

from our viewpoint...

Hustle, bustle of fair bring us together

This is the high point of the summer for many, with the hustle and bustle of the county fairs.

There are several this week, with the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair in Sherman County sort of in the center. There also are fairs in Oberlin, St. Francis and Burlington this week.

County fair time is when everyone gets to look at what has been going on with their neighbors for the past year and a time to enjoy the summer before the school bell rings.

While the weather has been hot and dry in the past month, the abundant moisture earlier in the spring should mean some good garden vegetables and flowers to be judged along with the canned fruits and vegetables.

The fair is a wonderful time for the young, with the kids washing and grooming their animals to be shown and judged, and the fun of the evening shows and carnival.

Tonight is the Howdy Rowdy Rodeo, one of the fun evenings at the Sherman County fair. It is fun to watch the youngsters try their hand at these events. And Wednesday is fun with the ranch rodeo, especially the cow-milking contest.

One of the funniest events of the week is the Catch a Pig contest which will be part of Family Fun Night on Thursday, and for those who enjoy smash-it-up action, there is the Demolition Derby on Friday.

The week ends with the tractor pull on Saturday and everyone then returns to their normal routine and prepares for the beginning of school two weeks later.

Our hats are off to all those who help organize and put on the many events of the fair which make it a great success year after year.

That includes the fair board members, who spend the whole year thinking and planning ways to improve the show. Sherman County has been blessed with a good group of people who handle the home-owned carnival, which adds enjoyment to the fair and helps charitable groups in the community.

The Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis clubs and other groups add their help in manning the fair rides, operating food booths and sponsoring events as part of the week's fun.

The highlight of the 4-H side of the fair is the animal sale on Friday, where kids' hard work over the past year is turned into cash to be invested in their future, and probably a new round of animals to care for and groom for the next year.

The fair can be counted on to have something for everybody. This is a time to enjoy and rejoice in the good times. See you there!

— Tom Betz

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Big steam train engine a joy for rail fans

She was right, of course. It's pretty stupid to be driving home at 2 a.m. at our age. We're not kids anymore.

But it had been a pretty good day, if you don't count getting drenched by one of those thunderstorms that sweep down out of the Colorado foothills on a summer afternoon.

We were in North Platte, Neb., on Saturday, meeting and greeting at a press convention, then drove to Denver to ride the steam train.

You can ride behind steam locomotives most any day of the summer or fall in Colorado, little ones. But there are only a couple of days when the big engine comes out.

A few major American railroads have revived big steam engines since the diesels took over in the 1950s, but the Union Pacific never quit running them. It keeps two big, modern engines in service out of Cheyenne. Both have logged more time in excursion service than they spent hauling freight and passengers for pay.

The Union Pacific has kept the tradition of steam power alive, though with the latest recession, the trips have become fewer and fewer. No one knows when the accountants at the railroad's Omaha headquarters might prompt management to call it quits.

But Sunday, the big engine was out and ready to run. The Challenger is the largest surviving operable steam locomotive in the world, 122 feet long and weighing just over a million



steve
haynes

• along the sappa

pounds.

Built during World War II to haul freight and troops across the continent, it sat in storage and on display in a park in Cheyenne for near 20 years. Then volunteer railroad employees rebuilt it for excursion duty, joining fast passenger engine 844.

The 844, unique among big mainline engines, has never been retired. When the railroad called it quits for regular steam operations, it just kept one engine hauling excursions.

But this summer, and the last couple of seasons, the 844 has been under repair, a complete rebuilding, and the larger, more impressive Challenger has handled the few trips the company budget will allow.

Saturday, the engine handled a round trip from Denver to Cheyenne for the annual charity excursion sponsored by *The Denver Post*. The trip got behind a freight train which was stuck after breaking a coupler knuckle, and got back very late, which is a familiar story.

Sunday, the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club sold tickets for the return trip to Cheyenne,

where the engines are kept. The crew was back and the shiny yellow streamliner was ready to roll.

Though the Saturday trip usually runs full, the train was not crowded on Sunday. Many riders were rail fans from Denver, but people had flown and driven in from all over the country. It's not every day you watch and ride a big, modern steam engine pulling an authentic 1950s streamliner.

The UP treats in excursion operation with class. The cars, used the rest of the year to haul customers, Wall Street analysts and others the company wants to impress, are spotless, regularly painted in the line's yellow and red and frequently overhauled. Though the cars are 50 years old or more, the air conditioning works and the upholstery is new.

Rocking along the main line to Cheyenne, you quickly drift back to the era of dome cars and cross-country trains. It's an illusion, but the big southbound freights all duck out of the way as the train rolls through. No sidings for this special, no red signals.

It was my birthday present, and I was having a good day. Not even a cold mountain rain could spoil that. And Cynthia, though not as fascinated, at least feigned interest. I guess that is true love.

Heck, even the bus ride back to Denver was beautiful, and I hate buses.

Bible tells of cure-all for mankind

People are always seeking a miracle cure for whatever ails them, a miracle pill to lose weight, a miracle cream to make them look young, a miracle herb to help their memory, and the list goes on. What few people look to is the Bible.

The Bible? Yes, it tells us that mankind will all be healthy and young and will have perfect minds. And it tells us what we need to do to be one of those "lucky" people because luck actually has nothing to do with it.

Where does the Bible talk about people regaining their youth?

Job 33:22-25 says, "And his soul draws near to the pit, and his life to those afflicting death. If there exists for him a messenger, a spokesman, one out of a thousand, to tell to man his uprightness, then he favors him and says, 'Let him off from going down into the pit! I have found a ransom! Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.'"

Mankind will have the opportunity to have a youthful appearance and youthful health and energy. The scripture in Job foretells these things in the same breath as saying there is a ransom, a redeemer. Christians recognize that Jesus is our redeemer in line with Matthew 20:28: "Just as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many."

Because of Jesus' ransom, mankind has the opportunity to live forever as John 3:16 says. But that wouldn't be possible if we grew old



sharon
corcoran

• use it or lose it

and had health problems. So we will need to be cured.

How will mankind be cured? The prophecies in the book of Revelation talk about the war of Armageddon when God will destroy the wicked. After those prophecies are fulfilled, Chapter 20 says Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and Chapters 21 and 22 talk about future blessings for mankind.

Revelation 22:1, 2 says, "And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations."

Similar trees for healing are mentioned as part of Ezekiel's temple vision in chapter 47, verse 12. In the Bible, the term "tree of life" is used to symbolize wisdom.

Proverbs 3:13, 18 says, "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment. It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy."

What does wisdom have to do with healing?

John 17:3 says, "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."

Knowledge of God and Christ is linked with everlasting life. When Jesus was on earth, he cured many people of ailments that doctors even today cannot cure, for example helping the blind to see and the lame to walk. He also raised the dead to life again.

A person's salvation and thus his growing young again is dependent on God and Christ, not on a cream or a pill. Having accurate knowledge of them and the wisdom to use that knowledge is required to gain that salvation. And we are each responsible for gaining that knowledge.

Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The soul that is sinning — it itself will die. A son himself will bear nothing because of the error of the father, and a father himself will bear nothing because of the error of the son. Upon his own self the very righteousness of the righteous one will come to be, and upon his own self the wickedness of the wicked one will come to be."

James 4:17 tells us that not doing what is right is just as much a sin as doing what is wrong: "Therefore, if one knows how to do what is right and yet does not do it, it is a sin for him."

Ignoring God in our lives won't make him nonexistent, but getting to know him by learning about the Bible can give us an everlasting future in perfect health.

garfield

