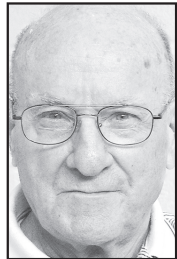


Some things just never change

Man of the Plains
Tom Dreiling



This 'Man of the Plains' can well remember when public swimming pools were more than just a place in which to swim.

In my days as a youngster, the public pool in our area of town was drained once a week, then thoroughly cleaned and refilled over the weekend for another week of fun and whatever else might take place.

"Whatever else might take place?" you might ask.

Well, yes, kids being kids they found it more convenient to answer mother nature's call in the pool rather than to get out and head for the small wooden huts near the pool. Those huts were designed to allow swimmers to change from street wear to swim wear and to use the bathrooms provided to rid themselves of water that badly needed to exit their bodies.

You get the picture.

Mondays through Wednesdays were the best days to swim because the refill was able to withstand, to some degree, the urge of the wild. But when you figure in Thursdays and Fridays - wow! - the water began to take on a real cloudy look, much like the clouds overhead preparing to drop rain.

You could always spot the kids in the midst of doing something in the pool they knew they shouldn't be doing. They would simply stand there quietly with hands on their hips and wearing a grin that in itself was like broadcasting the action taking place.

But we were fortunate to have that swim pool in our neighborhood.

On occasion, we would make use of the much larger municipal swimming pool in the southern part of the community. That was the crown jewel! Clear, crisp, running water, a slippery slide within the pool itself, and two levels of diving boards.

A fancy tan-colored stone building allowed you to change into your swimsuit in two large rooms equipped with stalls. Stalls? Boy, that was really uptown!

Additionally, the municipal pool had a snack area atop the building that sold potato chips, ice cream, candy, pop, etc. Sometimes they even had dances on Saturday nights.

We didn't use that pool much because there was a charge to get in. And money then, much like now, wasn't always available.

Fast forward! Today, many public swim pools are equipped with all sorts of attractions, designed to keep the swimmers entertained. They also attract many non-swimmers who just enjoy taking in the carnival atmosphere. I honestly have no idea what some of that stuff is for.

But despite the state-of-the-art design, these newer pools still have one thing in common with the swim pools I remember as a youngster. Yes, if you look around the pool, you will spot a child or two quietly standing there with hands on their hips and a grin on their face broadcasting the action taking place.

Some things never change!

Politically speaking...

Let's get our second little Straw Poll into the mix. Simply e-mail me who you think will get the Republican nomination at this point in the campaign. That's all there is to it. My address is <mailto:milehitom@hotmail.com>milehitom@hotmail.com.

Ahh, I see where Kansas increased its speed limits on the interstates from 70 miles per hour to 75. That's good news for east-bound Coloradans who now won't have to slow up when entering the Sunflower State and westbound Kansans won't have to speed up when moving onto Colorado's turf. (As if that ever took place.)

Snippets

"As for Hays' Kennedy Middle School, there are enough Catholic families to support a K through/junior high school. That would also tie-in well with TMP's recruiting program and give the community an option of Catholic education from k-12. ..."

"... Thanks for using yourself as an example for when it's time to get out from behind the wheel. ... We are facing that problem and will use your suggestions."

"We've tried everything with my husband's folks to give it up. They looked at us like we lost our minds. ... My husband told them if they don't quit driving, he will for fear he just might be a victim of their stubbornness. ..."

"Our 17 year old said he will drive his grandfather wherever he needs to go if he gives up driving. Grandpa reluctantly agreed under one condition: that they use his car. A small victory, I guess. ..."

Snippets to <mailto:milehitom@hotmail.com>milehitom@hotmail.com.
Have a great day!

Your comments on anything that appears in your favorite newspaper coming from my computer, are always appreciated, regardless of the tone. Simply email me at <mailto:milehitom@hotmail.com>milehitom@hotmail.com



Fund raising to preserve history and business

A friend asked me to help raise money for our community store. She had a lot of great ideas. So even though I make it a point not to get involved, I said yes.

It hasn't been so bad. I haven't had to go to a meeting yet! We've had fun planting pinwheels around town. You pay to plant them in someone's yard. They pay to have them removed, and hopefully more to find out who was responsible. You can buy insurance to make certain they do not come back to your yard, pay to plant them elsewhere and so on!

