

Seniors recall their stories to be put in new book

Nursing home residents now have their memoirs and poems published. The books are on sale and, at the Good Samaritan Village open house on Feb. 12, there will be a signing.

Starting in October 2008, on the third Wednesday of each month, residents of the Good Samaritan Village, St. Francis, gathered in their sun-filled great room for a writing workshop. Some moved down the hall in wheelchairs, others with the aid of walkers and one or two on the arms of friends to greet each other. Next, with the canaries and finches warbling in the background from a glass-enclosed cage, they spent an hour sharing memories and composing their own songs: poetry.

Then these writing sessions were interrupted by a fire in October 2010, causing all the residents to be relocated to other care facilities in neighboring towns. Now, a year later, the Village has nearly completed a rebuilding program, some of the people have returned and the writing has resumed.

These sessions, said Lucille Rossbach, one of the people organizing the writing workshop, opened with my asking individuals to briefly share memories on a certain topic. Sometimes I would share a memory of my own or read an inspirational poem or two.

Next, I passed out scratch paper and fat ballpoint pens and said with encouragement, "Now it's your turn to write." Minutes later, they were no longer just residents gathered around the table. They were writers, poets and memoirists.

Those helping residents in the writing workshop were volunteers from the Rough Writers, a community group of writers organized by Mrs. Rossbach about five years ago. The volunteers

helped scribe for those residents not physically able to write due to failing eyesight, trembling hands or painful joints.

"At times, we would solicit more specific details or prompt with questions such as 'What else do you remember about that?'" Mrs. Rossbach said. "Often we read what we have recorded and ask, 'Did I write that down correctly?' or 'What do you want to say next?' Even when they veer off the topic, we still record their words.

After about 40 minutes, Mrs. Rossbach would gather all the rough drafts and read them aloud, often to responses of approval, smiles of admiration, and even applause of delight. Later, she types the drafts into poetry-like formats, retaining original words and unique speech patterns, only correcting distracting errors and adding the date of the composition. She then slips them into a ring binder entitled *Poetry Book*. Available for residents, family members and visitors to read at leisure.

As a retired English teacher who leads poetry-writing workshops for schools and church camps, Mrs. Rossbach became interested in offering the workshops at the Village after reading *I Never Told Anybody: Teaching Poetry Writing to Old People* by Kenneth Koch.

As a result, the residents have now composed nearly 500 poems on various topics. Almost all made their way into a book produced by the Rough Writers entitled *Memories and Musings*. The printing was funded through a local grant and the sales used will be used as a fundraiser for the county historical society.

When called upon to record experiences, the "poets within" surface as the residents dug deeply into their memories, stretched

their imaginations, applied creative thinking and pulled words from the heart, Mrs. Rossbach said. None have ever written professionally, but now all have experienced the joy of having their words made public.

Obviously, she said, their minds, memories and social connections were stimulated through the monthly writing activities. During a December writing session, 90-year-old Irene Schiesler dictated:

I remember my Lord.
I can still recite my verses in German.

I was always the first to recite.
I was nine or 10 when I started.
I can still recite it.

Then, everyone sat in amazement as she proceeded to recite in German, without faltering even once, the many stanzas of her "verses," which she had recited for Christmas programs as a child.

"After a few moments of stunned silence, we broke into spontaneous applause," Mrs. Rossbach said.

The immediate effects of these writing workshops are apparent, she said, but more lasting effects also take hold. These writers came to realize the importance of their work: recorded their knowledge and stories for future generations.

"Often our society's elderly feel as though they have little to offer, that their life is over," she said, "but these individuals clearly grasp that their lives matter. They believe that younger generations really do want to hear their stories, their advice and their wisdom."

We all hunger to know our heritage, Mrs. Rossbach said, but we also strive to inspire the future. When we reach our final years, we want assurance that our lives had meaning, that we have not lived in vain.

"The beautiful stories recorded in *Memories & Musings* do that," she said, "They tell us who we are and where we come from, and they will continue to inspire and entertain us for generations."



GOOD SAMARITAN VILLAGE open house is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 12. Josh Moberly, left, is helping Jeff Paulsen, administrator, move some of the furniture into the new rooms.

Good Samaritan Village to hold open house Feb. 12

The Good Samaritan Society - St. Francis Village is urging the community to tour its completed building during an open house from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12.

The open house will include several guest speakers, a book signing for a published collection of St. Francis Village residents' reminiscences, tours of the new rooms and offices, as well as coffee and light refreshments.

St. Francis Village will add 13 rehabilitation and skilled care beds on Feb. 1. This will give the center a total of 35 beds.

A fire on Oct. 19, 2010, caused extensive damage to the St. Francis Village building and displaced 48 residents. Since then,

St. Francis Village has been in the process of rebuilding.

"After the fire, the St. Francis Village was not in a position to maintain residential services," said Jeffrey Paulsen, administrator at the Village. "But thanks in large part to community support,

we commemorate that St. Francis Village is alive and well. We look forward to continue to serve seniors and their families in the provision of long-term care services in Cheyenne County."

Seniors hold potluck at Senior Center

The Senior Center in Bird City had their monthly pot luck on the 23rd again with a great turnout! The food was great along with the socializing! Minutes were read and card games were played

after the supper. The Center has been getting stronger everyday! Come and join us and have a good time next month!!! Everyone has a great time.

McDonald News

Gilbert and Janice Antholz attended the Rawlins County - Cheylin basketball games in Atwood Tuesday night. They enjoyed watching Bianca and Porsha Binning perform with the Creative Movement group in between games. Gilbert and Janice also attended the Cheylin - Grinnell/Wheatland basketball games in McDonald Friday night.

