

# Cheyenne Christmas Parade

*It was my plan to interview Marie Crader, the founder of the Cheyenne Christmas Parade, and write an article about the establishment and growth of Cheyenne's most popular parade. My wife and I have attended almost all of the 19 parades to date - I think I've missed maybe three and she has missed one fewer. One year, we had family visiting and I chose to babysit a nearly perfect granddaughter so my wife has seen one more parade than I have. Marie and I had a hard time arranging an interview but she provided me a write-up about the Parade and I decided it was probably better than any I could put together so I went with Marie's. Congratulations, Marie, to you and your volunteers, for starting and continuing the city's best parade.*

The Cheyenne Christmas Parade got its start a little over 21 years ago when Marie Crader and her husband Bill were returning from Michigan after spending Thanksgiving with relatives. Their car broke down and had to be towed to Marshall, Michigan. They were required to spend the night at a motel near there awaiting auto repairs. The town was having a Nighttime Christmas Parade. The couple went to the parade and was totally thrilled at the sight of those brightly lit and decorated floats.

The next day after their car was repaired and they resumed their trip home, Marie began to ask, "Why doesn't Cheyenne have a Christmas Parade?" After they arrived home, Marie went to the library and began researching the subject of "How to Start a Parade."

After about a year of researching and studying on how to do it, she formed a committee and began the planning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas Parade. She walked to all of the downtown businesses pitching her idea. She also appeared on all radio stations in Cheyenne seeking support.

The parade has always been successful. However, there have been rough spots, setbacks and disappointing moments. One of the worst rough spots occurred with the first Christmas Parade.

On the day of the first parade, the weather took a sudden plunge and the temperature neared zero. On that morning of the first parade, Marie very nearly cancelled the parade because it was so cold. She began the task of calling parade participants to tell them she was going to cancel the parade on account of the extremely cold arctic temperatures. To Marie's astonishment everyone she called said, "No, No, Marie don't cancel it, let's just go ahead with it and if no one comes at least we had a parade." She thought about it for a bit and decided to go ahead with the parade. It proved to be a wise decision.

Even with the extremely cold temperatures, there were about 5,000 spectators and nearly all of the 80 entries in the first parade showed up.

As soon as the first parade was over, Marie began to get plenty of support from the City and Community. The parade, so far, has never had to be cancelled because of bad weather. Sometime it's cold, but people always come out for this event.

The Christmas Parade has truly become a "Holiday Tradition" for our community.

She has been asked, "Marie, why did you start a parade?" Her answer has always been that she did it because Cheyenne didn't have what she saw in a small Michigan town. She wondered why we didn't have a nighttime parade. She has also stated on many occasions that this parade should always be for and about children and for that child that lives inside all of us.

Christmas is a magical time for everyone! There's just something about that time of year that brings out the best in us.

In a letter-to-the-editor, this was stated about the Christmas Parade: "It is a magical moving river of lights." Marie has always said she liked that statement.

## Who planned the Obama trip?

Did it make any sense for the President of the United States to be out of the country on the heels of a national repudiation of him, his policies and his political party?

Did it make any sense for the President of the United States to be in Indonesia and recognize the sacrifices made by their people in the pursuit of independence at the time of our Veterans Day, a time of remembrance of our military's sacrifice not only to our retention of freedom but for those around the world?

Neither of these events snuck up on the POTUS or his handlers. For months, polling indicated that Republicans would regain control of Congress. Likely in a big way. As it turned out, they took numerical control of the House of Representatives but effective control of Congress by limiting Democrats to fewer than the dominating 60 Senate seats.

Why wasn't the President here to both reassure his Party that things could still get done by cooperation between members of the two parties (as well as Joe Lieberman and Bernard Sanders) and

to do his best to calm very real fears of the American people - that gridlock is almost certain - and that his leadership could gain cooperation from enough Republicans so the critical business before Congress can be initiated and/or moved forward over the next two years?

Was his overseas trip during these anxious times for the American people unavoidable at this particular time? What will be accomplished, except to further alienate Israel, that could not have waited until after the first of the year?

The photo ops being shown in this country aren't presenting a compelling purpose for this trip - now or at another time.

The fact that he and his wife have been able to visit the country where he lived as a youth does much to play into the hands of those who consider him a foreigner. After the election rejection, providing fodder to "the birthers" was unwise.

Of the three presidents preceding Obama, only one was accepted by veterans as one of them. George Bush the

Elder clearly served in the active duty military. The other two, Bill Clinton and George Bush the Younger, either avoided military service or shirked the duties assigned them.

Nonetheless, each of those presidents made themselves available at Veterans Day remembrances. Whether it is truly important or just symbolic, it is asking little for the POTUS to schedule travel, if at all possible and practical, around Veterans Day and Memorial Day - both occasions that now remember our military men and women's service and sacrifices to their country.

Few in elected office now are veterans and fewer in the future will be. Rick Kaysen here in Cheyenne is a notable exception. At time goes on, only the poorer will serve in the military. Possibly those from a military family. More and more candidates, especially the successful ones, will be born into wealth and privilege, like Matt Mead, and see no reason or advantage to volunteer to serve in the military. That is their choice. Worse than not serving, if that's a "worse" kind of

thing, is Connecticut Democrat Richard Blumenthal, who for years repeatedly claimed to be a Vietnam veteran when he was not. He didn't serve overseas anywhere, let alone the very dangerous Vietnam. He won on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Over a woman, Linda McMahon, whose greatest weakness seems to have been that she was CEO of the hugely successful WWE, the professional wrestling business. He lied about his record. She laughed about hers. She told the truth about her past. He lied about his. She lost the election. He won.

Perhaps Democrats are grateful to the President for being absent. Perhaps they wouldn't have wanted him reading off the teleprompter how he would lead them out of the wilderness. And maybe they are right. It just seems to this writer that he should have been here for both the grieving process of his party and for the remembrances of Veterans Day. You shouldn't have to be a veteran to appreciate the significance of that day of recognition. We are at war, aren't we? Still mired in one of the wars Obama promised to end instead of prolong?

**What is the Cheyenne Herald?** It is a bi-weekly publication that I hesitate to refer to as a "newspaper" but calling it only an "Opinion/Commentary" publication does not adequately describe it either. While some of what appears on these pages is opinion, commentary, and/or essay, much of it is breaking news readers won't find elsewhere. When I published disclosures about misuse of City credit cards by a City Council secretary, that was not commentary. That was fact. That was news. When I published specifics of the "secret" Costa Rica trip that LCCC's president had hidden from public scrutiny, that was fact. News. Not opinion or commentary. Because I write virtually everything presented on these pages, my byline is seldom used. It is not necessary. An article written by someone else will have a byline. The Herald is NOT a member of the Wyoming Press Association. I do not clear my offerings with anybody and I will not pay dues to share information. What is presented is original. The Cheyenne Herald is Wyoming's only investigative publication and that responsibility is taken seriously.

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