



Where are we?

It is the English teachers' lament that technology, specifically cell phones and other communication devices, is making it nearly impossible to teach young people to effectively read, write and speak.

While there's more than enough evidence to support that premise, similar consolation should be extended to those poor souls within our



Joe Hurd

Blair County Chamber of Commerce educational system who have been hired to teach geography. Thanks to the emergence of navigation devices, where someone is going has become secondary to how they get there. Just type-in an address and wait for instructions. You'd be hard-pressed to see too much of a downside unless you're someone who gets annoyed by anything the least bit atypical.

Like me. Since our Chamber created an alliance with the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County, I've had a number of our members express a willingness to explore some additional business opportunities the next time they go "down to State College." There is not a lapse of a full second before I reply "up."

Whatever satisfaction I hope to derive from being the directional police disappears as soon as the person realizes that I've made an effort to correct them. The value of the entire conversation diminishes and seldom returns. And yet, even with that experience still fresh in my mind, I'm poised for the next person headed "down to State College."

While geography was never one of my favorite subjects back before the GPS era, I'm starting to understand that a fair amount of people struggle with it. I can vividly recall a conversation many years ago with a waitress at a local tavern who was not from this area. When I asked her how she ended-up in Altoona, her answer was, to say the least, interesting.

"I was living in Detroit and planned to move to Kansas City," she pointed out. "This was as far as I got."

Sometime next year, the last of my three children will earn a college degree. Without question, they are all smarter than I am. They will tell you that they don't necessarily consider that a high achievement. But I have overheard enough of their conversations to know that if a Geography Bee ever breaks out, they're in a heap of trouble.

Clearly, I know where I am. I just wish I knew where I'm going.

Kulp's stewardship paved way for future

The late Larry Kulp was known as much for his engaging smile and his generosity as he was for the incredible expertise that he brought to the local dairy industry. Kulp, who died last December 11th, will be honored at the Blair County Chamber's "Down-on-the-Farm" event held at Kulp Family Dairy in Martinsburg on September 30th.

"It will be a fitting tribute," acknowledged Joe Diamond, who chairs the Chamber's Farm-City Committee. "With so much going on in 2020, Larry's passing really never got the amount of consideration that it deserved. Our committee really wanted to remember him in a way that brings the agriculture community together."

Without question, few in that community were more respected than Larry Kulp. Larry and his wife Mary Ann owned and operated Lar-Ann Dairy in suburban Martinsburg from 1973 until 1999. At that time, the dairy was renamed Kulp Family Dairy. Phil Kulp, Larry and Mary Ann's son and his family currently operate the farm which is one of Blair County's largest.

"Larry's influence on

agriculture in this region was incredible," explained Joel Wineland, a former business partner and long-time friend. "He did a lot of things that people never knew about because he didn't want the thanks or publicity. He had a big heart. Young people in particular benefitted from Larry's generosity. He's bought gift cards and makes sure that people who needed help ended up with them."

It was part of his nature to help others stay upbeat, even at times when being optimistic was difficult, according to Sinking Valley farmer David Hilemen.

"Larry was always smiling," he admitted. "He loved working in the dairy industry and he did so many things to make himself a valuable resource for other farmers. He wanted to do what he could to assure that his community was the best it could be. He always did the little extras like delivering sweet corn and Christmas gift bags to anyone associated with the Kulp Family Dairy."

Jim Michelone, a longtime employee of West Central Equipment in Martinsburg, would see Larry often. He relished the occasions.



Few in the Blair County ag community made more of an impact than the late Larry Kulp. No one had a more endearing smile.

"Larry would stop into the store just about every week to talk about farming," Michelone pointed out. "He was a super guy who cared so much about people. So much of what I've learned in this business, I learned from Larry Kulp. There is little doubt of why he was so successful."

Larry's great affection for farming wasn't his only contribution of time. He served on the Spring Cove

School Board and was the school district's representative to the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center Board. He was also a corporate Board member for Land O'Lakes and earned the title "Master Farmer."

Larry was also recognized twice with the Chamber's Agricultural Community Excellence (ACE) Award — once as an individual and once as part of the Kulp

Family Dairy.

"There really hasn't been a time that our committee has asked the Kulp Family for anything that they haven't readily delivered," disclosed Diamond. "Larry Kulp would start many of his conversations by asking us what we needed."

To register for Down on the Farm, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

Carnegie Equipment continues long tradition of unwaivering commitment to customers

George Ferris, II understands what the term "recipe for success" means. He's watched it as a young boy and again as a young man. George's grandfather, George "Carnegie" Ferris opened Carnegie Equipment 93-years ago. George's dad took the reins several years later. With his dad's retirement in 2016, George became the man-in-charge and has lived what he has learned.

"I've never had to wonder what it takes to be effective here," he acknowledged. "Our company's core values were developed from the culture and vision of my grandfather and my father. They preached the importance of being honest and fair and doing whatever it takes to make the customer happy and successful."

Carnegie Equipment, located at 5930 Sixth Avenue in Altoona, is a full-service Food Service Equipment dealer whose customer base is wholesale business-to-business but also open to the public. But according to Ferris, it's much more than that.

"We not only have a local customer base in Blair and surrounding counties in which our business was built from restaurants, taverns, fraternal clubs, churches and fire companies, we have created a design/build project division as well," he pointed out. "That division attracts



George Ferris, II (left), President of Carnegie Equipment, discusses a project with Project Manager Mark Madden.

customers in the institutional and large corporate sector that takes us all over the East Coast from Massachusetts to Florida."

Like many businesses, Carnegie Equipment had numerous challenges related to Covid-19.

"We were actually fortunate in that we were considered essential," Ferris admitted. "Of course sales overall were down but we were able to keep all of our employees working. Our employees are a main reason why we are where we are today and many of them are people who were hired

by my grandfather as far back as 35 years ago. We are all like family so none of this is about me. It's about us."

There were also some other positives that Ferris identified as the result of adjusting to the realities of a pandemic.

"It gave us a chance to evaluate our current workflow processes and how quickly supply and demand can hit."

So what comes next for Carnegie Equipment? Ferris is exuberant in considering his company's future. "Our expansion plans are

to add our current wholesale chain account sector that will require further warehousing, logistics and project managers," he disclosed. "We have already implemented the latest technology for our internal processes and ERP software to handle the growth. Given the current problems that we all are facing with supply chain, transportation and rising costs, we have put all of this on-hold until 2022 and will then evaluate from there."

(Carnegie Equipment has been a member of the Chamber since 1998.)

After Hours scheduled

The next Chamber "Business After Hours" will be held on Thursday, September 23rd from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Appalachian Running Company, located in the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center in Altoona.

Managed by A.J. Kelly, the Altoona location is one of four in Pennsylvania. The company's website emphasizes that "many of our customers aren't elite athletes, they're just people who need a good, supportive pair of shoes."

To register to attend the Business After Hours, visit the Chamber Website at www.blairchamber.com or call 814-943-8151.

Chamber plans trip to Iceland

The Blair County Chamber of Commerce is partnering with Ketrow KURTZ Travel on a trip to Iceland from October 26th to November 1st of 2022.

"Although the trip isn't departing for more than a year, we are holding an informational program on September 28th at 6:00 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development," reported Chamber President Joe Hurd.

To register to attend, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151. There is no cost or obligation.

CONTACT THE CHAMBER

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