

Powers Field lease

"Well, this is another fine mess you've gotten us into, Ollie."

Rick Kaysen is like the guy who bought a house back in the 1950's, maybe one in Amityville, New York, when buyers did not have to disclose anything about the property they were selling. And the problems Rick inherited go far beyond a leaking roof or collapsing foundation. On the surface, he probably saw a city rolling in money and a job that he could assume and coast through four or eight years until he retired for real. Another line on the resume.

That, of course, was fantasy.

The truth of the matter was the city was rotting at its core. It was broke and its financial future bleak.

And while budgetary shortfalls draw the spotlight, other problems nearly as serious continue to be disclosed.

An earlier incompetent city attorney was broken by demanding city councilmen who had commandeered the bright potential of a mayor who had won election with a majority of votes in all but one city precinct - 33 of 34. Incompetent legal advice and a clique of councilmen determined to spend every penny in city coffers, without regard to state law or common sense, put this city into a precarious financial and moral position.

Why was a lease presented to American Legion Post 6 Baseball that was obviously in violation of federal grants that enabled the "blue ribbon" baseball field be built?

Why would six or seven or eight or nine men in city government risk future federal grants in order to satisfy a few whose interest was in a sport not even played at the high school level?

The answer, disturbingly, is quite simple.

That group operated under a belief that they were elected by the people to do anything they wanted - so long as they, that handful of men - believed it was for the good of the people. It did not have to be legal. It did not have to have public support. Over time, they came to believe that they could do anything - play golf at exotic courses at your expense, borrow money with a city ATM card, fly needlessly to Hawaii on junkets with no purpose, try

to aid a council employee who had committed felonies against her employer avoid prosecution - anything they thought they had a right to do by virtue of your having elected them to make your decisions, they did. Over and over and over.

When they were sued, they lost and you paid for their mistakes. Over and over and over. That did not stop them, though. Their mistakes were costing you money, not them. They never lost a cent.

There was an arrogance without constraint. Without legal boundaries. Without leadership. Without reason. None of those men were that successful in their personal lives - nothing like they implied. So, they made up for their failings by "big shooting" it with your money.

Now, Post 6 Baseball is suffering a bloody nose for the advantageous lease they hold on Powers Field. Of course it was wrong. Of course it was not warranted. But, Post 6 is not at fault.

There were two parties to the lease in question. One, the city, was responsible to represent the interests of the citizenry as a whole. The other, Post 6, was responsible to represent its own interests. Post 6 did not deceive the city. The city gave away the baseball field like they did the depot.

Why? Partially because of whom was involved with youth baseball. Names were impressive. One was attorney general and became a Supreme Court justice. When he signs a letter, lesser people like a mayor and city councilman quake.

So, that mayor and council entered into a lease that is of their own making. Post 6 did not badger, pressure or threaten them into the favorable arrangement. The city willingly ceded control of Powers Field to a small group of baseball enthusiasts.

Rick now finds himself in an unenviable position. The lease cannot stand as written. To do so would require returning hundreds of thousands of federal grant dollars the city does not have to return. To do so might require returning a great deal of money to LCSD1. It might require returning individual donations made on the basis the field would be for public use - not just Post 6 Baseball. And, those who blundered will walk away scot-free. As always, it is your money being wasted.

My bad. Sorry.

While no reader complained, I have regrets for words I used in the headline on the front page of the March 30, 2010 issue of the Cheyenne Herald.

Headlines are often as important to a story as the words in the story. Important from the standpoint of readers being brought to the story on the strength of a headline.

I once used the headline, "Sex, lies and videotape" for a story having nothing to do with sex or videotape. I knew those words over a double-truck article would grab attention and readers would be drawn to the story by the headline.

I don't recall ever second guessing my own choice of words in a headline. I probably have but after a couple thousand headlines over eight and a third years, I just don't remember them all.

The headline being referenced was: **"Sloans Lake is finally free of fecal matter and, NOW, no swimming will be allowed?"**

The absurdity of draining a lake, refilling it with clean water, THEN closing it to swimming was too precious to go unchallenged. For years, the City has allowed, no, make that, encouraged, access to the

contaminated water and closed the beach only when the bacteria level - the filth - became too much to ignore.

My regret has nothing to do with pointing out the bizarre decision. That had to be brought to the attention of parents who will hear children complain about not even having a lousy beach to go to this summer.

My post-printing regret was in using the words "fecal matter." Yes, it could have been much worse. But those words were unnecessary and brought little additional attention to the story that followed. Had the headline been on a story on page 5 or page 11, that would not have been so bad. But, on page 1, it was overboard.

Many copies of the Cheyenne Herald are picked up or read in restaurants and fast food places. Those words should not have been used on the front page of a publication distributed in places serving food.

Typos generate unintended headlines - who can forget the WTE using "pubic" instead of "public" in a headline a few years ago? But my use was not a typo, it was not unintentional. And, on reflection, I regret those words. I should have used "filth." That would have sufficed. So, my bad. I'll be more vigilant in the future.

WyomingNETWORK.com

What's your opinion? Read and participate in the forums at www.CheyenneNetwork.com

LOS AMIGOS

Authentic Mexican Food For A Little "Spice of Life"

Mexican Restaurant

TRY OUR DAILY LUNCH SPECIALS!

620 Central Avenue / 638-8591

Tues - Thurs 11 am - 8:30 pm
Friday & Saturday 11 am - 9 pm

No weigh. No more.

Last day of operation will be April 30th

Freight, Military, Trailers & Trucks, Livestock, Salvage, Metal & More

UP TO 100,000 POUNDS -- 4' AND 70' SCALES -- GROSS & TARE WEIGHTS

Cheyenne Public Scales

802 W. 21st St. (between Snyder and Reed Ave.)

307.634.2758

187-200

Ed and Carol Ann Strader of Strader Enterprises announce the sale of their rental properties at

Moran and Dell Range - 12 units
and

Cribbon and W. Allison - 16 units

to Mr. Dave Newman
Golf Park Apartments LLC

THANK YOU to all our former tenants for their residency in our properties from 1977 to 2010.

Ed and Carol Ann