

Lease the doggone ballfields

City government, most of the same people remaining on city council now, recently proposed spending \$700,000 for an elevated tunnel from the underused parking garage to the undeveloped Hynds Building. They have funded numerous foolish, unnecessary and unwise projects.

Now, there is deliberation about leasing two ballfields the VFW on Nationway is offering?

What the hell's wrong with these people?

In the nearly eight years I've published the Cheyenne Herald, I have had spirited discussions with friends, readers and supporters of this publication. They insist that I should have used some of the 2.6 million words I've written to accuse elected officials and public employees of being dishonest and corrupt.

I've seldom gone there because that's usually not true. Not that there hasn't been an occasional bad apple like the former city council secretary who had also been a former city councilwoman, but, by and large, I have just never felt that dishonesty or corruption was the problem. I believe most of their mistakes have been the result of poor judgment, limited intellect, laziness, etc. - those kind of character and genetic flaws.

In my personal experience, I have found over and over again that adults who, in their youth, played summer baseball, as well as other sports, were much more likely to become citizens we are proud of and strive to nurture and develop.

I understand the reluctance of residents to support things like leasing a couple ball fields. They simply do not trust city officials to tell them the truth about cost, need or purpose. But even incompetent Parks & Rec employees should be able to generate some or most of the \$20,000 annual maintenance fees they estimate the two new ball fields would cost the city.

My support for the trade of unusable city land for the ice center was conditioned on the city hiring someone with experience to run the place. They haven't done that so things aren't going well down there and hours of operation have been curtailed. The ice center is a unique facility and employees whose experience is limited to mowing grass will not be able to run the center adequately. My support was also conditioned on the trade being of the described parcels of land north of town - along Converse and Storey. That transfer of property to the ice center investors still has not been completed.

With all the mistakes made by these characters, I would still support leasing those ballfields if \$20,000 a year is an accurate estimate for maintenance. I've seen firsthand and personally the quality of person kids who play baseball in the summer become later in their lives. I'll be responsible for every kid who played baseball (or softball for the girls) if you take responsibility for every kid who did not. There are no guarantees - no absolutes - in life but providing ballfields does much more good than harm.

Lease the doggone ballfields.

Raw milk

Farmers and children who grew up on farms have always been considered to be among the healthiest of Americans. Pointy-headed experts (liberals) can't figure that out. They sit in their windowless laboratories, separating food products into bacteria and the like, then pronounce that raw milk is not good for you.

Well, several on my mother's side of my family were farmers. My grandpa had a dairy farm for decades. Even after he couldn't help with the chores himself - it was very hard work - my two uncles continued to operate the farm. Neither ever married and spent most of their lives on that same farm, even after terminating the dairy operation because the rules became too onerous and too costly to comply with and they got old. They both still lived on the farm when they died, one this year. Other uncles on my mother's side were also farmers and a couple of their sons followed that path. There is but one cousin that I can think of who is still farming - still milks dairy cows.

As a little boy, one of my happiest times was visiting "the farm." Especially if I got to stay overnight. My folks had a farm when I was born but my dad changed to producing pulpwood and logging shortly after my birth. I grew up about 28 miles from "the farm" and visited often. Some think dairy farming is easy. They know farmers go to bed at 7:00 or 8:00 at night. In the summer, it was still daylight. What they may not know is farmers and farmhands got up by 4:00 am - that's in the

morning. And that wasn't to sit around the kitchen table, drinking coffee and eating fresh cinnamon rolls. By 4:15 or so, they were in the barn or in the fields.

They couldn't even look toward weekends when they could sleep late, watch football games on television or go fishing. Their jobs were about 24/7. I used to plead with my grandma to stay longer at our house when they came for Sunday dinner. Grandpa would always say, "the cows can't wait, David." Talk about a routine. Cows had a certain "stanchion" in the barn and they would walk toward the barn almost without prompting at the same time twice a day, walking to the exact stanchion in the barn that was theirs - and wait to be milked. And they would swat flies with a tail that was often nasty.

This background is to establish my bona fides about drinking raw milk. I didn't. I have always been finicky about what I eat or drink and I didn't like those floating chunks of cream in the milk. Right from the cow. Grandpa shipped most milk to a local creamery and bought back ice cream, cheese, and other products that were made from milk. They didn't drink coffee but they used cream that they skimmed off the top of the milk on their oatmeal and fruit. And they ate eggs and bacon every morning. At about 5:30, they came in for breakfast. Yeah, an easy life.

Two of my farming uncles died in 2009. One was 82 at his passing, the other 81. Drinking raw milk didn't harm them much.

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WOODHOUSE RODEN Law Firm

1912 Capitol Avenue, Suite 500
(American National Bank Bldg, Fifth Floor)



Gay Woodhouse
gaywoodhouselaw@aol.com

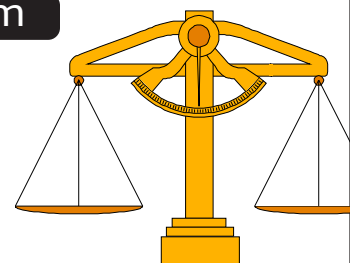


Debb Roden
debb@woodhouseroden.com

www.gaywoodhouse.com

432-9399
FAX: 432-7522

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