

## LCCC President Darrel Hammon questioned the accuracy of Cheyenne Herald disclosures and the value of what we do. He will now be the focus of our attention.

Multiple sources told me that, when a LCCC Trustee brought up the article(s) that appeared in the October 19th issue of the Cheyenne Herald that disclosed questionable practices in the use and oversight of LCCC-issued credit cards, Darrel Hammon and the college's "custodian of the records" Carol Hoglund, became defensive, belligerent, fearful, angry and then critical and insulting.

All except the last reaction was expected and would have been considered tolerable. Insulting, however, is intolerable.

And, I have been told, in addition to disparaging Jim Mathewson and myself, Hammon also said something to the effect that the Cheyenne Herald belongs in the trash. Those are fightin' words, Hoss.

After what I've learned during the past several months about Darrel Hammon's professional and personal behavior, I don't think he should be using that term to describe anyone or anything else.

Jim Mathewson developed and wrote the articles that appeared on three and a half pages of the last Cheyenne Herald. Only he knows how many hours he spent in auditing the credit card records and data incidental to use of those credit cards.

You have a right to know what is being done with the LCCC-issued but taxpayer funded credit cards and Jim's audit uncovered many unsettling and questionable things. While one could challenge some of the spending, we have stopped short of alleging fraud or deliberate theft by use of taxpayer funded credit cards.

Over the past two or three years, I have been contacted numerous times, asking me to investigate, "look into," what was "going on" at LCCC. I have met with insiders and I have been sent detailed complaints - most reflecting on Darrel Hammon and his failure as president of our community college.

While the input was interesting, I didn't feel I could do justice to the investigation that would be required and I, basically, gave Hammon a free ride, a pass. But, when the Jim Cook wrongful termination hearing was approaching, I was asked

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if I could attend at least part of the hearing, listen to at least some of the testimony. It was felt that if I heard some of what was happening on the LCCC campus, I would find a way to go further into an investigation. I reluctantly agreed to go onto campus for the beginning of the testimony of that appeal. That is when I concluded LCCC had become a community college run amok and there was a single person responsible for what the college had become and that it would never get any better with him at the helm.

What I observed during those days of the Cook wrongful termination hearing and learned elsewhere about the then-sitting board of trustees was alarming. Some trustees, enough to stall improvements or actions necessary to remove this president, were little more than potted plants who believe it is their responsibility to support a president they may played a direct role in hiring, rather than representing the voters who elected them and protecting the students who depend on them.

Because Jim Mathewson is both willing and able to focus on a single issue like a pit bull on a balled-up sweat sock, I asked him if he'd be willing to take a look at the use of LCCC credit cards. That concern has been one of the most frequently expressed to me over the past many months. Jim doesn't go into his audits with a preconceived idea of where it will take him. He is deliberate, tenacious and determined. He takes "no" for an answer like that four year-old boy in the seat behind you on the airplane. And, sure enough, the LCCC custodian of the records and a new full-time attorney now draining money from the college's coffers, tried to stall him. They tried to discourage his pursuit. They didn't know this guy. Through patience and perseverance, Jim accessed the public records he sought and began his audit and developed the first articles about LCCC credit card use and lack of oversight. (See the last issue.)

This is Jim's story. He was willing to take it on and I won't inject myself or interfere with his efforts. I'm sure there are some tangents I can follow and add to Jim's efforts. That's what I will do.

After Jim's articles hit, the LCCC board impetuously approved an audit of the credit cards by their current, under contract auditor. That was not a good idea. More so because this board should not have taken any action. They should have waited until after the November 2nd election and allowed the new board to make that decision. While there is at least a chance the make-up of the board won't change, it is widely expected it will.

If the board's mentality stays as it has been, it is unlikely I will feel any investment of time or effort to disclose wrongdoing or questionable behavior at LCCC is worthwhile. By "mentality," I mean if the incumbent board members prevail in this election (held the day this issue comes out), it is unlikely the necessary changes or improvements will be seen at LCCC. While the votes could be there even under that scenario, I'm not sure the courage would be. The minority side has served for the longest time and appear to hold sway over the newer, more capable trustees.

I have taken the position that, unless and until Darrel Hammon's employment is terminated, little can improve at LCCC. The board of trustees have had the required "cause" to terminate him based on his assignment of responsibility and lack of supervision during the LCCC students Costa Rica trip and his behavior after the return - his unprofessional behavior leading up to the trip - regarding use of free tickets and considering the trip a family vacation for him and two daughters - and his lack of personal concern during the trip - when, among other indiscretions, he assigned an unqualified student to be a troubled girl's "pharmacist" and directed him to dispense her medicines in a foreign country with much different laws than our own on such a subject - and upon return when he took upon himself an assignment of acting as a mental health counselor, without qualifications or license.

Yet, their misguided, unfounded and foolish concern for Hammon's having the potential to litigate against LCCC if he were terminated for legitimate cause, has led the board to tolerate his continued rogue behavior that has brought shame,

ridicule, embarrassment and scorn upon LCCC. He and Carol Hoglund provided the required distortions of FERPA that led an uninformed judge, Peter Arnold, to issue a temporary restraining order against the Cheyenne Herald, necessitating my removal of an article about the Costa Rica trip and the legally obtained Care Team Report about the president's failings during the trip, from my website.

First Amendment, free speech and freedom of the press organizations from around the country weighed in on the side of the Cheyenne Herald and the judge quickly rescinded the improper and ill-advised TRO he had granted. But, it was too late to avoid the humiliation the two LCCC employees caused the institution.

Carol Hoglund, who now casts aspersions on the Cheyenne Herald, knowingly and willfully signed an Affidavit that gave the judge what he needed to grant the TRO. Contents of that Affidavit were false and she attested to having personal knowledge that everything was true. She also could have been terminated for that obedient albeit illegal behavior.

I have asked Jim Mathewson to direct more focus on the actions of Darrel Hammon. His use of LCCC funds, his travel at LCCC expense, his attendance at distant meetings, his in-town use of his expense account, his scheduling travel to coincide with other events and charging all expenses to LCCC, others using his LCCC credit card, and the specifics of his travel and costs for the Costa Rica trip for him and his daughters.

Jim Mathewson is not an employee of the Cheyenne Herald. He does not take orders or direction from me. I ultimately make the decision about publishing his work but he makes all decisions leading up to the writing and presenting it to me for consideration. I have never refused to print what he offered and it is inconceivable that I ever will. But, where he takes this story is his call. I will get involved in non-interfering ways. It is my expectation that both of us will dedicate time and effort to investigating Darrel Hammon's spending of your money. If our findings warrant sharing, you will read about them. If not, you won't.