

‘Small world’ discoveries can be fascinating . . .

We were working with a consultant from Lincoln who had come to help us set a direction for our community foundation and evaluate what goals we want to work toward for the future of the community.

It’s amazing what kind of brainstorming is created when you focus on success stories from the past, then dream and realize that maybe those dreams can become reality. Setting a positive direction, believing in it and working toward a common goal are key.

Marcia, the consultant, stressed this point when she mentioned that John F. Kennedy stated in 1961 that man would walk on the moon. She said that Kennedy died in 1963 and did anyone know what year man set foot on the moon? Her point was that even though he was gone, the vision still became reality.

I remembered. 1969.

I didn’t say out loud how I remembered, but I was 10 years old at Girl Scout Cedar Point Camp near Ogallala and we watched it on a little T.V.

Imagine my surprise when Marcia confirmed that it was 1969. She shared that she was at Girl Scout Cedar Point Camp.

“So was I,” I exclaimed. What a small world. We had no recollection that we had spent a historic moment together nearly 40 years earlier. I love “small world” stories and you run into them everywhere.

A week later, I was at a dinner in Lincoln following an all-day meeting. It came up that my husband and I will celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary this year. Les from across the table asked what month.

Turns out that he and his wife were married the day before us. Whoa. We were honeymooning at the same time and were shocked to go on to learn that we were all in Kansas City. Who knows? Maybe we saw each other. Yes, it’s a small world.

Many people have heard my favorite small world story more than once but when that’s the subject, I can’t pass up telling it again.

My brother was riding the chair lift at a ski resort years ago with a man with an accent. Conversation found my brother learning that he was from Australia. My brother mentioned that he has an uncle that moved there to develop irrigation and ended up marrying an Ausie and staying to raise a family.

Lo and behold, this guy asked if my brother’s uncle was Bob Christensen. He worked with him. Now what are the chances? These were men from different countries who by chance ended up at the same ski resort on the same day, ended up on the same chair, and ended up small talking to discover they had a like acquaintance. Wow.

But the story doesn’t end there. I lived in Wauneta at the time and wrote a column about this “small world” discovery. After the paper was out, my neighbor came over to tell me that she had dated my uncle in high school. I had no idea that she had lived in the same area as my mom’s family in Colorado.

We communicate to children “Don’t talk to strangers,” but I do it all the time and it sure can be interesting what you find out.

My folks had been on a cruise in years back and one of the day stops was in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. When they returned, my Dad called his brother for one of those occasional check ins to learn that they had just returned from a vacation also, ironically to Puerto Vallarta. My aunt and uncle had actually watched a cruise ship come in and saw the cruisers getting off the ship from a distance. She had even commented that one of the men walked just like my dad. Little did she

Another Perspective

Written by Lori Pankonin

know at the time that it really was him.

They could have had lunch together in another country but didn't make that "small world" connection.

What's your story? It seems like practically everyone has one. Often times it just takes a little chit chat with strangers to discover it.