



..... STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

Duane A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator, Webster County

July 24, 2016 Edition

Well if any of you were wondering I have literally been out of the country for the last 10 days. I didn't really plan it that way, but things have a way of happening that way with me. This fair was to be special to me as it was to be my 44th Webster County Fair as a volunteer, FFA Advisor, and now the last 16 years as an Extension Educator, and head of the 4-H program and most likely my last county fair in an official capacity. I wanted to go out with a bang, and boy did I ever do that! Actually it was more of a thud. I have always been a little accident prone and those that have been at the fairgrounds with me each year will remember some of my "shocking" experiences, falls off ladders, tearing my rotator cuff and bicep tendon, my arm catching a wire, stepping on nail sticking out of a board, dropping panels on toes – well you get the idea.

Throw in the bad hip four years ago when I took a rather nasty fall and ended up fracturing my arm and bruising my hip – which by the way was not at the fair but actually going out of my own home on the back porch just one week before the start of that fair. But of course, I at that time then decided it was only a bruise, so "I can go at least go watch the horse show!" Which I did, but in doing so slipped on some fresh road apples and then cracked that already weak hip. So I missed the 2012 Webster County Fair. Fast forward 4 years and remember the fact that my hip probably hadn't completely healed from the incident four years earlier. (It takes about 5 years to do so.) So what do I do? I basically do the same thing. No I didn't fall off a ladder or a fence; I didn't get electrocuted; I didn't drop a panel, or pull my shoulder out of joint; I simply slipped on some wet grass (which we seldom have in Webster County) as I was taking a shortcut to go find our Fair Board President to have him unlock the open class building and landed on that same hip. But this time I really did it. I drove the hip ball joint through the pelvis – basically shattering that hip. It was so bad that Mary Lanning did not want to handle it and forwarded me to Lincoln Bryan West where they also decided that surgery could not be performed and nature would have to do what it could. And that brings me to where I am and will be for a while longer. I made the big leagues... I am at the Southlake Village Rehabilitation & Care Center in SE Lincoln, doing some therapy, mostly laying around and letting nature take its course.

Yes, I am a bit like a caged cat. I am not the type that likes to lay around and do nothing... Which is pretty much what I have to do. It was awful to sit in a hospital with pain you cannot describe and then find out you are being sent to a swing bed unit for an undetermined time. You find yourself in a little room alone. In that situation your mind can be your enemy or be your friend. One's mind runs to many things, many "whys", "what-ifs" and even a bit of depression. My mind kept going back to the fair which is where I was supposed to be. I imagined what each of those sheep, goats and beef that we weighed in so long ago looked like to the judge. I could about see the people hanging on the panels urging their kids or grandkids; and the happy looks on the faces of those young people who were rewarded prizes for the top animals in their division or class.

I know I missed something we work hard for each year. What I missed most is the kids. Each year I can't wait to see them prepare and show their animals, watch them run, yes, I said run – from one building to another or perhaps to the 4-H Food Stand, or maybe to help chase a wayward lamb or calf that slipped its halter. I missed the parade of animals in front of the judge. I missed the daily walk through the 4-H and FFA exhibit hall to the smell of fresh baked goods and the beauty of photography, horticultural items, unique wood or metal projects, sewed goods, etc. It really doesn't get any better than this for people like me. Strangely those inflictions I spoke of miraculously seem to go away when my mind takes me there.

I have found that even this klutzy move, or unfortunate landing, has actually turned out to make this fair even more special, because of all the great support that has come from parents and volunteers across our area, 4-H leaders, Junior Leaders, FFA Advisors and many people in the county who have called, and have stepped up to take the pressure off my staff. It speaks volumes about what makes up a county and a bunch of small communities uniting for a purpose that many just cannot understand - if you haven't lived it. From all reports, I think those that stepped up in my absence did a great job and the fair went rather smoothly. From what I have ascertained we even had some decent weather (wouldn't you know it?), and even some much needed rain. It goes to show that perhaps I have been the jinx and should have hung it up years ago.

Seriously, I do want to take this opportunity to thank all of those that did step up and all the exhibitors/parents for understanding why things were a little different this year. I want to give special credit to Carol Kumke, Liz Kierl and Christa Alber for doing yeoman's work in taking care of all the little things I usually do. I know they worked their tails off, and I hope our exhibitors, parents, families and other attendees realized the monumental task that they undertook. Thank you to each of you. You don't know how much I appreciate my staff and all of you that stepped forward to help them. This fair is more than one person or one office. It is a whole county pulling and working together to provide entertainment and most importantly opportunities to those future leaders in our county. We should never lose sight of the fact that "It's about kids!"

One thing is for certain in our county. People care about people, and they show that attribute in so many ways. I have always been proud of this county, and that is one of the reasons why. That being said, I want to thank everyone for the kindness you bestowed on me with Facebook comments, emails and personal visits, phone calls, cards, letters, candy and other treats, coloring books, puzzle books and even books to read. It really does make the time go faster and the boredom and pain much more bearable! All I can say is a big, heartfelt - Thank You!

The preceding information comes from the research and personal observations of the writer, which may or may not reflect the views of UNL or Nebraska Extension. For more further information on these or other topics contact D. A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator for Webster County in Red Cloud, (402) 746-3417 or email: dlienemann2@unl.edu or on the web at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/webster>