

group joked that they should do a calendar as a goofy Christmas gift for their families.

“And then we just did it,” Bowes said.

“That Christmas each of their children received a calendar with pictures of their mother and her friends posing with strategically placed seasonal props representing each month. The next year they dressed as nuns with Groucho Marx glasses and mustaches and cigars.

“Those are really funny pictures because we can’t even tell who is who in them,” Cornette said. “The calendars were lots of fun. Our kids thought we were crazy.”

Recently the group decided to do something even better — something they’d been contemplating for 40 years.

“About 40 years ago recipes were mentioned and we talked about a cookbook,” Stephenson said. “Food is always a big part of our gatherings. We like to eat, talk, play cards and eat! We thought it would be nice to compile all our favorite recipes to pass down to our kids and grandkids.”

Gerstner was “volunteered” to collect the recipes and make it into a cookbook. Once that was completed the women found a publisher and self-published the books in time to send them to their children for Christmas.

“The recipes are some of our tried and true, some of them old traditions and others on their way to becoming traditions,” Gerstner writes in the book’s introduction.

The “Infamous Bridge Club: A Lifetime of Bridge and Recipes” is filled with hundreds of recipes, a few photos recycled from the

old calendars and an entry written by each of the women about the cookbook and the club.

“When the bridge club was formed, I was lucky enough to be invited to play bridge,” writes Wray. “This is more than just a group of bridge players ... these ladies are like sisters, each one nurturing my life in their own special way.”

“The Bridge Club has been an integral part of our lives for over 40 years,” Stevens writes. “... In good times and in bad times there was one constant — food. At this point in our lives, we truly understand that we must have food to nourish our bodies, but friends to nourish our souls.”

The women of the “Infamous Bridge Club” say keeping their group together over the years hasn’t been too hard. When the busy times in their personal and home lives came about they had to choose to make their friends a part of it all.

“We just made it a priority,” Cornette said. “We’re very, very fortunate to have a group of friends this close.”

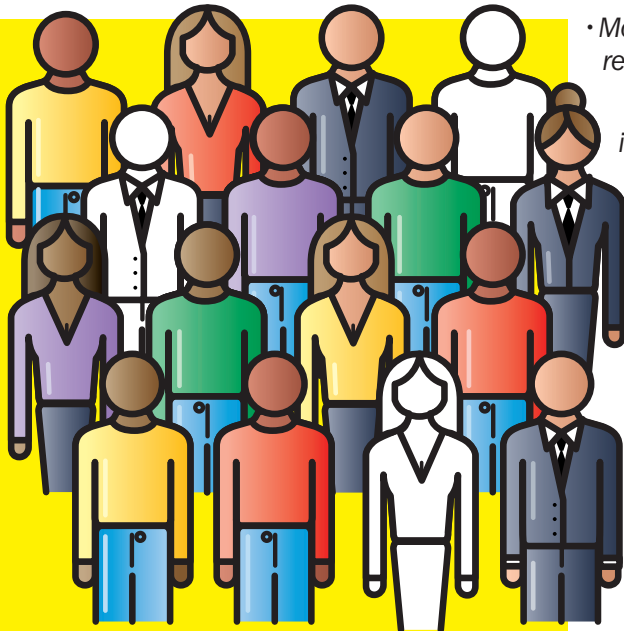
Stephenson said she has learned a lot from her friends.

“We share advice and stories and such and I’ve learned from the club that you have to ask for what you need and they’ll be there,” she said.

All the women agreed that sitting at home and knitting is not the way to stay young.

“You have to stay active and involved and have fun,” Bowes said. “We definitely have fun.”

■ Story and photos by Tera Schmidt



Last year, 150 South Dakotans lost their lives to colorectal cancer.*

*Source: Colorectal Cancer in South Dakota 2010, Project In Check, South Dakota Council on Colorectal Cancer.

- More than 92% of colorectal cancer cases in South Dakota occur in residents that are age 50 and over.*
- The risk of getting colorectal cancer increases with age and is greater in men than in women.*
- In South Dakota, an average of 165 people died annually from colorectal cancer spanning the years from 2003-2007.*
- In 2009, South Dakota expected 440 new cases of colorectal cancer and 150 deaths.*

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