

Walt was right.



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Mr. Disney that is, and thanks to Robert B. and Robert M. Sherman who wrote the song, anyone who has been to a Disney property knows that it is a “Small World After All.”

We’ve all experienced it at some part in our lives: the person we pass by on the sidewalk who looks familiar and two seconds later you both realize you’ve met before; a colleague that you haven’t seen for years and suddenly you see them at a conference; or you meet someone who knows someone from your hometown. Wyoming is said to be one big city of 500,000+ people with really long streets... and it’s true.

My personal favorite “small-world story” happened while my wife and I were on our honeymoon in Italy. We were in Florence and we were walking around the main downtown area when we entered a wine store. The proprietor asked if he could help us with anything and, after hearing our state-side accents, asked us where we were from. After foolishly answering “the United States” he said “yes but which state?” We said “Wyoming.” His response was, “Oh my wife used to work at a dude ranch in Encampment, Wyo.” Really? Sure, we didn’t know any of the same people but still, Encampment? There was an instant connection, and over the years we’ve had some friends who have traveled to Florence and visited the same wine shop and talked with the same people – all because of the Wyoming connection.

My other favorite “small-world stories” have come from people who remember when the lights came on at their ranch or farm

house...or cabins. I may not have known the people who helped make rural electricity a reality for them, but the fact that I work for those cooperatives (and people) that made it happen gives us the same sense of “community” that anyone from Wyoming feels when they meet someone else with a tie to the Cowboy State.

My most recent experience came during a legislative reception prior to the beginning of the 61st Legislature (actually at the bar after the reception). My wife and I were visiting with some county commissioners, and I met Leo Chapman from Carbon County. Shortly after meeting Mr. Chapman, we both realized that I grew up with his son Erick in Rawlins! After catching up with him about his son and other kids that I knew, we talked about their cabin in the Snowies. We discussed the fact that not only had I been to their cabin back in the day, but we also talked about his dad building the cabin and getting electricity from their local co-op. We also commiserated about the decimation that bark beetles have had on that area and the great work Carbon Power & Light has been doing up there. To draw our pasts even closer, he said that he was a newly elected county commissioner and that his assigned mentor was the former manager of a Wyoming cooperative!

I guess my point in this column is that we should always apply the Golden Rule – “Treat others as you would want to be treated” – because as I stated earlier, Walt was right: it’s a small world after all.