

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Once in awhile, I'm contacted by a person in need. Food, lodging, financial, etc. I don't have close relationships with many groups who try to help our needy or homeless but I do have an idea who someone might contact, depending on their need.

Over time, I have decided to support a couple groups that I have found willing, cooperative and successful.

One is the Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless. I run their fundraising messages and we make personal donations to WCH.

In recent weeks, I have contacted organizations that, by their title, seemed to be in a position to help targeted groups - say seniors. From those calls, I found one group that tries to solve problems. A group that doesn't right off tell me they don't have enough money or don't serve that constituency or don't know what group may be able to offer assistance.

The group that is a "can do," not a "won't do" organization is the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Don't be concerned about a name that suggests religion. Churches, some, not nearly enough, do provide

sleeping areas for families with children who are displaced or need temporary aid.

To those who think of the homeless as those who ride trains and choose to not have a permanent address, IHN's purpose is to serve Cheyenne's "children with families" homeless due to a number of causes. The IHN objective is to help those among us who are temporarily thrown into a situation not of their own choosing. In a bad economy, the need is greatest.

Interfaith Hospitality Network has various ways you can get involved. They can always use volunteers - I'll let them explain how if you'll call them at 772-8770 or stop in and visit them at 2950 Spruce Place (north entrance to the downstairs offices).

Interfaith Hospitality Network is one of the worthy organizations caught up in the City's reduction of funding and they have to cover that lack of financial support.

If you are looking for a good cause to support, or another one, consider IHN. We at Hacienda Herald are going to. They actually do the job - they don't pass the money through to others and take a cut off the top. They do the job.

Mother's Day 2010

With my mother-in-law's passing in January, this is the first Mother's Day my wife and I have spent together without a living mother. My own mother died back in 1971 but my wife's mother always provided a bond taken for granted by so many.

Neither of us have grandparents and haven't had for many years. And, when your links to the past are gone, you have a huge void in your life. Aunts and uncles provide a connection but it just isn't the same. They're not like a parent.

For those estranged from their families, that has to be so hard. And, almost certainly, so wrong. And those who haven't seen parents in years and there is no excuse except distance, someday you may regret that separation.

You see, when they're gone, you can't make amends. You can't go see them.

You can't apologize. You can't make anything right.

I always had a good relationship with my mother-in-law. Never a disagreement (except she probably thought her daughter could have done better but what mother doesn't) and never an argument.

We hadn't spent Mother's Day with her for a long time but there was always a card, a gift and a telephone call. Placing flowers on her grave in northern Wisconsin won't be the same. They do have to be live. No plastic ones. No artificial ones. My wife's orders. It didn't require a holiday for my wife to call her mother - they spoke weekly or more often - but she didn't miss a Mother's Day. Now, she will.

So, if you have a living mother, consider yourself among the lucky. We'd like to be in your place.

Usually holes that deep have tour guides

City's dereliction has made more of us vigilant drivers

Driving around Cheyenne reminds me of the Crocodile Dundee line: "Pothole? That ain't no pothole. This is a pothole!"

As my cherished Lamborghini drops into still another cavern on one of the most traveled and busiest streets in Cheyenne, I'm reminded of some words I've tried not to use since I was a teenager and a bowed sapling slid up over the dozer blade and smacked me flush in the face.

What the City should do to generate funds and try to balance their budget is to open a string of front end alignment shops. Local residents tell me frequently what it just cost them to repair their vehicle after dropping into yet another unavoidable pothole. And it's a bunch.

If the City is seeking a sure fire means of getting voters to reject the next fifth penny extension, they're on the right track. You cannot fool with someone's "ride." Cars are cherished even more than cell phones or iPads. No one appreciates damage caused because a City does not perform the most basic of tasks - keeping its street in good repair.

The City can't say it hasn't had the money. Even without dipping into the \$40+ million reserves on hand in 2001, the sales tax collected for the purpose of maintaining city streets has been adequate to do just that.

So, why hasn't it been done?

There is a software package in the Public Works Department that allows tracking of streets most in need of repair so it isn't because city officials and the mayor didn't know certain streets were deteriorating. They did. And have for years.

Maybe if there were fewer Chamber luncheons to attend, city officials and the mayor would have more time to do the job they were hired or elected to do. Maybe if the mayor held fewer meetings and made more decisions quickly, they'd all have time to do their jobs better. This City has always been a body of meet-ers. No group has ever been stronger proponents of CYA than this group.

Meetings are used to cover the shortcomings of those in the repeated meetings. Decisiveness is lacking - we've seen that over and over with Mayor Maybe. It seems that, if they get within sight of a decision, another meeting will be scheduled.

As the old line goes, "Do something, even if it is wrong."

The current group, short of bonding a bunch of projects that do not require voter approval, cannot hurt the residents further with their spending. The money is all gone and it ain't comin' back. The endless source of revenue from the State has dried and it ain't comin' back. At least not in the near future.

With no money to spend, you'd think they would have the time to complete the work that has been funded, such as filling in the uncountable, deep and dangerous potholes in all parts of town.

So, what hasn't it been done?

Maybe they need just one more meeting. One more discussion. Perhaps a survey to learn residents' feelings about the potholes they have to navigate like Lindsey Vonn on her slalom runs. It is kind of amazing there haven't been more head-on collisions as drivers zig and zag down these busy two-way streets. That may be part of the solution: Convert all streets to one-way so drivers can safely swerve around the growing number of potholes.

The City hired an unnecessary Public Information Officer last fall. At a time they could not support retaining critical employees, they added a noncritical one at a nice salary. Maybe every evening at, say, 6:00 pm, he could appear at a different intersection to take public input about the condition of city streets. He could ascertain where new potholes are and report that information to the mayor and public works. He could determine voters wrath and develop a plan to contend with all who tell him they're not voting for the 5th penny again because the City doesn't use the money well or for purposes for which it was approved. Get him out of his office.

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