

Our City

Some have it and many don't. Spring break started a week ago today; it's Saturday night. Measuring the extra efforts of students may not necessarily seem fair, but then much of life doesn't seem fair at times. Last Saturday was the Beef Spring weigh-in and showmanship event. Among the FFA ranks steers weighed in from Aberdeen, Rockland and American Falls. In the estimation of those of us who weighed in the animals it looks like the quality across the board is up, a lot. However, in the showmanship event only one member really stepped up and actually fit his animal and was an easy winner for the judge to select. Great job, Jordon Kress of the American Falls FFA Chapter. Keep up the outstanding effort. Monday and Tuesday found me back at the Ag Building working with students doing the extra to get ready for the State FFA Leadership events next week. I teach and preach the five P's (Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance) and it actually sinks into many and has manifested itself into success for some over the years. Time will tell with this group.

Not for the lack of trying and effort, Scott Ploussard is doing his best to get the café open. Seth Lusk did his part, Scott passed the fresh food health inspection; but the internet connection created havoc with his point of sales equipment as he tried to open quietly late last week. Things should be resolved by the time you read this and he should be open at 6:00 for breakfast through 2:00 pm for lunch Tuesday through Thursday. Fridays will see him open from 6:00 am. through 9:00 pm. with Friday Night Steak Night. Saturdays and Sundays his hours will be again 6:00 to 2:00 with a wonderful Sunday Brunch. These hours will continue through May 15. On May 16th he will be open seven days a week from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Tamby and Anthony Tilley continue to make cosmetic improvements to Willow Bay Campground and are in the process of getting their online reservations and credit card payment system set up online. Holidays are being booked; as are family reunions. With what looks to be at least an average water year ahead of us it may well be time to give Willow Bay a visit if it fits into your schedule. I have high hopes that the campground and café will surpass your expectations.

Your City crews continue to work collaboratively as they clean our streets, parks, parking strips, alleys and sewers. Thanks for the great work across and throughout all the departments within our City ranks. To clear up a possible misconception our Building Administrator and Planning and Zoning Superintendent Jeff Nelson is currently working 10 hours a week for the County with Bob Steinlicht. Please do not assume that you can take care of City building permits at the County Courthouse because of the collaborative efforts between Jeff and Bob. All City permits must be acquired and paid for at City Hall; just as all County permits must be obtained at the Courthouse. Nothing has changed in regards to how either is secured.

Last Tuesday evening found Sally and I headed south to Phoenix, Arizona to see our daughter Suzanne and her husband Kelton Landvatter. It was a pleasant drive through country I had only ever read about. Much of it was quite beautiful in a different than Idaho sort of way. I am not much of a big city type and the Phoenix area is nothing but big. Granted I didn't see much of the metropolis but what I did see was well cared for and amazingly clean. Kelton is a construction manager of sorts and he tells me many of their multiple construction sites are in lower income areas and those areas come with the problems often associated with less economic opportunity. As Mayor I found it interesting that the more affluent areas were immaculate but that those areas that were economically depressed were seeing investments by

both private and public interests. I know I only saw a microcosm of the area but what I did see inspired me to believe what more might be possible in American Falls.

I told Suzanne before leaving for Phoenix that I wanted to do some hiking and see some things I normally wouldn't. Well she is a planner and filled three days with a really cool itinerary. Thursday was my birthday and for someone 56 years old, you may not think that a day at the zoo and botanical gardens would amount to much; to be honest I was skeptical. But, once I got over the hordes of humanity, it was really way cool. The zoo was neat in that I saw some species I never would have seen otherwise, but the true gem of the day was the botanical garden and the light show that accompanied our second stroll through it after the sun went down. I was amazed at the diversity of species at both the zoo and gardens. While I very much love my niche and home in American Falls sometimes a change of perspective is good in an eye opening kind of way. My experience at the zoo and gardens was much like my experience of the Phoenix area as a whole; eye opening and enlightening. I didn't start the day thinking I would walk very far but nine miles later I thought differently.

Friday found us in the mountains north of Phoenix covering almost seven miles of high desert trail. Thanks to our visit to the zoo and botanical gardens I was able to identify many of the plants and animals that we saw along the trek. I don't know if that was superior planning on Suzanne's part or coincidence; either way it worked out well.

Today was something else entirely. Nine o'clock found us at the Siphon Draw and Flatiron trailhead in the Lost Dutchman State Park. Suffice it to say for a hike of just over six miles it may well have been one of the most difficult ones I have done. That Sally, Suzanne and Kelton all did it too speaks well to their level of fitness and mental toughness. I won't elaborate on all the details as they can be easily found. What I will say is that in this life I have found that things that test us mentally and physically leave us better. Both the mental and physical open doors to other possibilities not unlike getting out of one's niche and home and seeing things and gaining new perspectives.

Too often I have limited myself by my choices; my inflexibility or inability to see other perspectives. It's easy to get in a rut and stay with what works. Until that is it doesn't work anymore and you have no other life experiences to draw on for perspective and choices. In the end we are a collection of our life experiences; and the decisions we make often reflect those experiences or lack thereof. As I try to steer my students and our community to some degree to new experiences and to try different things I am thankful that there are those around me that remind me from time to time to do the same.

I don't know if the hike to Flatiron in the Superstition Mountain Range profoundly changed anything about me just like I don't know if doing the extra will pay off for my FFA members in the weeks and months to come. But, what I can say is the outcome for my students will be profoundly different than if they had chosen not to do the extra. There are not many instances in life where the five P's don't make a difference. Yet, on the other hand life can change at a whim, often with little rhyme or reason. There is little if anything that can be done to change that except to adapt.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Terri Miller, our Deputy Clerk, and her family as her father struggles to hang on to life.

Until next week...