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Christopher Braunschweig/Jasper County Tribune

Aaron Bartholmey, 36, of Colfax shares but a fraction of what he claims is a 70,000 advertising pencil collection. The history buff and former teacher began his collection as early as 6 years old. Bartholmey held a public event on July 1 for a Guinness World Record attempt for largest pencil collection. The current record is more than 24,000 pencils.

THIS PENCIL COLLECTION IS ON POINT

36-year-old Colfax pencil collector seeking Guinness World Record traces his passion back to elementary school

Christopher Braunschweig
Staff Writer

Editor's note: Newton News did not receive an updated count by press time Sunday, July 2.

Aaron Bartholmey has too many pencils to count, but last weekend he had no choice. If he wanted to break the Guinness World Record for largest pencil collection, the 36-year-old had to hold a public event where a full count of his roughly 70,000 wooden advertising pencils had to take place.

That is one of the requirements, he said to Newton News in a sit-down interview one week before the count. And since officials from Guinness World Records would not be attending the event in Colfax, another requirement

is to have each pencil be different. Counters would be hard-pressed to find any duplicates.

If Bartholmey's math is correct, his collection is nearly triple the size of current record holder Emilio Arenas from Montevideo, Uruguay, whose pencil collection was last counted at 24,026 in 2020. According to Guinness World Records, Arenas had been collecting pencils for more than 60 years.

Bartholmey's pencils were on full display July 1 at the Colfax Historical Society Museum & Community Center. It was a surreal experience for him to see his collection exhibited in this way, and not at all similar to what may be the first time he shared his pencils, which was in a display case at his middle school library.

"I maybe had 10,000 at that

time," he said. "I really don't know for sure ... This is just so much bigger than it was back then. I'm just thrilled to have everything out in one place and have a chance for people to come and look at it and see what I have. I don't get a lot of chances to really show it off like this."

Two individuals from the American Pencil Collector's Society — president Andrew Westberg and vice president Jeff Hoffman — were stationed at two separate counting tables in the community center, all the while a video camera recorded their every move to ensure the count was authentic. They needed to sort through 490 boxes.

By around 9:30 a.m., the counters had gone through

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Up in smoke

Air quality issues continue as smoke pours in from Canadian fires

Jamee A. Pierson
Editor

A blanket of smoke has descended upon Central Iowa and large portions of the United State, blown in from fires located in Canada. The haze can be seen and effects of the smoke can be felt just by stepping outside.

"Predicting the air quality is difficult and changing quickly. As of noon June 28,) Jasper County is currently under unhealthy air quality which can be hazardous to anyone," Jasper County Administrator Becky Pryor said. "When the air quality is unhealthy, please stay inside as much as possible and reduce outdoor activity but especially to those at risk such as seniors, children and those with compromised immune systems."

Multiple providences in Canada are seeing unprecedented fires according to Health Canada. The fires have an increased intensity than has been previously seen and spread from coast to coast in a variety of locations throughout Canada.

"We are currently living through devastating wildfires across the country during one of the worst wildfire seasons on record. These events can harm our communities and our health, which is why we are working with all partners to mitigate this situation, reduce the risk to people from air pollution and support those affected," Canada Minister of Health The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos. "During these times, we should all take the necessary actions to protect our health and wellbeing, including knowing the air quality in our communities and reducing exposure to wildfire smoke."

According to Airnow, people with heart or lung diseases, older adults, children and teens should take steps to reduce exposure to the smoke. They include:

- Avoiding strenuous outdoor activities
- Keeping outdoor activities short
- Consider moving physical activities indoors or re-

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Jamee A. Pierson/Jasper County Tribune

Smoke could be seen in the air, a result of the Canadian wildfires. Air quality in the area took a hit and caution was given to individuals spending time outside.

Jasper County to close many service buildings for RAGBRAI

Courthouse, administration building, attorney's office and community center cannot be accessed July 27

Christopher Braunschweig
Staff Writer

The Jasper County Courthouse, administration building, county attorney's office and community center

will be closed when RAGBRAI cyclists ride through town on July 27. Although officials did not entirely like the idea of closing some

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Christopher Braunschweig/Jasper County Tribune

Attendees of RAGBRAI roam the streets of downtown Newton in 2018. The Jasper County Board of Supervisors on June 27 decided to close a number of its buildings — including the courthouse — when RAGBRAI cyclists come through town on July 27.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Departed director of Jasper County Historical Museum dedicated his work to preserving Newton history

Christopher Braunschweig
Staff Writer

Ken Barthelman had a soft voice but a sharp wit, and it was these characteristics that not only made him a formidable director of the Jasper County Historical Museum — so much so that he managed to earn the title two separate times in his life — but they are also what made him a beloved husband and father.

On June 23, Kenneth Lee "Bart" Barthelman died at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center at the age of 74.

Known for his creativity and dedication to expanding displays at the Jasper County Historical Museum, Ken had an affinity for history, particularly when it came to Newton industries. He had a deep knowledge of Maytag and of the 11 other washing



Christopher Braunschweig/Jasper County Tribune

Ken Barthelman, the executive director of the Jasper County Historical Museum, died on June 23 at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center. Barthelman has served twice as the executive director of the museum, and he was pivotal in the establishment of many historical projects in the community and for expanding displays at the museum.

mashing companies in the county.

Joni Barthelman, Ken's wife, said he even earned a four-year scholarship from Maytag after gradu-

ating from Newton High School. Ken attended Iowa State University, starting out with engineering and

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