

The turkey was the one writing the WTE column

There are a lot of people who enjoy watching Funniest Home Videos or whatever that show is now called. They laugh uproariously when a fat guy in swim trunks falls on his back running toward the pool or when a baby falls out of a high chair while the video camera is taping the mishap. People embarrassing themselves or getting hurt is what makes some people laugh.

Once people started to stage the mishaps, at the risk of being seriously injuring themselves and using small children as foils, the show ceased to be funny or entertaining. Many will do about anything if there is a chance to be seen on national TV or pick up a few bucks.

The couple who recently crashed a White House state dinner made sure they got pictures taken with the POTUS, Biden and others. Their purpose was to peddle a story or pictures for cash. The aftermath hasn't been quite as much fun for the wannabe celebrities. Their personal lives are unfolding in the public eye and all the lies they've told their friends over the years are being exposed.

Some of my annual (semiannual, you'd probably call it) amusement comes from the columns offered by Reed Eckhardt (Scott Smith before him) on April 1st and on Thanksgiving Day.

As predictable as the swallows returning to Capistrano or a politician being caught in embarrassing situations, including with a woman not his wife, these columns are universally bad. They are not clever. They are not humorous. They are not entertaining. They are, how do we say this decorously ... just plain dumb.

Each column, an annual occurrence that almost every credible newspaper gave up years ago, presents an opportunity for the editor of the WTE to attack people personally, suck up to those he worships and adores, and inform readers of nothing of intrinsic value.

Never wanting to work very hard to write a column, and WTE readers see more "guest" columns from newspapers around the nation than they now do of locally written material on the Opinion Pages of the WTE, they regurgitate the same lame stories or attacks they used ad nauseam during the preceding months.

This year's column was no different.

They don't even have the courage to put their own name on the attacks and fawning praise for those they love. This year, they pretended that University of Wyoming Tom Buchanan wrote the piece.

Tom Buchanan was not the choice to be president by the UW Regents but it wasn't because he's dumb. Chances are they probably wanted someone a little more distant - more detached - from the UW faculty. Not an insider. What a concept. Buchanan was chosen when others wouldn't take the job when offered.

The first paragraph set the stage for unabashed sucking up to Buchanan. Even though the WTE pretended that Tommy Boy wrote the drivel, it stooped to self flattery at the outset. *"It is hoped that he [Buchanan] will carve the turkey as neatly as he carved UW's budget in the wake of declining state revenue."*

Where's my barf bag?

Did the WTE forget that Buchanan used the budget crunch to axe a guy he obviously wanted gone from the Geological Museum? Did they really believe that saving that piddling amount of money addressed the budget rather than settling a personal score? Come on, you dopes.

The column went on, with awe dripping off each word: *"He managed to keep the school focused on its upward academic arc, and he recently got modest tuition increases to fund quality efforts at the library and for instructional materials."*

Upward academic arc? By what measurement? Modest tuition increases? To whom? Maybe for the inherited fortune of families like the McCrackens but not to the average Joe that earned their money.

We wrote here a long time ago that UW would pirate the Hathaway Scholarship funds and few would realize it. By ever-increasing tuition and other costs, the Hathaway money students receive for diminishing their high school courses for benefit of a higher GPA doesn't chip away at the cost of an education as it was intended to do. It merely helps pay toward the increases. That was so easy to see coming we thought even the WTE would predict it. They didn't.

The coup de grace: *"He also was able to find a way to re-open and upgrade the Geological Museum."*

Do they proofread the tripe they write?

Buchanan found a way to re-open the Museum? With a part-time, uninformed caretaker?

I have to confess that as I celebrated Thanksgiving Day with a large turkey, ham and all the trimmings down in Colorado, I thought more than once about what kind of baloney the WTE would have for me with their annual column. They did not disappoint.

Next, they bowed to *"local economic developers,"* crediting them with everything short of the federal interstate system.

The downtown is gone, you bozos. Two announced major developments in the downtown did not materialize. Business after business, not the mom-and-pop small businesses that try and fail but major businesses that had kept the downtown alive for generations, are gone. Failed. Grier's Furniture, Dinneen's. Both taken over by a younger generation that was not up to the task. Others like Z's moved away from the downtown and that large space remained unused.

The NCAR project would have gone anywhere. Anywhere that would pony up the public funds to pay for construction. And, for \$50 million, we should see fewer than 50 new jobs - more likely a couple dozen.

Criticism continued for the Wyoming Legislature and Dave Freudenthal for putting some of the State's abundance into a savings account. This paper, which portrays itself as conservative, absolutely hates it when all available money is not spent. They were successful in pushing city government, under Jack Spiker, to spend every penny they could lay their hands on and now Rick Kaysen faces an almost impossible task of getting through the next couple years without employee layoffs and reduction in services. While the WTE criticizes the State for taking an action that will pay off in both the short and long run, they praised and encouraged the City to spend itself broke.

The column criticized the State for failing to *"improve our communities."* Where was that criticism when the City of Cheyenne spent money on questionable purchases like the Belvoir Ranch? Money that could have gone to another of the WTE's now recognized need, streets.

The hallucinatory world Reed lives in is not crowded. Bold, albeit unsubstantiated statements like CFD *"can get little or no support if it keeps things secret."* Hell, CFD has kept things secret forever and support keeps coming their way. Not everybody is obsessed with how others run their business. Maybe the WTE should release *their* financials so readers can determine if *they'll* survive the tough economy we're in - what with investing in new printing and inserting equipment at the worst possible time.

Reed criticized the DDA for not working hard enough to get the recent property tax renewal approved. He forgets that his paper badgered and cajoled downtown property owners to again pass the additional ten mill tax. By saying the DDA didn't do enough, he admits that his efforts once again didn't help. Just like the rec center proposition. Downtown property owners don't care what the daily believes or thinks. Or tells them to do.

Charging that the Wyoming Business Council staff *"rigged"* numbers about the need for a publicly funded day care center in Cheyenne is a pretty serious accusation. If it weren't on the opinion page, it could be considered libelous.

The WTE uses this annual column to try to even scores. They don't use it constructively or cleverly. They don't know how. Journalists, my ascot.

Ending the column by making a desperate reach to retrieve lost affection of their readers, they come up short. Readers buy the daily for the advertising and obituaries. Not the news, opinions or syndicated columns. If the WTE did its job, there would be no place for the Herald. So thank you for being such a failure.

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