

OPINION



PILOT EDITORIAL

Fair association members make fun, memories, laurels possible

Jackson County Fair Association President Rob Withers doesn't mince words.

Just ask him how much his fellow fair board members contribute to the success of the annual county get-together.

"Basically, if we didn't have them," Withers said of the fair board members, "there wouldn't be a fair."

There it is. All the fun we have, all the memories we make and all the laurels we receive at the Jackson County Fair each year are because of this group of people — our friends and neighbors — who dedicate countless hours of their time to making the fair what it is.

"All the board members do a lot of work and take time away from family and friends to put the fair on," Withers said. "It's not an easy task, but we all do it because we love the fair."

To the officers and members of our local fair association — Rob Withers, president; Jason Diemer, vice president; Melanie Post, secretary; Terri Bargfrede, treasurer; and directors John Chonko, Adam Christoffers, Scott Christopher, Jeff Fiala, Kim Hohenstein, Tom Holthe, Cole Lusk, Dave Maschoff, Becky Nestegard, Mike Stade and county commission liaison Phil Nasby: Thank you.

We love the county fair. But we're all so grateful you love it even more.

Contemplating life without work

I once thought the idea of retiring would be a good one. But the more I thought about it, the more it lost its appeal.

I enjoy the work I do and, even more so, the people with whom I work.

Just like most everyone who works, I get tired — not of the work so much as just finding life tiring, as I live without a hobby, although I enjoy kayaking and biking even more. I still fish some, but less often, and I like to hike.

What brought me to sharing my thoughts of a retired life was a business card I found in the process of cleaning out my home office. It is

a card I received from Galen Hoy.

Unfortunately, I don't remember Galen, but his business card is unforgettable.

On the front of the card is a figure of a fellow leaning against a cactus with a large sombrero covering his face as if he is sleeping. He has no shoes or socks on his feet and he appears to be wrapped in a blanket with arms folded.

Around the four corners on the front of the card are these words: "No Money, No Business, No Phone, No Address," and in the middle of the card next to the sleeping figure

are Galen Hoy's name and the word, "Retired."

On the back side of his business card are these words:

"Now that I've retired from Life's Competition I find each day an exact repetition;

I get up each morning and dust off my wits, Pick up the paper and read the obits.

If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead. So I eat a big breakfast and go back to bed."

Amusing as that may seem, it is a picture of retirement that keeps me happily working and also keeps me from becoming retired, thankfully.

I realize I need something to keep my "wit" busy and my body moving. Until I find a hobby that can do that for me while keeping me actively in contact with interesting people, I work.



OUT AND ABOUT
Mike Jordan

Recalling the day when there really was a man on the moon

It seems every generation has an event or two that helps define it — events you remember where you were and what you were doing as they transpired. During my lifetime, there have been three such events.

I am not talking about events like my birth, my wedding and the birth of my children. While those were significant events — to me, anyway — they were only my own personal events.

I do not remember too much about my birth — I was too busy working myself out of a jam to worry about specifics — but I am pretty sure I was born at the Meeker County Hospital. That is what my birth certificate says anyway.

I do not even remember being transferred to Abbot Northwestern in the Cities for tests and then surgery (pyloric stenosis). I was too busy trying to survive. But I do remember very clearly our wedding and the birth of our children.

A more vivid memory is when I asked Kathy if she would like to become Mrs. Stephen A. Condon and she said, "Yes!" I am sure it was with some reluctance and trepidation; luckily for me, she was getting down to extinction levels of available grooms from which she could choose. While they were big

events for me, they pale in comparison to the significance of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Neil Armstrong walking on the moon and the terroristic acts of Sept. 11, 2001.

I realize the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, along with the Vietnam War, were major events as well, but the war lasted a long time — way too long — and the two assassinations did not hold the nation's attention as long as the other three.

Honestly, as I was only 4 years old, I do not remember where I was when I heard about the assassination of JFK, but I do remember the funeral procession and the somber, crestfallen mood of Americans.

As for 9/11, I remember stepping out into the hallway between classes and Julie Place telling me what had just transpired. Even though it was almost 18 years ago, I still cannot wrap my head around the "why" and "how could you do that" surrounding that terroristic act.

I remember the excitement as I was glued to our black-and-white TV watching the lunar events unfold 50 years ago this week. Luckily it was summer, so we could stay up to watch Armstrong take the first step onto the moon shortly before

10 p.m.

For us, it was 9:57 p.m. July 19, but in Universal Time it was 2:57 a.m. July 20, 1969, when he stepped onto the moon saying one of the world's most famous quotes: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Even though I have a fear of height and it is hard for me to fully relax on a plane, if NASA could guarantee safe passage there and back, I would go to the moon. Mars even.

But, as they cannot make the guarantee, I will stick to traveling here on Earth, visiting places I have never seen before. And some I have.

I do not mind revisiting places. There are very few places I have been to that I have no desire to return. In fact, off the top of my head, I cannot think of any.

But then, there is never too much on top of my head. Not now anyway. Some thinning hair maybe. A few stragglers holding on fighting extinction. Just not like it used to be.

I definitely plan to travel to the fairgrounds next week for the 151st Jackson County Fair.

I enjoy going to the fair. I could go every day, looking at the same exhibits, drinking the same flavored malt... Even though the

museum exhibits are the same year in and year out, I always enjoy seeing them. When I take the daycare kids to the fair, we make sure we go through the museum buildings, ending at the "store" for some stick candy.

I like to check out the 4-H projects, both livestock and non. A tour of the animal barns is a must on every visit, especially the dairy barn. I even have fun donating money in the bingo stand. Those of us who cannot win for being losers have to be satisfied donating.

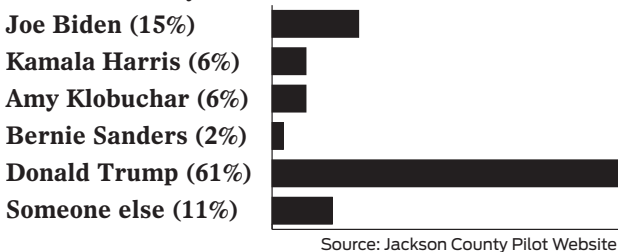
Now it is your turn to be a winner as you have come to the end of this week's Wide Write. Until next week, while enjoying the fair, take the time to look at the moon and reminisce about the time there really was a man on the moon. I know that is what I will be doing starting Friday around 10 p.m. Go, America!



WIDE WRITE
Stephen A. Condon

LAST WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: If the election for president were today, for whom would you vote?



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK'S ONLINE POLL

Q: What's your favorite county fair food?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

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