

Everybody won. But, nobody won.

High Court issued another "six of one, half dozen of the other" ruling

It is obvious that the Wyoming Supreme Court simply does not hold in high regard the issue of public records and/or open meetings. Decisions offered by the High Court frequently prove that.

Chief Justice Voigt said it at an earlier oral arguments before the Court: "There is no teeth in the law." There is but he doesn't see it.

A 9th grade Civics Class could issue these decisions. Basically, the public has the right to know. And, regardless of whom it is, if an attempt is made to keep things secret from the public, they will lose when challenged.

The Cheyenne daily challenges the goofiest things. It's as though they only litigate those issues they are confident of winning. And, then they claim victory no matter what the Supreme Court decides.

The governor withheld budget information. Not important information but data that he was required to disclose. The dispute was a no-brainer. He couldn't do it. Yet, the WTE and the Wyoming Press Association chose to bring legal action against the governor and a couple of his appointees who were following his orders.

The foolishness of these Supreme Court decisions is that there is no penalty for violating state law.

That's what CJ Voigt meant - there is no punishment for the miscreants. Even where minimal fines apply, the burden of proof about "willingly" violating the law is too high a threshold to meet. So those who deliberately, but not "willingly" evidently, withhold public records from scrutiny survive to repeat their violations.

If the daily newspapers, with the cooperation of the WPA, would challenge meaningful violations, the public would be better served. Instead, they bring lawsuits only when they are certain to prevail and only on matters that have long since been resolved by the time a legal determination is offered by the Supreme Court.

When you read the daily's own stories about these outcomes, you must feel like the AFLAC duck in the Yogi Berra spot. The newspaper claims victory as though they had just won something big and the governor is "excited" about the clarification. And, as always, the Attorney General has "no comment." His office defends these undefendable cases and when he invariably loses, he has "no comment."

How about a comment, Bruce, about wasting taxpayer's money and AG office time in court and in preparation for court? Do you ever have any remorse or regret that you will never be successful when you try to conceal public records? Or, do you have "no comment" on that, too?

Congratulations, Gregg Sawyer

If there were a Hall of Fame for "Good People," Cheyenne's Gregg Sawyer might have been a charter member. Instead, he will have to be satisfied with his recent induction into the University of Wyoming Athletic Hall of Fame.

Gregg is often identified as a "Burns" athlete and that is where he attended high school. But, he is a Cheyenne boy through and through - growing up in the Buffalo Ridge area of town. He attended Burns school because his father was a teacher and coach out there. So did Gregg's older brother, Dan.

Accolades are often bestowed on athletes because of their athletic ability. Many are skunks as people but are worshipped by the American people because they can drop 25 a game, hit over 70 home runs a season or run like the wind.

Because Wyoming doesn't play real baseball, we can't be sure how many home runs Gregg Sawyer might have hit. But we do know he could play basketball and compete at the highest collegiate level in track.

He was inducted to the UW Hall of Fame because of those athletic exploits - specifically while a student at UW. And it is always good to see a Wyoming native honored by their own school. But, I'm not writing about Gregg's accomplishments on the hardwood or over the bar.

I am commenting on the person Gregg Sawyer is and always has been.

My wife and I were next door neighbors to Gregg and his family in Buffalo Ridge for several years. He is an unfailingly polite, respectful and personable young man. The Sawyer family was very close-knit and the sons brought great pride to their parents and vice versa. Gregg's dad (Ron) was the teacher/coach at Burns and his mother held a high level State job.

While Dan might not have had Gregg's athletic skills, he has an accomplishment unique in his competitive family. He coached a high school basketball team, Chugwater, to a state championship. Both Gregg and Ron assisted to some extent but Dan was the head coach.

There was never an argument or loud voices from our neighbor's yard. They seemed to get along as well as any family could. They worked the yard together and the boys and their dad commuted to Burns every day together. In spite of all that time spent together when the sons were younger, they now have a business together - Sawyer Waterscaping.

Gregg's words in the WTE story were not contrived, not false. He is humble. He is hardworking and he has been successful in life's adventures as much as he was in sports. Congratulations, Gregg. It is right that good people are recognized.

Sell the water!

Finally, someone on the city governing body realizes that trying to accumulate more water than the BOPU has storage capacity is a foolish move.

It has been written here for years that Cheyenne has an abundant water supply and that the need for water restrictions was slight. It always was unnecessary but at least one good thing came out of the exercise - residents were forced to conserve water by not irrigating during the height of the sun and wind (10 am - 5 pm).

As Jack Spiker said several years ago, the Board of Public Utilities is in the "business of selling water." Conserving water should be a last resort, not a first choice.

The last I checked, BOPU only pumped from permitted wells half of the water they are authorized. And, the infamous carcinogen-laden water supply at the Belvoir Ranch has never been tapped.

We've got water, folks. We've got water.

Residents were so good, so cooperative, about conserving water during the period lawn irrigation was restricted that they learned, some against their own wishes, that more reasonable watering of lawns and other vegetation could adequately be accomplished three days a week, 17 hours a day.

There are some properties that cannot complete a sprinkler cycle in the allotted time but they are in the minority.

It is ironic that the same people who defended wanton spending of the tens of millions inherited in 2001 used the excuse that they were not elected to "hoard" the huge reserves on hand in 2001, even though that money was not recoverable but they have done exactly that - hoard - water when it is a recoverable resource.

Even when the city was in the midst of what was repeatedly and erroneously

labeled a "million year drought" by the daily, there was ample water in storage and available from city wells to drown the residents of the City of Cheyenne. Absolutely drown 'em!

Now, Spiker sees the wisdom of selling more water. With both the BOPU and its overseeing city government itself wallowing in debt and budget problems, there is no smart reason to hold to water restrictions that were not even truly necessary during the worst of the "drought."

I know Jack Spiker religiously reads the Cheyenne Herald and I have no problem with him "borrowing" my ideas. This one he got right. Had he purloined more of them over the eight years he was mayor, the city wouldn't face the financial crisis it now does. So, borrow away, Jack!

The only water restrictions we should have now, and really not enforce them too strenuously, is from 10 am to 5 pm daily.

Other than that, water away!

Two reasons: We have the water and the BOPU needs the money. They wouldn't have risked wrath of the voters by requesting an excessive rate hike unless they truly and desperately need the revenue.

The City needs every penny they can come across. By begging, borrowing and stealing. And, even though the BOPU has its own board of directors, the city governing body does have certain responsibilities and authority for the BOPU.

Yes, it would create a bit of pain and some embarrassment to admit that the restrictions could be lifted and the BOPU could terminate the unnecessary employment of their "water cop," but it is the right thing to do and it should be done without delay. Every day lost squanders more readily available revenue and serves no good purpose. It's never too late to do the right thing. Try it for a change, BOPU.

DREAMS

We all have dreams in life. College for the children, retire comfortably, vacation homes. What are your dreams and how are you planning to get there?

Total life planning includes the financial effects of daily events that we don't pay attention to, or expect. If you could save more *would you?*

Financially, where do you want to be in 10, 20 or 30 years?

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