tuesday, Dec. 20, 7-9 p.m. Open to the public. Just come!
- Open Mic on the Dining Room Stage, Senior Center, 211 Smith St. Advance sign-up required by calling Jane Perkins in advance at 672-2240. Each participant gets 5 minutes in the spotlight starting at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 21.
- New Year’s Eve EVE (...that’s right!) at noon, Friday Dec. 30, at the Sheridan Senior Center. Music, gaiety and BINGO! No need to sign up in advance.
- The Senior Center will be serving a Christmas roast beef lunch on Sunday, Dec. 25. Lunch hours are 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. The building will be open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. that day.

MAKING SPIRITS

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