

Don't always believe what you read

A few days back, I received a certified letter without a return address on the envelope. I signed for it and opened it in the car, curious who would spend \$3.12 to send me a letter but not use their address on the envelope.

The message page was "wrapped" by a plain sheet with a heading "CC:" and the names of 42 individuals, officials, public offices, attorneys and businesses, including a church. The Cheyenne Herald was the only media listed.

The letter was brief and signed by the sender, a local professional.

The words were defamatory toward his former wife and accusatory toward her intentions about his safety and lamented his financial treatment in their divorce.

My first reaction was to dismiss it. To let other recipients of the letter, including the FBI, CPD, LCSD, Wyoming AG, courts, and attorneys deal with it.

Then I thought, based on personal past experience, none of them was likely to react to the message. So, I "Googled" the writer's name and learned he was an educated professional who has a recognized business here in Cheyenne.

I decided to review the divorce files at the Laramie County District Court offices.

That review changed my thoughts of empathy to a decision that I should let others who received the letter know the writers' allegations were vindictive, half-truths and unwarranted.

Briefly, here is the case: This guy, who opened his letter, "I, (name), believe my life to be in jeopardy" married his ex-wife in 1995 when she was 18 years old. She had four children in rapid succession, beginning 18 months after they married.

According to the divorce case files, he made very good money in his profession ("\$250,000 after expenses"), liked to gamble and admitted to being unfaithful. He had a child from a previous relationship for whom he paid child support.

Comments in the file from Judge Peter Arnold include: "You and your clients are aware of my opinion of the merits of the parties." And, "... to try to ensure that my decision is not affected by my distaste for the Defendant's conduct." Also, "... which paid for his hedonistic lifestyle."

This is a case where, after you touch the files, you feel like you need to scrub your hands. The letter writer has gone through three attorneys, discussing with a second before terminating the first, etc. One of his attorneys had previously spoken with the ex-wife but did not disclose that. Judge Arnold: "I would urge Mrs. (name) to reconsider her decision not to file a complaint with the Bar." Yuck!

His letter was dated May 7, 2009. He hurled personal invective at his ex-wife, some libelous (she was copied). Yet, as of 5/15/2009, DFS had filed a claim against him, stating that he was in arrears \$31,011.11 in alimony and/or child support payments. No saint he. On 8/21/2009, he must appear in court to answer that claim and contempt charges.

Rick didn't say anything about hiring a new DDA director

Some may have taken news coverage of the new mayor's words about the DDA as meaning he wanted someone in charge that could turn things around.

But, that isn't what he said in the letter he sent to council members, the DDA board of directors and others.

Rick spent years downtown at the Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power offices so he has to be well aware of the recent destruction to the downtown core of businesses. And, you'd hope he will institute the necessary changes to try to change the course the downtown has taken under the direction of the current DDA executive director (actually a contract consultant, which is against the law). Hope.

Rick had been informed that the DDA was operating outside state statutes by having no executive director but having a consultant under contract acting as an executive director. He has to realize by now that the DDA board of directors is ineffective. He just needs to look around.

To pay someone a hundred grand or better to fiddle while downtown burns is unacceptable. The gal who is responsible for being asleep at the switch has to go.

But, that's not what Rick said. What he said was the DDA had to come into compliance with state statute by having a direct employee (not consultant) running the show but he also encouraged the failed director to apply for the job.

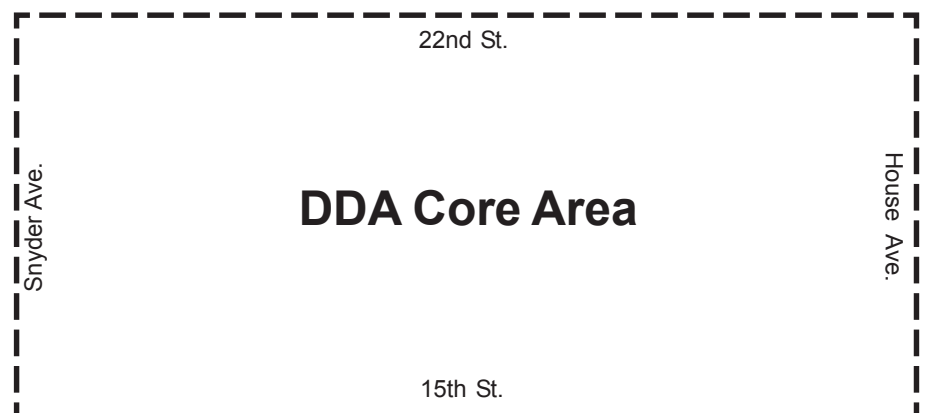
Millions of dollars that could have been used in other parts of town were diverted to the downtown. There is little to show for it. And the idea that the mayor would accept perpetuating the failings is frightening. At some point, someone must say, "no mas." Many residents avoid the downtown like they would a ghetto in Gary, Indiana. Not out of fear for their safety but because the sight of Cheyenne's downtown is so discouraging. A handful of entrepreneurs like John at the Mayflower, Salah at Central Plaza, the women at the former Cheyenne Club, Jerry Inniss, Sue Miller and the McMurry's of Casper have invested. But the millions of dollars squandered by the DDA has been unproductive.

It is time for sweeping changes. The mayor should make it known that the failed policies (and people) of the past will not continue in his administration. Short of doing that, residents cannot hope for revitalization of the downtown core.

Gone from the downtown since 2001

Businesses that have failed or relocated and/or buildings that are empty

Hynds Bldg; Dinneen's showrooms, new car dealerships, used car lots and service garage; Frontier Printing (known as Vision Graphics when moved to Loveland); Vision Graphics Copy Center, Mary's Bake Shoppe; Suburban Propane; Z's Home Furnishings; Kennedy-Western University; Tivoli Building, including the Chamber of Commerce and American City University; Paramount University of Technology; American Global University; American Capital University; Mossholder's; P.S. Cook; Roedel's; Volk Real Estate; Enterprise Auto Leasing; UP RR offices; Grandma's Attic; GMAC and others at 504 E. 17th St.; AT&T Cable (Bresnan); KKTU TV; Fix 'n Mix Liquors; One Stop C-store; Driftwood Cafe; Medicine Shoppe; Your Appearance; Frontier Boot; AmTrak; Perfection Muffler; Yong's; Tolerton Dance Studio; Wigwam Lounge; IKON; etc. and (just outside the DDA district) Whipple House, Armadillo Express, Western Superstore, Wyo OTB, etc. Many, many others have also departed - either closed or relocated.



Walk In My Shoes

The 11th Annual Walk In My Shoes will take place June 13, 2009, starting at 907 Logan Avenue.

Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. and the Walk begins at 9:00 a.m.

The Walk registration form can be found at

<http://www.wch.vcn.com/walkregis09.htm>

Registration for walkers or ghost walkers is \$12.00 prior to the event and \$15.00 on the day of the event. Contributors and sponsors are needed. Door prize donations are needed.

Call Virginia with questions or offers at 634-8499.



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Just send your check for \$75 and name and address to The Cheyenne Herald, P.O. Box 2208, Cheyenne WY 82003

Southside Ext.

Central Ave.

Economic Development Model for Downtown Cheyenne

If it stands and is now occupied, knock it down.

If it is empty and has been for years, ignore it.

If it has been paved or laid at public expense, tear it up and sod or replace it - with Colorado labor and materials.