

Appalachian Trail hiker teams up with Senior Center to lead hikes

BY LOIS BELL
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Steve Stresky has hiked the Weminuche Wilderness Area in southern Colorado, areas in the Wyoming Bighorns, the Sierra Madre Mountains and the northern Cascades in the state of Washington. He has climbed three volcanoes and skied Mount Hood, Mount Adams, Mount St. Helen and Mount Rainier. Last fall, Stresky completed hiking the 2,200 miles of the Appalachian Trail, a venture that took him 203 days.

This year, Stresky has teamed up with the Sheridan Senior Center to lead several hikes as part of the center's fun program. The invitation was by the Senior Center's "Director of Fun," Jane Perkins.

"We're always looking for new ways to do things," Perkins said.

Perkins knew of Stresky's venture along the Appalachian and asked him if he would be willing to lead hikes organized through the Senior Center. The center has offered day hikes for years.

"But we know of only some trails," Perkins said. "And Steve knows of more. He has such enthusiasm for the outdoors."

Perkins also approached the Wyoming Wilderness Association about the possibility of teaming up on some of their organization's hikes



COURTESY PHOTO

Sheridan resident and hiker Steve Stresky is volunteering to lead hikes through the Sheridan Senior Center's summer hiking program. In 2016, Stresky successfully completed hiking the Appalachian Trail.

that would be appealing to older hikers.

"They (WWA) know of more trails than we do plus they have trail guides who know the area. The hike becomes an educational experience, too," Perkins said. The match was made between the association, Stresky, and the Senior Center.

Stresky led a "First Day

of Spring" hike through the Senior Center's activities program on March 20.

"We had about five people on that hike," said Stresky, who is leading a second hike May 8 under the Senior Center's spring activities schedule.

The Senior Center's summer hiking program has six hikes arranged beginning June 6. Stresky will be the guide for five of the six hikes and the WWA has

teamed up on two of these hikes.

A hike into the Rock Creek area in August gives hikers the option to hike for a day or to stay overnight. This hike is being offered in partnership with Stresky and the WWA and will be led by Stresky and WWA member, Julie Greer.

The Senior Center's hikes are designed for a few hours and catered to older hikers. "Nothing too strenuous,"

Stresky said.

The second hike on June 30 is a hike into the Dry Creek Petrified Forest outside of Buffalo.

"This will be a really easy one," Stresky said.

The Dry Creek hike is appealing to individuals wanting to taste the hiking experience for the first time.

Stresky will also be teaming up with members from the WWA to lead an inter-generational hike to South

Piney Canyon in July. The hike will include local Girl Scouts and older hikers.

"Age is not a factor on the trail," Stresky said, referring to his experience on the Appalachian Trail. But his observation is not necessarily restricted to that ambitious hike.

Stresky observed that hikers on the Appalachian ranged in age from 20s to 70s.

"There was a woman I met in Tennessee who was 71 was hiking the entire (Appalachian) trail," said Stresky. "She started in Georgia like I did and she was a much stronger hiker than I am. I never saw her again."

Stresky estimated that the average age was 68 to 69 years old.

"The mental aspect is easier for older hikers but not so much for the younger hikers in their 20s. The older hiker has a more simpler goal in mind: they just want to see if they can do it," Stresky said.

Stresky is 61 and an embodiment for Older Americans Month's theme, "Age Out Loud!"

The Senior Center's summer hiking program offers opportunities for outdoor activities while a major section of the Senior Center is under construction this summer.

For individuals not inclined to hikes, the Senior Center also offers the loan of bicycles and a casual "inspired walker" or bicyclist group.

CENTER STAGE

Music therapy brings positive changes

Inevitably when asked what I do, that question is followed by a string of questions I never tire of answering. Sometimes the answer is simple and other times very detailed, always depending on how much a person wants to know. I am pleased to be given this opportunity again to share about the profession of music therapy — what's involved and who can benefit.

Music therapy is administered by a board-certified music therapist who has a degree in music therapy after having studied psychology, music and medicine from an approved school. It is recognized as a health care discipline and utilizes research to support its use of clinical and evidence-based music interventions to meet the needs of individuals. A music

therapist working with an individual or group will make assessments and then design a treatment plan to address the needs of the individual or group.

Music therapists work with all ages of people and someone receiving music therapy does not need a music background to benefit. Music therapy addresses intellectual disabilities,

behavioral and communication needs, social and spiritual needs, anxiety, coping, pain management, addiction and end-of-life care to mention a few.

