

In ~~three~~ fours

Ed McMahon. Farrah Fawcett. Michael Jackson. Now, Billy Mays.

So different yet so alike.

Icons in the entertainment business, each with such different appeal.

Ed McMahon spent a lifetime as second banana to the best late night comedian in television history. The same introduction of Johnny Carson for seemingly thousands of nights. He dutifully laughed at his boss's jokes, no matter how bad. Straight man for Carson's Carnac the Magnificent. Even knowing what was coming, audiences could not help but laugh. A pair that seemed to be perfect for each other - it never looked strained. Johnny was never impatient with Ed and Ed was never put down by Johnny.

A man who faced difficult financial times in his last years on earth but had been such a credible spokesman, including for a publishing company and as a manservant for the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon year after year after year.

Like Ed Sullivan, one with no discernible talent who was part of one of early television's most popular and enduring shows, Ed McMahon could do nothing well. Yet his presence brought success to so many programs in addition to the *Tonight Show*. *Who Do You Trust?* was his first partnership with Johnny Carson. *Star Search*. Alpo commercials. McMahon always seemed to have work - even after his time with Carson ended.

No special talent but long a favorite of television viewers. Ed McMahon.

Farrah Fawcett burst onto the scene with the television show, *Charlie's Angels*. Some may remember storylines or that it was John Forsythe on the other end of the telephone calls to David Doyle giving instructions as to what "the Angels" should do. There may be some trivia nuts who know that Jaclyn Smith is the only Angel to appear in all 113 episodes of the series that ran from 1976 to 1981.

Even Kate Jackson did not appear in all episodes, calling it a day after 1979. Cheryl Ladd joined the series after Farrah Fawcett left. In order to work, Farrah had to agree to appear in a few episodes each season for four more years.

Shelley Hack joined the cast when Kate Jackson departed and Tanya Roberts (*That 70's Show*) came on for the last year to replace Shelley Hack.

All were attractive women but no one watched *Charlie's Angels* to see any of them. Farrah Fawcett became an icon in one season of television. Her "poster" was put on more walls than thumbtacks.

Over time, Farrah proved she could act. She took on roles that didn't capitalize on her looks. She displayed odd behavior at times - hooking up with disturbed Ryan O'Neal and acting bizarrely on the David Letterman Show. Farrah was interesting to watch as she morphed from sex kitten to legitimate actress. When she was diagnosed with cancer, some in the media went too far in describing it. Many are diagnosed and even die from cancer without us knowing what cancer it was or where. Cancer is cancer. Her documentary of her pursuit for a cure was inspiring. She allowed cameras to see her unattractive - a woman who made it big because of her attractiveness.

Michael Jackson was an incredibly talented young entertainer. A gifted musician and entertainer. He "invented" more dance moves than anyone else. He sold records in the tens of millions. He became sort of a "freak" but was to go back on tour. Most remember he was tried but few recall he was acquitted. A man who destroyed his own face to be someone else. A pitiful but talented man.

Now, Billy Mays. The loud and aggressive pitchman without peer offended many and sold product. Like Jackson, his cause of death is still to be determined. Like Joe Isuzu, he became famous for shilling a product(s). There is no one like him. The loss of another icon.

Laramie Museum

By George, I think the Tribune-Eagle got it right. But, as is said, even a blind pig finds an acorn once in awhile. And a stopped clock is right twice a day.

The WT-E has taken an editorial position in opposition to the closing of the Geological Museum at UW. Unfortunately, with the WT-E, which has become a carping whiner about the governor because he bounced Reed Eckhardt off a couple of boards he was not qualified to be on, you can never be sure of their editorial sincerity.

The WT-E always finds a way to come back to spending the state's savings. Reed is apoplectic about the Permanent Mineral Trust Fund. He cannot stand for the governor or legislature to favor putting one more penny into that "lockbox." Eckhardt favors spending every penny the state, county, city or federal government can lay their collective hands on. If it isn't spent, his employer has no chance of getting any of it. Just don't ask them to pay sales tax on newspaper advertising. Their stated position is that other people should have to pay taxes - that Wyoming residents do not pay enough in taxes - but *they* should not. Right out of the Democrats playbook, of which Eckhardt is a dues-paying member.

It has been widely publicized that the subsidy necessary to keep the museum open is only \$80,000 a year. We know that all levels of government spill more money than that so Deductive Reasoning 101 leads the Cheyenne Herald to wonder why the museum is being closed and why no real effort has been made to find funds to keep it open.

The logical conclusion is that the real reason behind closing the museum is not money - not funding. A quick telephone call to the McMurry Foundation or an Andrikopolous in Cheyenne - or Maurie Brown over here - and PRESTO! the funding would have been in hand.

Why would UW or the governor risk the wrath of residents when so little money is involved. Hell, the Cheyenne City Council had that much money earmarked for discretionary spending - their infamous "contingency fund[s]."

The governor wastes more money than that by having excessive legal counsel at the State Capitol. Or on mousse.

If it's not really about the money, what could it be about?

Well, in government, one way to rid yourself of a troublesome employee when you don't have the right to terminate them because you just don't like them is to RIF their position.

RIF is "reduction in force," a fancy term for eliminating the position. That is what happened to Joe Dougherty when Jack Spiker became mayor. Joe had been co-mayor with Leo Pando and didn't show the good sense to stay out of the campaign in 2000 (thinking that Jack had no chance of defeating his boss so he could safely ingratiate himself further with the guy who wasn't going to dismiss him anyway) and he said critical things about Jack Spiker. Well, Jack won and Joe lost. His position as "co-mayor" was RIF'd and Joe was terminated. Eventually, he was rehired in a different position but he spent a long time on the outside looking in.

Could it be that UW president Tom Buchanan wanted the museum director gone and the easiest way to accomplish that would be to sacrifice the museum for a time? Has the plan always been to keep the facility open as before to students but not the public until a safe interval passed when it could be reopened to the public but *without* the person Buchanan wanted gone?

And what does the governor care? One state employee is not going to generate enough sympathy to cause him any heartburn. Maybe staying pals with the UW prez was more important.

Closing this particular museum isn't like closing a rest area on Hwy 85. Wyoming has been home for several dinosaur "digs" and discoveries. We may not be the corn capital or the dairy capital, but we are the "dinosaur" capital. How do we tell outsiders that we couldn't scrounge up \$80,000 to keep the museum open until more permanent funding is found? Does the UW president and governor really think they can convince anyone that \$80,000 will balance the budget? That \$80,000 could not be found anywhere else to cover the cost of one year's operation? Of course not. They'd be perceived as even more incompetent than most people already think public employees, including the governor and university president, are. Keep it open.

Cheyenne Herald - 2009

January 13, 27	July 21
February 17	August 4, 18
March 3, 17, 31	September 1, 15, 29
April 14, 28	October 13, 27
May 12, 27 (Wedn.)	November 17
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