

Anything two people know is not a secret

# CHEYENNE HERALD

FREE-TAKE ONE

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## Menard's is a "landscaping company?"

*WTE readers were once again shown, in one day, why the local daily newspaper has no credibility, no influence, no principles and diminishing circulation*

Having intimidated the former mayor to break the bank, the local daily now laments the fact that the current mayor "has [a] dearth of big ideas."

By my estimate, the former mayor and his band of doofuses spent \$40+ million of excess money he inherited or was provided by the State of Wyoming during his first term. That's in addition to an increase in general fund spending from \$28.6 million to over \$50.0 million in eight years.

Painted as "anti-growth" in 2000 when the newly arrived, all-controlling editor Reed Eckhardt refused to endorse him for mayor - in spite of having demanded that incumbent mayor Leo Pando resign for incompetence - Jack Spiker didn't deserve that label but instead of using the incredible mandate from the 2000 election for mayor, Spiker decided that getting Eckhardt to "like" him was more important than forcing Eckhardt to "respect" him.

Jack began his first term by selling out to the publication that detested him. Within 30 days, Spiker took actions that put the newspaper in the position of announcing (ahead of the compliant broadcast media in town) that Lowe's had chosen Cheyenne for a new regional distribution center and also repeatedly made telephone calls to the WTE opinion page editor and reporter covering the City "beat" with information intending to damage or discredit council members he later aligned with and fell in love with.

The reason Jack Spiker did not have to "sell out" to the inferior daily newspaper in Cheyenne was that he had won the 2000 election by carrying all but one precinct in town. He lost that single precinct, in northern Western Hills, by a handful of votes. Jack was in the driver's seat, not a new editor from Monroe, LA. Jack's thin skin and lack of self-confidence made him go to the dark side, though.

Betraying voters and supporters by throwing in with city council members who despised him and disrespected him - hell, one even made illegal campaign contributions to two opponents in the same primary in an attempt to eliminate Jack Spiker from the general election - from a PAC formed for another purpose - Jack used that very word with me. He was determined to make Reed Eckhardt "like" him. And, he did. That romance came at a high price to residents and the City.

Editorials were written in 2000 (by Eckhardt) disparaging Spiker and praising two city council candidates Eckhardt had in his pocket. In the 2000 primary election, the WTE endorsed a candidate (a sitting council member like Jack Spiker) who had done nothing to distinguish himself in four years. He finished third in that primary and was eliminated.

The reason for this review is to remind Cheyenne Herald readers that little written by that same editor at the WTE should be believed or trusted. Often, the purpose for his words is to intimidate, to belittle, to convert, to proselytize. He has no principles. And, because of him, the WTE has no influence. He cannot remember positions he has taken in the past and believes only for the moment. Now, no one cares what positions the daily has nor consider voting for or against a candidate because of endorsements they make.

On the day in 2000, shortly before that general election, a day when the daily was supposed to make its endorsement for mayor (after having said no endorsement "was not an option") Reed refused to endorse either the incumbent mayor Leo Pando or the challenger Jack Spiker. Neither were worthy of being mayor, Eckhardt wrote. Instead, he wrote, the daily would push for a city manager form of government.

That was over 11 years ago.

What has that newspaper done to "push for," support, endorse, encourage, etc., a city manager?

Nothing.

Now, the same editor again writes "we support the move to a city manager." For eleven years after stating the same position, the WTE remained mute on the subject - opposing it by its lack of support.

You cannot believe them. Should not.

His words are simply a shot across the bow to whomever may seek the mayor's office later this year (2012). What Reed is saying in the story of Sunday, January 1, 2012, is that his employer may "support" a change to city manager form of government, IF the candidates do not bow down, cave in and sell out to them.

It worked in 2000 when Jack Spiker, so lightly regarded by the same editor that he would not endorse Jack even after demanding his opponent resign early, did all of the above.

I have managed, and/or advised to the level of being considered the campaign manager, several political campaigns. My record is very good. I have had many victories. And while I would just not get involved with a Jack Spiker again if I knew who they really were - or would become if elected - he was still the better choice at the time. I regret that he became a different man after being sworn in and more regret that he did it so quickly and without need. I came to recognize that a weak man can be manipulated by a weak daily newspaper. And that is what happened. Then.

Voters have to choose from among those on a ballot. Generally, strong candidates will not seek public office.

That problem, combined with a local daily newspaper that provides not information helpful in making a choice between candidates but propaganda favoring *their* causes, not voters interests, make for bad elections.

Cheyenne *should* change to a city manager form of government. No question. The daily would still try to dominate a city manager but that person would not be as vulnerable nor susceptible to such pressure as an elected mayor. It will require the "people" to bring about that change, not this daily newspaper. They are insincere in most positions they claim to take. They will not make any effort that might lead to a city manager. They may pontificate about the need but they don't mean it. If the next mayor will make secretive calls to Reed Eckhardt and/or seeks his blessing on all important decisions, the hue and cry by the WTE for a city manager will end. Mark my words.

The true colors of what the latest generation of McCrackens see for Cheyenne show through brightly in those January 1, 2012 editorials. The editor mocks potholes, graffiti (even though their own building was tagged), and oppose "growing the landfill," to "get a fire truck," and to "expand the cemetery."

To write the words, "a great city," when they don't understand what makes a great city, is shallow. Meaningless. Insulting. Pandering.

Cheyenne has aspects of greatness now. But, it will never reach its potential with a daily newspaper that doesn't know details as simple as Menard's is a "home improvement store," not a "landscaping company" as Reed wrote in that editorial on New Year's Day 2012. Cheyenne will not become a great city so long as it has a weak daily newspaper. And it won't by just mouthing the words.

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