Music therapist can be found working in medical settings, educational settings, private practices, children's centers and prisons. There are even corporate music therapists working in large business corporations to enhance relaxation and reduce anxiety for employees. The practice of music therapy is governed by the American Music Therapy Association and the Certification Board for Music Therapy. Both organizations outline scopes of practice and codes of conduct for music therapy regulations. The MT-BC (music therapist-board certified) credential is recognized nationally in all 50 states and currently there are 7,289 board certified music therapists in the United States. Wyoming has five board certified music therapists.

Music has been recognized as a need in the medical setting dating back to the early 1800s and began to grow as a health practice after World War II. Immediately after both WWI and WWII, it was noticed by doctors and nurses in Veteran Affairs hospitals across the United States that when musicians were brought in to play for patients, positive emotional and physical changes were occurring. This led for a push to have musicians in

the VA hospitals but it was discovered that musicians needed training and instruction in medicine and psychology as well. Thus, several pioneers led the way and music therapy schools began appearing around 1944.

There are no "typical" music therapy sessions as each group or individual brings uniqueness and the goals are individualized. The session might follow a structure with beginning, middle and ending or might follow a free form. The music therapist develops a strong rapport with clients as music can elicit strong emotional responses and connections. The therapist is trained to conduct the music therapy session in a safe and trusting atmosphere. The therapist will encourage active music making to address a variety of needs or may provide opportunities for receptive music listening to enhance relaxation and refocus attention from anxiety or pain.

For more information on music therapy, I encourage readers to visit the American Music Therapy Association's website at www.musictherapy.org or the Certification Board for Music Therapy at www.cbmt.org.

ANDY EDMUNDSON is a music therapist in the Sheridan area. 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.



ANDY EDMUNDSON

Sheridan Senior Center
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www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

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Entrée Choice*	or	Soup and Salad Kiosk
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Wed- Chicken Salad		Corned Beef Stew
Thu- Baked Potato Bar		Creamy Chicken Soup
Fri- Steak Teriyaki		Potato Soup
Sat- Barbecue Chicken Breast		No Kiosk on Saturday
Sun- Chicken Cordon Bleu		No Kiosk on Sunday
Mon- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce		Butternut Bisque

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Tue - Share your mom's photo and recipes	All week	Senior Center
Wed - "The History of the Sheridan Brewery and Prohibition in Sheridan"	10:30 a.m.	Dining Room
Thu - Wear A Hat in Honor of Mother!	All day	Senior Center
Fri - The Conversation Pit w/ Dr. Sy Thickman and friends	8:00 a.m.	Dining Room
Sat - Saturday Morning Breakfast	7:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Dining Room

Call for changes to activities due to construction at the Senior Center.

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
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SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- Are you new to the Sheridan community or just to the Sheridan Senior Center? Join Executive Director Carmen Rideout and Assistant Director Linda Gostas at a meet and greet "Senior Center 101" on Monday, May 15, from 1-2:30 p.m. at 211 Smith St. Stop by the receptionist desk for the room. No need to call ahead.

- Due to construction at the Sheridan Senior Center, the north doors will be locked at 2 p.m. Monday through Friday for construction in the dining room. Afternoon access Monday through Friday is through the double doors on the east side of the building. All doors to the Senior Center are locked at 1 p.m. on weekends and holidays as part of the center's usual hours.

- Mother's Day week at the Senior Center is May 8-12. Share your mother's photos and recipes! Call Jean Harm, fun department assistant, for specifics at 672-2240.

- Wear a hat in honor of your mom to the Senior Center on Thursday, May 11. Show off those chapeaus!

- Interested in traveling with the Sheridan Senior Center to see the beautiful fall colors of New England, Acadia National Park (the oldest national park east of

the Mississippi), Montreal, Quebec and much, much more? Call 672-2240 for details on total price and itinerary. The deadline for the \$750 deposit is May 15 with final payment by June 19. Trip cost includes round-trip airfare from Billings, hotels, ground transportation, a tour guide, three train rides and more.

- The registration deadline for an older adults trip to Glacier National Park has been extended to June 15. The trip is Sept. 9-13. We need 20 travelers to make this trip a go. The cost is \$1,776 per person, double occupancy. Call Pam Rodgers with questions at 672-2240 or call Peg Martin at 672-2481 to sign up.

- The DIY Card Workshop with Heidi Roesler has been rescheduled to Saturday, May 20. Time and location are unchanged: 12:30-3 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 100 W. Works St. Make beautiful handmade cards. All supplies provided or you may bring your own project to work on. Sign up by calling 672-2240. Space is limited. There is a suggested contribution of \$5 for those registered with the Senior Center and it is a \$7 fee for those not registered. Cash and checks to the Senior Center are accepted at the workshop.