



MARK JOHNSTON

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH COMMUNICATION

BY MARK JOHNSTON GENERAL MANAGER

Have you ever reconnected with a friend you haven't seen in years? Remarkably, the conversation just seems to flow. You talk about friends, family and world events. It can feel like no time has passed. And taking the time to catch up helps strengthen your relationship.

This dynamic of interpersonal communication crossed my mind recently when I read the following member survey comment: "Save money by not mailing out *Colorado Country Life* magazine."

The feedback led me to ask: Is communication in business as important as it is in a personal relationship? I believe that answer is a resounding "yes."

I understand the concern raised by this member and want to assure you that operating cost reductions are a primary focus at MPE. Behind the scenes, our staff works tirelessly to maintain or lower your rates. This is evidenced by the fact that MPE has not raised rates in four years. And we do not plan to increase rates in 2022.

Still, as the survey respondent indicates, publishing a monthly magazine costs money. So why do we do it?

MPE's quarterly online surveys occasionally asks the question, "Do you read MPE's monthly *CCL*?" It amazes me that 70% or more of respondents consistently answer "yes." In this era of declining hard copy print publications, a majority of you



"My belief is that communication is the best way to create strong relationships."

— Jada Pinkett Smith

prefer our award-winning magazine to any other form of communication. "It feels like home," some readers have told me. *CCL* is one way we stay connected with you. It is part of our communication strategy that includes a website, social media, a YouTube channel, community events and our annual meeting.

In short, we believe *CCL* is the most effective communication tool we have. It benefits a majority of our members by providing updates and pertinent information. However, if you would like to help us reduce costs, you can choose to receive the digital magazine (or opt out of receiving the magazine, except when we are required to send you a notice) by calling MPE customer service at 970-887-3378.

I want to thank everyone who takes our online survey (mpei.com/online-survey). Know that your suggestions are welcome and always considered. I believe the more we communicate, the stronger we become.

Our surveys reveal the most valued content in *CCL* is:

- Ways to Save (energy conservation tips provided by Lindsay McCann)
- Rebate information
- Outdoor life features
- Local Chef Spotlight (with a home-cooking tip)
- Local feature articles about our neighbors and businesses

***CCL* also includes:**

- Information about community events and local organizations
- The Pet of the Month (photos and bios provided by our consumers)
- MPE news
- Notices of our annual meeting and director elections

An Unforgettable Adventure

BY ROB TAYLOR MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS



What's the biggest Rocky Mountain adrenaline rush? Maybe this: gazing down on snow-capped peaks and wildlife at sunrise from a hot air balloon. Fraser, Colorado, has a guy for that — one who can deliver the experience. It's Captain Jack (Castellion, not Sparrow). Over the past 30 years, the Grand Adventure Balloon Tours' pilot has floated adventure-seekers to unparalleled views of Middle Park, North Park and Rocky Mountain National Park.

The initial surprise balloon passengers experience is the stillness in the wicker basket at 2,000 to 3,000 feet above ground. There's no wind when you ride air currents. It's a profound sensation of no sensation. The avian world spirals and soars in the surrounding sky. Owl, heron, hawk and eagle sightings are common. And when Captain Jack tugs the valve cord, venting the hot air, it gets even better. That's when the craft descends and more wildlife comes into focus: elk and moose and, occasionally, a coyote, bear, mountain lion or wolf. On final descent, some passengers snatch souvenir pinecones from nearby evergreens.

After touching down, champagne is served. Then, Captain Jack recounts the tale of the first hot air balloon.

Origin of ballooning

The story begins in the 1780s in France. Brothers Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier, while gathered around a fire, observed the dress hems of women in their company levitating. Intrigued, they constructed a paper balloon, capturing the magic smoke to see if it could propel flight. When it worked, they upscaled

their design, experimenting with silk and lined paper, taffeta and varnish for fireproofing.

A rooster, a duck and a sheep were the first balloon passengers. On hand, observing, were King Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and a crowd of 130,000. The animals survived the 2-mile, 8-minute flight in 1783 without incident.

Two months later, in Versailles — 120 years before the Wright brothers flew their aircraft at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina — the first untethered, manned hot air balloon flight launched. Benjamin Franklin witnessed the feat and journaled his thoughts. When asked what possible good this "new toy" could be, the ever-quotable Franklin replied, "What good is a newborn baby?"

