

# Life in the fast lane, not so long ago

It is amazing to me how involved our lives are these days.

In my case, I have a young family, and with that come lots of hustle and bustle; but I have to wonder for all of us in the fast lane, was it really any different not so long ago?

I ponder this as the new development director at the Sheridan Senior Center, and it makes me think of my husband's grandmother, Ester West, who passed away this past November.

Ester (Grandma West as we all called her) had a rich history in Sheridan County. She was born in Sheridan and grew up near Piney Creek on the family place.

She met Grandpa (Ed) West on the George Williams Ranch on Beaver Creek, where she worked as a cook for six years before marrying Ed. Soon thereafter they began a life together selling milk, eggs and cream from six dairy cows and 100 laying hens.

The couple moved approximately three times in 17 years, each time adding more

cows and new technology such as a grain bin in 1946 or a milking machine in 1948. They too had a young family with son John; and Grandma West was the treasurer for Big Goose School District 32 and also the treasurer for Sheridan County Homemakers at various points.

As time sped past, West Dairy went from carrying buckets of milk that were poured into cans to pipelines of milk running to bigger holding tanks, and it became one of the highest producing dairies in the region.

It is kind of interesting ... somewhat contemplative to think that Grandma used to talk about how life these days is just too fast to be truly enjoyed, but from her vibrant stories of life not so long ago, she



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was racing strong right there in the fast lane ... among the technology of her day and the energy of work.

I have to think that maybe it isn't so much what we do, but that we do it, and how we make the most of it. Leann Womack states it best in her

country song, "I Hope You Dance."

I know that Grandma West was able to stay in her home, on the West place, through the kind and helpful In-Home Services of the Sheridan Senior Center and an exceptional caregiver from town. She spent her final days remembering her life in the fast lane.

Being able to stay on the family ranch and still be right among the history meant more to her than we will ever know, and

for this I am proud to be working for an organization that I know Grandma West valued so much, an organization that showed its value in every bit of care and concern.

The Sheridan Senior Center offers so many great recipes for elder care and opportunities for intergenerational activities. The value of those services and concepts is worth more than all riches. They are truly the secret to the circle of life.

Grandma West is tremendously missed, but she will always be remembered for her contributions to the community and to her family; and as the days zip by, full of boundless opportunities, let's remember life in the fast lane, not so long ago.

*Center Stage is written by friends of the Sheridan Senior Center for the Sheridan community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.*

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