

Lost in New York

My family attended the 1964 World's Fair in New York City. The fair's theme was "Peace Through Understanding", dedicated to "Man's Achievement on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding World."

Since I was 9 years old, I have some distinct memories of the visit. One of the fair's most popular exhibits and a distinct visual memory of mine was standing on a platform that moved around Michelangelo's Pietà which was brought in from St Peter's Basilica with the permission of Pope John XXIII. Many of the large US corporations built pavilions to demonstrate their wares, vision, and corporate cultures. I mostly remember the display of the Picturephone. Just a couple years before this, McPherson was a "test city" for the Touchtone phone, so I probably hoped we would be chosen to test this new technology. (was technology even a word then?)

And then I remember getting lost. Yes, I was the original "Lost in New York" kid! What I remember is being taken to a room with many adults I didn't know and having my picture taken. My face was put on display televisions all over the fair so my parents would come pick me up! The joke has always been that my family enjoyed several hours of less stressful sightseeing before claiming me!

This memory came to me this week as I read about the Hebrew word, Shalom. It is a greeting we should know in Israel, but it actually means "safe, sound." I was lost in a city of over 7 million people, but I felt safe and sound. I thought about that many times as I worried about one of my own children being separated from us. Being lost in New York City today might have much a different outcome.

This week I read an article in Farm Journal magazine, called *Rural Town Renaissance*. Five small, rural towns were highlighted to tell how some rural towns are "bucking the trend of the brain drain." Andrew McCrea, host of the "American Countryside" radio broadcast and author of the book, "The Total Town Makeover," writes that successful rural towns are focused on these areas:

Economic vitality

Vibrant communities

Next-generation focus

A rural Sociologist, Ben Winchester has found that "Since the 1970s, there has been a gain of people in their 30s, 40s and 50s across 98% of rural counties in this country," he says. "These people are in their prime earning years and are choosing to move to our small towns."

Small towns are safer than big cities. Small towns are more peaceful. Small towns encourage relationship building. Shopping is even easier! There are many organizations and groups that do their best to support our small town. We need to all be reminded that not every small town has a thriving economy, a vibrant community or is focused on the next generation. GSCF is proud that Sabetha is a small town "bucking the trend."