Scientist Jean-François Pilâtre De Rozier — who urged the Montgolfiers to construct a balloon for human passengers — piloted the craft, which floated into the countryside. He was accompanied by military officer Marquis d'Arlandes. Farmers soon spotted the strange vessel in the sky. They thought the balloon was extraterrestrial and were convinced that Rozier, the pilot, was a witch. When the balloon landed 20 minutes after launching, the farmers immediately attacked and destroyed the craft with pitchforks and axes. Fortunately, Rozier and d'Arlandes were unharmed. Nonetheless, the farmers quite possibly, at least for a while, believed themselves to be the first Frenchmen to fend off aliens.

Perplexed (and likely traumatized), Rozier contemplated future precautions to prevent the incident from being repeated. Since the balloon launched from the Champagne region, he settled on disarming would-be attackers using the king's stock of champagne.

And so, on subsequent balloon flights, before landing, Rozier waved a bottle at the landowners below. Then, he ripped off the champagne label and tossed it down to them, shouting, "I'm not a witch or from outer space, so please don't destroy my balloon." After landing, the bewildered observers toasted and drank with Rozier and his passengers. And thus, a tradition was born: a bottle of bubbly following balloon rides.

Nearly one century later, the U.S. military employed hot air balloons. During the Civil War, both the North and the South used them to spy on each other's movements.



WAYS TO SAVE

BY LINDSAY MCCANN
CUSTOMER SERVICE SUPERVISOR

THANKSGIVING SAVINGS

Energy-saving tips

- Preheat your oven for only 5 to 8 minutes.
- Bake the stuffing outside of the turkey to reduce the time needed in the oven to cook the turkey.
- Smaller turkeys take less time and energy to cook.
- Only place cooled down and covered leftovers in the refrigerator.

Alicia Johnson, ACCT 1014199

PET OF THE MONTH



OTIS

Otis is a curious, fun-loving 3 1/2 year old wheaten terrier. His mom was a rescue. He loves to play with other dogs and hunts for chipmunks and other critters that pass by. He also enjoys playing with kids. We couldn't love him more.

OWNERS: Ryan, Lisa, Nathan, Jacob and Emma Zorn

Email your pet photos and pet bio to rtaylor@mpei.com



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.

In 1896, Leon Teisserenc de Bort launched the first weather balloon. His work led to the discovery of the stratosphere and the tropopause (the boundary between the troposphere and stratosphere).

Today, recreational hot air balloons are increasingly used to mark special occasions like marriage proposals, wedding anniversaries and birthday celebrations.

A feat worth repeating

Because air currents chart the balloon's course, no two flights are the same. Even so, Grand Adventure Balloon Tour passengers typically observe mountain peaks from five to seven counties between takeoff and

landing, including summits as far away as Steamboat Springs. The change of seasons also adds variety, repainting the terrain below. Flights are available year-round.

One of the most frequent Grand Adventure Balloon Tours online review comment topics is about the man pulling the strings. While navigating air currents, Captain Jack points out landmarks and railway lines, retells Native American legends, explains the pilot controls and answers questions that only a seasoned sky sailor would know.

For many passengers, the experience checks off a bucket list item while adding another: They simply must do this again.



GRAND ADVENTURE BALLOON TOURS

220 County Road 522

Fraser, CO 80442

970-887-1340

grandadventureballoon.com

James K. Pool, ACCT 110704003



Hidden Fork's elk ravioli with roasted acorn squash, sage brown butter and spinach ricotta.

Local Chef SPOTLIGHT

RESTAURANT:

HIDDEN FORK CHEF SERVICES, LLC

Winter Park, Colorado

hiddenfork.com

720-352-4307 | chefscott@hiddenfork.com

SERVICES:

Personal chef, in-home, multicourse, plated and family-style dinners

SPECIALTY:

Modern American cuisine focusing on custom, seasonal, local, organic and sustainable menus

COOKING TIP FOR MPE READERS

Ditch the iodized salt. For improved taste, use kosher or sea salt. And don't forget to season and taste your food as you cook.

TURKEY COOKING DO'S & DON'TS

BY CHEF SCOTT SMITH HIDDEN FORK

(FEATURED IN LOCAL CHEF SPOTLIGHT)



1. Brine your turkey overnight in the refrigerator so it stays juicy. For every gallon of water, use 3/4 cup kosher salt and 1/2 cup brown sugar. Add spices and herbs like rosemary, thyme and sage.



2. Cook turkey to 165 degrees, using a digital thermometer stuck into the thickest part of bird. Check temperature at 2 hours, then 30 minutes later to predict when it will be done.



3. Let turkey rest 30-45 minutes before carving to keep the juices in. If it cools down too much, put back in the oven for 15 minutes.



4. After carving, save the carcass for soup or stock. There is a lot of meat left on the bones that makes great leftovers (like turkey green chili).

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