

What gender gap?

Defenders would argue that Wyoming's claim as the "Equality State" refers to it being the first state (territory) that allowed women the right to vote. Many of those who chest thump about that noble gesture forget that the Territory needed residents and gave women the right to vote in the hopes of attracting immigration to the Wyoming Territory.

Interesting that the inability to entice people to move here has continued - some 140 years later. Hmmmm.

Women in Wyoming were granted suffrage in 1869 as a legislative act, which likely would have been overturned by the current Wyoming Supreme Court had it been challenged. They have ruled that such action cannot be taken statutorily, it would require a constitutional amendment. And, interestingly, women in Wyoming had the right to vote before they had to right to own property, serve on juries or be paid equally with male teachers.

(Obviously, that reversal could not have happened because the Wyoming Constitution had not been drafted or approved yet. That would come in 1890.)

Colorado was the first state in which men voted to allow women the right to vote. Wyoming was admitted as a state in which women had the right to vote from our territorial days and suffrage. When confronted with the possibility that Wyoming would not be admitted to statehood if women had the right to vote, leaders said they would wait for statehood for another 100 years before they would rescind women's right to vote. What men!

Women's suffrage did not come quickly or easily. For nearly four and a half years, from early 1915 until mid 1919, the U.S. Congress rejected women's suffrage bills. Fifty years after the Wyoming Territory had granted women to right to vote, women across the United States were granted the same right. Had they known the quality of male candidates they would have to choose from in later elections, they may have declined the "right."

So, why the history lesson about suffrage?

Because that is all the "motto" of Wyoming represents. Suffrage. It does not claim women are equal in other aspects - like equal pay for equal jobs in the state.

Or equal opportunity in professions.

Today's WTE had two very revealing advertisements.

One, on page A9, was placed by Orthopaedic & Spine Center of the Rockies. The ad's headline is: "Providing orthopaedic care from head to toe," with a sub-head of "We've offered quality spine care for years -- now it's part of our name." There are postage stamp size photos of the physicians in this Colorado firm.

There are 23 photos. The first names of the 23 physicians are: Roger, Kenneth, Mark, Rocci, Dale, Kirk, Michael, Sean, Mark, Robert, David, Satoru, Robert, William, Wesley, Michael, C. Dana,

Stephen, Thomas, Stephen, Thomas, Vincent and Thomas.

Yes, it does look like Stephen and Thomas are popular names for doctors.

Twenty-three (23) physicians and every single one is a male. A man. Probably unintentional, no deliberate effort to keep it an "all male" club.

While the photos are tiny and the men's names are difficult to read with 20/20 vision, the ad is 6 1/2" x 4 columns wide. They paid \$300.00 or more to tell Cheyenne residents, "If you want a place that doesn't hire women physicians, we're your place."

By contrast, Wyoming Spine & Neurosurgery Associates, LLC has a full page ad inside a piece that is supposed to be used by WTE to "wrap" inserts but isn't. That ad, which is presumably physicians (Dr. Cook and Dr. Beer are in the photo) and staff, shows five males and ten women. A bit better balance than the Colorado outfit. Hopefully, along with balance in numbers, there is equity in pay. Is there?

On the other side (the outside, if you will) of that wrap that isn't being used as a wrap as intended and sold, Wyoming State Bank has a holiday greeting. In that picture, there are three men and seventeen (17) women.

This photo is more reflective of the inequality of Wyoming. Banks are, and always have been, notoriously poor paying employers. Especially to non-officers. "Here's a nameplate. Same pay."

Visually, what these ads tell readers is that the high paying medical jobs go to men, the low paying nontechnical jobs go to women.

Again, Wyoming's state motto does not say women will be paid equally to men. And they're not. National studies on the subject are always embarrassing to women. Most places. Often women doing the same or comparable jobs to men, with the same employer, are paid less. Why? Because employers can get away with it. There is no one or no group protecting any specific gaggle of workers to insure they're treated fairly or equitably.

W.S. § 8-3-101 Great seal of the state of Wyoming - in part:

"There shall be a great seal of the state of Wyoming, which shall be of the following design ... Standing upon the pedestal shall be a draped figure of a woman, modeled after the statue of the 'Victory of the Louvre,' from whose wrists shall hang links of a broken chain, and holding in her right hand a staff from the top of which shall float a banner with the words 'Equal Rights' thereon, all suggesting the political position of woman in this state."

"All suggesting the political position of woman in this state." No other promises of equality were intended, just that women would have an equal right to vote. Pay? No promises.

Cell phone use is returning

Immediately after the local cell phone use while driving ban was approved, in spite of the mayor's ill-advised and illegal, "grace period," people laid the phones down. Even young women were almost never seen talking on a cell phone while driving with their children in the back.

Making a point to observe, I would estimate that cell phone use while driving dropped by 80-90%.

But now it seems to be having a rebirth.

That means one of two things. Either drivers don't think they'll be caught or if they are they won't receive a citation, OR, use of a cell phone while driving outweighs the potential penalty if caught.

I would guess it's more of the former than the latter. Reduced fear of a citation.

While many of today's drivers on cell phones don't know a time without them, they do know they can get by without using them while driving. So, odds are that the reason use is returning is that drivers have already become convinced that the ban will not be enforced. That it will be an "after everything else" type of priority to Cheyenne police officers.

Remember, those officers were told, after the ban had been approved by the City governing body and published in the WTE to become effective under state statute, that they should ignore violations.

When the prohibition on dogs riding loose in the back of pickups or on flatbed trucks was approved, enforcement never kicked in and dog owners of the Rodney "Pete" Anderson, "It's just an animal, do with it as you please" school of thought have always flagrantly violated that part of city code with impunity. Jumping, barking, unrestrained dogs in pickup boxes pass police cars and the violation is ignored.

While the cell phone ban is still in its infancy stage, it is quite possible that the same noncompliance will be shown as with the dogs. It is beginning already. The mayor and city attorney will have a hard time convincing residents that they do have grave concerns about distracted drivers, while at the same time encouraging electronic billboards with hard to read messages high in the air changing every 8-10 seconds. To view a message about a 35% discount will take the driver's attention off driving. There will be more "rear enders" at that first location on Dell Range than anywhere else in town.

CHEYENNE HERALD

2010 Publication Schedule

January 19
February 2, 16
March 2, 16, 30

April 13, 27
May 18
June 1, 15, 29

July 13, 27
August 10, 24
September 7, 21

October 5, 19
November 2, 16, 30
December 21

SANDWICH SPECIALS

Begins January 1, 2010

Chicken Fried Steak
\$6.99 Plus tax **Large Drink**
Large Fries

French Dip
\$5.99 Plus tax **Large Drink**
Large Fries Through Thursday
December 31, 2009

Burger Inn
Pershing & Snyder

MAXIE MONDAYS - \$1.69

