



Tom Sifers

[Mountain Parks Electric]

From the GM's Desk

BY TOM SIFERS || GENERAL MANAGER

October reminds me of Orville — Orville Freeman, that is, not his popcorn namesake, Mr. Redenbacher. I remember Freeman because, back in the day, I had to memorize his name for a quiz in freshman citizen class: Orville Freeman, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture under President Lyndon Johnson. His name never comes up when I play trivia. But as irony has it, he relates to my present-day job as general manager at Mountain Parks Electric.

Back in 1964, Freeman proclaimed October as National Co-operative Month. The news didn't make the splash The Beatles did after appearing on "The Ed Sullivan Show." Still, Freeman's proclamation mattered to rural America.

There, outside of urban population centers, lives improved markedly in two decades, thanks to co-ops (with assistance from the federal government). Now there was rural electrification. Rural communications. Rural water systems. And the infrastructure to make rural areas comparable to their city cousins was no longer a dream. By 1964, life was no longer the struggle it once was. It no longer felt like rural folks were working "Eight Days a Week" (another Beatles shout out for you maniacs). National Co-op Month was a deliberate act to encourage us to remember and give thanks.

Many of the entities that brought these changes to the countryside were formed as cooperatives: not-for-profit organizations, created solely to provide service. Organizations like Mountain Parks Electric, Inc. — still here today, still owned by those we serve, only doing more today than just keeping the lights on. (Hugh Mowery ACCT 901350700)

This October marks the 53rd National Co-op Month and, if you ask me, Freeman's proclamation is still the best idea since a pocket on a shirt. The theme this year is "Cooperatives Commit." MPE embodies this theme through its continuing support of local chambers of commerce, by sponsoring and participating in a variety of local events, by awarding Charitable Trust grants funded through Operation Round Up, by awarding college scholarships with Educational Trust grants, by providing safety demonstrations and school science fair trophies and by supporting of the North Park and Middle Park fairs, the Fifth Quarter Program and renewable energy installations through-



out our service territory.

Thanks for teeing that up for us, Orville. I'll do my part to keep this month special "With a Little Help from My (Co-op) Friends."

PET OF THE MONTH



Fiji

Owners: Brian and Ann Heckman

(Email your dog photo to: tsifers@mpei.com)

CATCHING UP WITH WEST GRAND HIGH GRAD CHARLEE MANGUSO

How Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) opened new doors for me ... and could for another junior or senior in 2018



Charlee Manguso, a former West Grand High grad and winner of the MPE-sponsored 2015 YLC trip, is now a sophomore studying wildlife biology at Colorado State University.

Each summer, MPE sponsors one local high school junior or senior to attend Youth Tour, a week-long, all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., and one local high school junior or senior to attend Youth Leadership Camp in Clark, Colorado. To be eligible, students must attend a high school within MPE's service territory, be 16 years or older as of January 1, 2018, submit a Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Camp application (request one at rtaylor@mpei.com) and submit one of two winning 500-word or less energy-related essays to rtaylor@mpei.com by Monday, January 1, 2018.

Check the Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Camp essay guidelines at:
www.mpei.com/contestinfo

FIND YOUR NAME • WIN \$5

If you find your name in this magazine, contact Mountain Parks Electric to receive a \$5 credit on your power bill. Winners must contact MPE within one month of the date of issue.

What leadership qualities were addressed at YLC that help you today in your adult life?

Leading in a way that encourages others to participate, to consider others' opinions, to avoid making rash decisions, taking responsibility and even some social skills. (Linda Berry ACCT 502777001)

What is something valuable that you learned at camp?

I learned how easy it is to meet people. I realize that might sound odd, but growing up in a small town, I never really had reason or opportunity to introduce myself to or get to know new people. Camp helped me learn how to do that better.

What was your fondest memory of YLC?

Being on the winning volleyball team, of course. We just played for fun, but our team was fierce. Rafting down the Colorado River was a close second. It's great fun!

New Books for the Library District

Mountain Parks Electric and *Colorado Country Life* recently joined forces to award books to a local library. This cache of books — fiction and non-fiction, some penned by Colorado authors — was originally donated to CCL for its November book review issue. Through a drawing, the Hot Sulphur Springs Library was selected to receive the books. But everybody in the county wins. The books are available for checkout at any Grand County Library District library.



Left to right: MPE GM Tom Sifers, Hot Sulphur Springs and Kremmling Library Branch Manager Emily Pedersen and Grand County Library District Director of Public Services Jeanie Johnson display the new library books.



