



# Senior service



Gazette photo/JAMES WOODCOCK

Senior volunteers, from left, Mary Ellen Whittle, Leo Colstad and Arnold Reed will be honored with the Celebration of Life! Award tonight.

The public is invited to the ceremony to honor the three recipients of the Celebration of Life! Award which will take place at 7 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Home.

By **JENNIFER MCKEE**  
Of The Gazette Staff

Leo Colstad is off his rocker. So are Mary Ellen Whittle and Arnold Reed.

In fact, some wonder if these three retirement-age volunteers ever sat in rockers to begin with.

"There's always something to be done out there," Colstad says.

The three are the recipients of the Celebration of Life! Award, sponsored by St. John's Lutheran Ministries, and will be honored at a public concert and ceremony tonight at 7 p.m. The Billings Community Band will perform and the awards ceremony will be at the Town Square

at St. John's Lutheran Home.

To qualify, each had to be nominated. A committee — Dave Jorgensen; Billings Mayor Chuck Tooley; Mary Helgeson; Sue Hart; and St. John's executive director, Kent Burgess — picked the three winners.

Colstad, 85, of Hardin, spreads his volunteerism far and wide. He serves on the board of directors for the Big Horn County Historical Society and worked to restore many of the historic buildings like the old time school, blacksmith shop and post office, now at the museum complex. He even renovated a Model A Ford by himself for the place.

Colstad is also president of the

local Senior Citizen's organization and is a member of the Council on Aging. The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) picked him to help people starting or expanding their businesses.

"I just love doing what I do," Colstad said.

Whittle never had much of a chance to retire. After raising 10 kids with her husband, Jerry, in Billings, Whittle started the Billings Birthright group. She volunteers at her church and has been an election judge for years. Whittle also works with the Central-Terry Neighborhood Task Force.

"I didn't know I was going to be nominated, so it was a pleasant surprise," Whittle said.

Reed's wife, Valine, nominated him for the honor. Reed, according to her nomination letter, plays a hand in ten service organizations, from the Kiwanis Club to the Scottish Rite.

But volunteering didn't start when Reed retired.

"I used to volunteer for all the track meets," he said. "It's fun."