

## A Thought

A few years ago I was asked to participate in a Western Fairs Association project entitled, "Thirty Great Thoughts in Thirty Minutes." Each speaker was given one minute to present their thoughts on reinventing the fair industry. The brevity of the presentations and the diversity of those participating made for a very well-received program. Here is the one minute of wisdom I presented:

Fairs have to stop trying to be what they are not! They are not major arenas, no matter how much equipment they rent. They are not theme parks, no matter how many corporate partners they allow on their lot. They are not events in isolation from their community.

A fair is good old fashioned treasure hunt! The people who come are pirates, there to see what they can take away with them. Your fairground is Treasure Island, your fair program a treasure map, and your fair's signs are landmarks to lead them on their hunt. And what are the treasures? Rides, games, entertainment; small pieces of gold, yes, but the day itself is the crowning jewel.

The look on Grandma's face as she studies details in a quilt, brother rolling his eyes in disgust as a cow licks his shirt, the toddler's joy when introducing Mom to the puppet lady, the moment in the flower garden when you took grandpa's hand for the last time.

There are so many simple things that the fairs could do to add to their treasure chests. Reinvent or rediscover, perhaps it's the same thing. Nurture the roots and wings will grow. Fairs don't value themselves as much as they used to!