Saturday evening Karlyne Atchison visited with Amelia Banister, George Vandegriffe, and Uncle Coy DeGood at the Good Samaritan Home in Atwood. Afterwards, Karlyne took Kathy Banister out for supper at Park Hill.

Eleanor Swihart attended the

Womens Retreat in McCook Friday and Saturday with Shirley Swihart. It was sponsored by the Evangelical Free Church.

Jim and Lois Morelock traveled to Salina last weekend and were guests of Wayne and Peggy Sager and family. They enjoyed watching Kyler play basketball.

Kenneth and Phyllis Wilkinson attended the Cheylin - Grinnell/Wheatland basketball games Friday night in McDonald.

Connie Sabatka, Tish Loker, Carrie Magnani and Marlene Johnson called on George Vandegriffe at the Good Samaritan Home in Atwood Saturday afternoon.

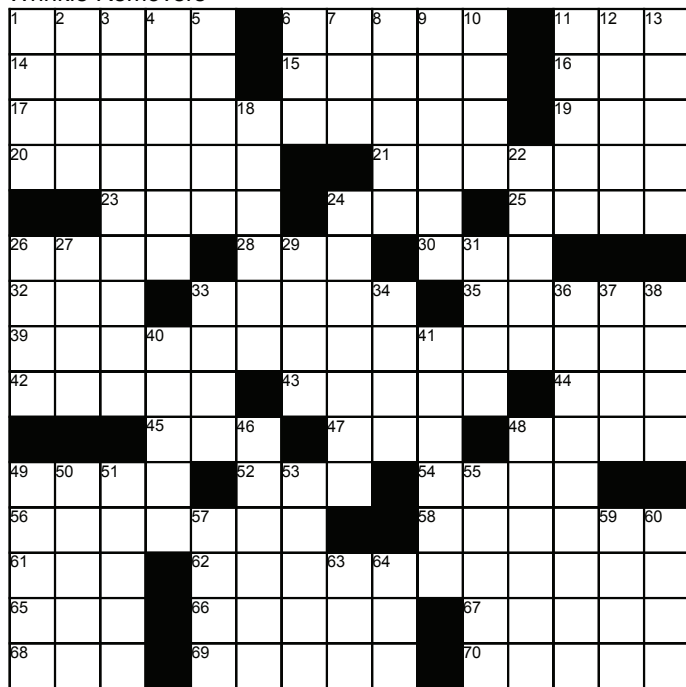
Honor Roll

New and renewed Times subscriptions: Terry Burr, Wichita; Ted Burr, Bird City; Bonnie Burr, Bird City; Donna Vanderput, Bird City; Dean Smith, Bird City; Gary Moore, Bird City; Donald Atkinson, Sewickley, Pa.; Michael Lusk, San Antonio, Texas; Richard Bursch, Bird City; Clint Bursch, Bird City; Royce Bursch, Campo, Colo.

ACROSS

1. J. Fred Muggs was one
6. Henry VIII's house
11. Sine __ non
14. Book after Daniel
15. In flames
16. City area, informally
17. Barrier whose name was popularized by Churchill
19. Self-image
20. Checker for poison, maybe
21. Vexed
23. Musical conclusion
24. Sought a seat
25. "If all __ fails ..."
26. Trucker with a handle
28. Dundee denial
30. "High __" (Anderson play)
32. Where to send IMs
33. Blair of "The Exorcist"
35. Watery porridge
39. Setting for a resignation announcement, maybe
42. Food of many shapes
43. Hall of Fame grid coach Greasy
44. Corleone's title
45. PIN requester
47. __-Magnon
48. Bit of progress
49. Abbr. on an envelope
52. Sitcom planet
54. Angling area
56. The USS Constitution, notably
58. Slip by
61. Won __ (Chinese dumpling)
62. Asphalt flattener
65. Genesis figure

Wrinkle Removers



American Profile Hometown Content

1/29/2012

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 66. Columnist Joseph or Stewart 67. Theater capacity 68. Hi-__ graphics 69. Cheats at Pin the Tail on the Donkey 70. Motel meeting, maybe | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Put down forcibly 12. Hankerings 13. Where you live 18. Pertaining to element 92 22. __ Haute, Indiana 24. Jeff Foxworthy's "You Might Be a __ If ..." 26. Dogpatch creator Al 27. When doubled, one of the Society Islands 29. Ever's partner 31. Folklore fiend 33. Future atty.'s exam 34. In the distance 36. Deal with subtly 37. MBA subj. 38. Shrove Tuesday follower 40. Bespectacled comedian Arnold | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 41. Justice of the peace's client 46. Pattern on a pinto bean 48. Holder of all the cards, temporarily 49. Intro to math? 50. Treasure cache 51. Dinner fork quartet 53. Ebbets Field shortstop 55. "The Love __" (Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes hit) 57. "Pronto!" to a CEO 59. Match divisions 60. Formerly, formerly 63. NASA go-ahead 64. AWOL chasers |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Brought to you by:

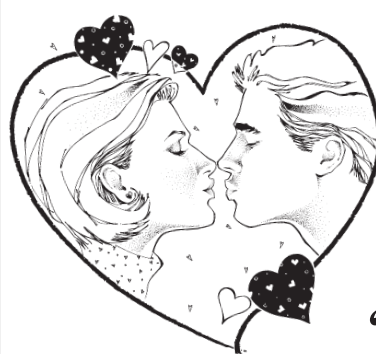
 **The Saint Francis Herald**

Coming Soon: WORKING WOMEN'S SECTION



Coming in February!

THIS SECTION IS PACKED WITH ADS FEATURING WOMEN.



Help us find Cheyenne County's "Sweetheart Couple"

WRESTLING AND BASKETBALL



For more details, contact

Tim Burr at the **Bird City Times**
785-332-3162



The Saint Francis Herald