We have some other things in the works. We need a lot of money to replace coolers and freezer units.

My friend is also on the county travel and tourism committee. She likes to go to meetings!

There is a fundraising effort going on to raise money for the restoration of the "Home on the Range" cabin. That's a cool undertaking, especially as it coincides with the sesquicentennial of the Kansas.

Besides preserving history we hope this will somehow lead to a resurgence of interest in the area and maybe more people will come into Kensington and buy groceries. It may sound farfetched but you can't buy any in Athol (the closest town to the cabin).

This Too Shall Pass

Nancy Hagman



The Geographical Center of the Continental US is also in the county. It's near Lebanon. I can't see that tourism has helped Lebanon, though it appears to be a lovely community. They still do a newspaper which comes to us as a section of the county paper. It's the most interesting part of the paper, I always read it.

While back we were in a restaurant in Smith Center and some people were asking the waitress about the Geographical Center. The waitress gave them a blank look. The hubby commented later "she must not be local."

Yeah, dear, how many times have you been over there? One less time than I have; which is exactly once. I liked it; I'd go back if he took me.

Anyway I gave those total strangers a pep talk. They were young guys. Their pickup was for a construction company and had Missouri plates. I got them suitably amped up because the one turned to his buddy and said, "We are totally

going there."

If you think about it very long it gets depressing. I've never been to the "Home on the Range" cabin. So why am I advocating fixing it up?

People say, "You never appreciate the things in your own backyard. My cousin in New York has never been to the Statue of Liberty." I know that's true but when we are so small we must remain loyal our own things. If we won't even go see it how can we make a case it is worthy of anyone else's attention?

Daughter Kate is here helping with harvest. She traveled to Manhattan one day to see a friend, Kelly, who was back visiting from Florida. Kelly has two little girls. The four year old was very interested in the farm especially after hearing about the kittens and the bucket calf.

Kelly said she really ought to bring the girls out so they could see the combines, etc. "They are such Florida girls, they complain it is cold in Kansas!" (Must be hot in Florida!)

So, Kate came home with the idea we need to start a "dude" farm. People would pay to see harvest in action!

Somehow I doubt it works out any better than the existing tourist attractions but I might help out if it doesn't require going to a meeting!

Even as adults, we don't always have all the answers

Today is a day the Lord has made, rejoice and be glad in it. Some days the gladness is actually more like hysteria. You know those days, the ones when, if you believe in God, you think, He hates me. But then again if you believe in God, you know that isn't true either. And so begins another day.

I am at times the forever optimist; always sure everything will be fine or maybe better interpreted as everything will go my way. Sometimes, though, my way isn't God's way. I struggle trying to find my footing as an adult. Okay, I know I am almost 65, but there is nothing in the Book of Life as to when you cease to be a child and begin to be an adult or if there is I haven't reached that chapter yet.

When I was a child I thought adulthood held this mystique, creating an allusion that the world was a perfect

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



place and as an adult you would have all the answers...then I became an adult. In my early adulthood I hit a point where I thought, ah yes, now I have all the answers...then I had children. Suffice it to say, once I had children I knew I would never, ever have the answers, but knew when they were raised I would no longer feel any responsibility which translates to no worries. Then my children married. Those of you who are parents-in-law

need no explanation of this stage.

And now at nearly 65, I have made the remarkable observation I will never know it all. I have always told my kids that God tells me what they need to do until they are 18, then He starts speaking directly to them, except sometimes He still wants me to interpret. I have five children, four in-laws and 11 grandchildren and you know what I have finally figured out...it doesn't really matter what I think or even what I think God's interpretation is. It is their life, their joys, their disappointments and dilemmas and, yes, their challenges and opportunities. It isn't a lack of interest in their lives but rather an absence of responsibility for their answers. God has graced me with a life beyond that time. Too bad I am such a slow learner. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

THUMBS UP! Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up: e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 785-877-3361

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THUMBS UP! Thumbs up to the staff of the Prairie Dog State Park. The park looked beautiful for the July 4 holiday weekend. Called in.
Thumbs up to those who set off the Norton fireworks at the Prairie Dog State Park. It was another spectacular display. And to all of those who donated so that we could view such a wonderful display. Called in.

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