Local Chef SPOTLIGHT

NAME:	Brew master Andy Brumenschenkel (an Oktoberfest special feature)
RESTAURANT:	Hideaway Park Brewery (HPB) in Winter Park www.hideawayparkbrewery.com
BREWING CHOPS:	Brewing ales for eight years, opened Hideaway Park Brewery in 2014
SPECIALTY:	Brewing an amazing selection of craft beers from scratch

Beer-Pairing Tip for MPE Readers

Pair pale ales (like HPB's Little Mac Pale Ale) with citrus seafood dishes; stouts (like HPB's Rye Stout) with red meat; and IPAs (like HPB's BruBrew) with chicken dishes.

Get Andy's home-brewing tip at www.mpei.com/ccl_bonus_features

WAYS TO \$AVE in October

by Lindsay McCann
Assistant Billing Supervisor

CREATE A CLEAN, LITTLE SPACE

- Leave a few inches between your refrigerator and the wall, and keep the condenser coils clean. This helps the compressor cool more efficiently and run less frequently, saving you money.

SHUT THE DOOR!

- For every minute you stand in front of an open refrigerator, money is flowing out the door. Try to decide what you want to eat or drink before opening the door. (Ronald Darling ACCT 800157100)

CONTROL MOISTURE

- Allow cooked meals to cool first before refrigerating them, and keep all refrigerated foods covered. This limits the moistness of the air inside. Moist air causes the compressor to work harder to keep things cool. Dry air saves you \$\$\$.

KEEP THINGS TIGHT

- Check the seals on both fridge and freezer doors. If needed, replace seals or adjust the doors to avoid costly air leaks.



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KARI SIMMONS: STILL THE SAME ON THE INSIDE

BY ROB TAYLOR, MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS

Is there anything more revealing than a cause? A food drive, an adopted stretch of highway, an outstretched hand or a pair of desperate eyes: So many worthy causes, so little time. Yet every one of them ultimately reveals the thing that it invokes: a human heart. Kari Simmons' cause is helping children.

Back in 2009, Simmons began missing work. A lot of work. There was no hiding it. No ignoring the subsequent whispers and quiet speculation. So she decided to face the issue head on: to be transparent with her second-grade Grand Lake Elementary School students about why, about the surgery to come, and about why the substitute teacher would be filling in even more in the days ahead. In doing so, she couldn't sidestep the C word.

"But you're too young to have cancer," objected a tiny voice in her second-grade class after Simmons' announcement. "My grandpa had cancer and he died! Are you going to die too? I don't want you to die!"

How do you answer that?

Answering no — through her tears — didn't suffice. Nor did explaining that people of all ages get cancer, and that many beat it. That's when Simmons began searching for a better answer. She wanted to help her students understand the cancer treatment process and the pos-

sibilities of overcoming it with the proper treatment. Surely someone had written a children's book about this.

After finding no such book, she did the only thing that made sense: She penned one herself and is now seeking publication. *My Teacher Has Cancer* details Simmons' personal experiences in overcoming breast cancer and the interactions with her students as she underwent treatment. The focus, as you might expect, is helping youngsters cope with a loved one who is fighting cancer. In Simmons' case, that meant allowing curious students to rub her shaved head, to critique her wigs, to theorize about why once-straight hair grew back curly and to ask questions about her treatment. In other words, it meant doing what came naturally: opening wide the contents of her heart. The book subtly drives home the following themes:

- Cancer might cause someone to look different, but your loved one is still the same person on the inside.
- Cancer might make someone tired and needing more rest, but your loved one still wants to play with you and be your friend.
- There are things you can do to help your loved one with cancer, like reading to him or her or drawing or coloring a



Kari Simmons is now the Title 1 teacher at Granby Elementary School.

picture for him or her.

Eight years after her treatment, Simmons is all smiles now: cancer-free and fully recovered. She hopes to get her book published to help more children, and she is thrilled that Mountain Parks Electric's Pink Hard Hat "Taking Steps for Cancer" campaign (see information below) is raising money for treatment-related expenses for locals fighting cancer in all forms.

For more information about *My Teacher Has Cancer*, email Kari Simmons at teacherlady66@hotmail.com.



MPE linemen wear pink hard hats during a pole top rescue exercise.

MPE's PINK HARD HAT "TAKING STEPS for Cancer" CAMPAIGN

MPE joins Mountain Family Center this October to help locals fight cancer in all forms

This October, MPE's linemen will again wear pink hard hats to promote cancer awareness. To donate to the cause, please visit MPE's Granby or Walden offices. All donations will be contributed to Mountain Family Center's cancer fund (Taking Steps for Cancer) that:

- Helps approximately 30 people a year with medical expenses associated with treatment costs of cancer in any form. Note: these funds will be awarded to local residents
- Awards \$1,500-2,500 per qualified applicant
- Reimburses cancer-related expenses, such as travel or mileage, out-of-county hotel stays, prescription costs and other expenses

For more information, call the Mountain Family Center at 970-557-3186.