

Anything two people know is not a secret

# CHEYENNE HERALD

**FREE - TAKE ONE**

the local advocacy journal

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## Don't call, e-mail or write to me to complain about or comment on a story you have not read personally. I am not interested in such input.

I appreciate hearing from readers of the Cheyenne Herald. I truly do.

On the other hand, those who contact me, or try to contact me, to weigh in on words they have not read, hold no interest to me.

And, my gag reflex meter spikes off the chart when someone like the current mayor leaves a message saying, "I haven't seen the story but someone told me ...".

Rick Kaysen has been a longtime fan of the Cheyenne Herald. When he was CEO of Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power, he and I had several lengthy confidential conversations about issues in the City and the inferiority of the daily newspaper. I did not know at the time that he sat on the Board of Directors of Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc., owner of the Tribune-Eagle.

At the time, I traveled to Torrington on the day of printing and personally brought the papers back with me, to arrive at City News as close to 1:00 pm as I could. The time was important to me because my good friend Phyllis Atchison was usually waiting there for the paper.

As I worked the downtown area in the distribution of the Herald, I often saw Rick walking from his office on 18th St. and Warren the three blocks to City News at 18th St. and Carey.

Rick not only supported my efforts in publishing the Cheyenne Herald, he was a loyal reader, one of the first to get a copy as I pointed out above, and could quote chapter and verse from my pages.

When the City attempted to municipalize the public utility, I was asked to allow the City Engineer at the time, Ken Lewis, to present the City's position to me. We met at the downtown Village Inn and I recorded a

lengthy interview with Ken.

I could not support the idea of the City, desperately mismanaged at the time, taking over Cheyenne Light and that was my editorial position. It was unfathomable to me that they thought they could handle such a large and foreign undertaking. At one point, I invited both Ken Lewis and Rick Kaysen to provide their written positions for Herald readers. Both accepted the offer and articulated their stands on these pages.

My position in support of Cheyenne Light had no quid pro quo. The company did not advertise with me. I never asked them to and they never offered. Black Hills Corporation did later but they haven't advertised with me for several years even though I have been supportive of them on other issues, like the "smart meters" more recently.

My support cannot be bought.

I wrote a number of times of my opposition to the City municipalizing our electric and natural gas utilities. Rick Kaysen used those articles in his presentation material, calling the Cheyenne Herald an "opinion former" or words to that effect.

He never tried to plant information or influence my positions and I never sought approval from him or his employer for my articles. When he ran for mayor in 2010, he ran several ads on these pages.

Rick Kaysen reads the Cheyenne Herald.

Rick Kaysen knows how I work in producing the Cheyenne Herald.

Rick Kaysen respects the Cheyenne Herald.

As a former high ranking city official once told me, "I really like your writing style. Unless I'm your target."

That might be Rick's current position.

And I don't care. He has been a major disappointment to many of us who thought, based on his business experience at Cheyenne Light, that he would be a good mayor. He has been weak and indecisive, hence my nickname for him of "Mayor Maybe." Whether he seeks a second term or is re-elected to another term matters not to me. I will not be here.

Anyway, with that as a background of the relationship between Rick Kaysen and myself as publisher of the Cheyenne Herald, let me relate what transpired after the last issue of the Herald hit the streets on November 29th:

I had left to go out of town very early on the morning of Wednesday, November 30th, the day after that issue was fully distributed. When I travel now, I do not check in for messages left on my answering machine while I'm away. Those I want to hear from have my cell phone no. and several e-mail addresses they can use to contact me.

So, I did not listen to the message left by Rick Kaysen until after my return on Sunday, December 4th.

He started with that B.S. line, "I haven't seen the latest issue of your paper but someone told me you wrote about my trip to Hawaii."

Now, if Rick had said he had read the article and wanted to provide further details about his trip, no problem. But by pretending not to have read it himself, he could misrepresent what I had written. And he did. And by pretending not to have read it himself, he could ignore the thrust of the story - that whether he made an official trip to Hawaii at public expense or had taken a vacation trip to Hawaii on his own dime, either would have been wrong.

What he wanted to inform me was that he had received no public funds for the trip except that he had used earned vacation time (paid time to be away) and that the City had paid him for use of his personal BlackBerry. I don't know what that means.

So, what he admitted to me was that he had gone on vacation to Hawaii at the time of the USS Cheyenne's 15th anniversary of christening and had presented himself as mayor of the namesake city and he and his family were afforded the niceties usually reserved for real dignitaries.

It would have been more acceptable to me had Rick traveled on official business with his expenses paid by the City - the taxpayers. Because, when the Navy is firing up a submarine for a pleasure trip to Gilligan's Island, that costs some real dough and should be reserved to real dignitaries, not a mayor and city councilman on vacation.

Larry Atwell, former director of the downtown Chamber of Commerce also left a message in my absence. He told me that Navy personnel in Hawaii really appreciate the hospitality they are shown when they visit during Frontier Days and like to reciprocate for Cheyenne visitors to the Islands. He even opined that, should I visit Hawaii, I could present myself as an important person and they would wine and dine me as they did Rick and Patrick Collins and other non-dignitaries that made that trip.

I am *not* a dignitary. And it would be a cold day in hell when I would present myself as one, expecting a ride in a nuclear powered submarine and a private dinner at the CO's house. This was a pretentious trip that cost considerable public funds to host a handful of regular Joe's from Cheyenne, not distinguished visitors.

Note: The mayor should not be held to a vacation schedule. He is elected, not employed, and should be paid \$380,000 for four years. Period.

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