

Congratulations to the bars that raised over a grand in the 2011 *Bar Bucks* program

There are so many good programs around here during the Christmas season. Even the WTE has attached its name, for publicity purposes, to one. The effort to provide gifts to children who might otherwise go without and to provide food to families that likely would otherwise go without, has been, and continues to be, remarkable in Cheyenne.

Most of us can afford to do more. But, many do extend themselves through effort and some through financial donations. Businesses could always do more. But the effort here is very good even if it is not enough.

Laramie County bars that participate in the *Bar Bucks* program are to be commended. Some do a helluva job. I don't frequent any bars so I don't know how they try to generate donations but it is obvious that at least five put some real effort into getting their patrons to contribute.

The Eagles Lodge has set the bar high. After several years of generating the highest amount of donations, they were surpassed in 2011 by the Redwood Lounge. Of the \$30,700+ generated from all of the bars, the two highest producers brought in more than half of the total.

MORE THAN HALF!

The top five bars brought in over 72.5% of all the money donated. The other 34 bars, the balance.

It was good to see that American Legion Post 6 encouraged giving in their establishment. Many veterans don't have great resources but they do what they can for others in need.

There are some bars that disappointed. For Jackson's to raise only \$140 when the Redwood Lounge, with a less affluent clientele, raised over \$10,000 brings into question what the BarX'rs, The Pointe'rs and other "pretenders" who go to expensive sports bars and lounges did for their Christmas giving. Shadow's enticed but \$53 from their customers. This is the tavern in the majestic former UP depot with the sweetheart lease from the City. "The owner" recently took a trip to Hawaii to "big shot" it with the mayor and others wanting to be dignitaries - they're not - and he couldn't throw in more than \$53 himself?

Redwood Lounge, Eagles Lodge, Legion Post 6, Pal's Pub and the Airport Golf Club, thanks for trying. And succeeding. Prost!

A strong military provides jobs

Over time, our active duty military has been shrunk dangerously and our reservists have been called upon to fill voids.

An "active duty" military member is defined as one who is full-time military with a certain obligation for duration of active duty service.

In 1970, when the population of the United States was 203,400,000 people, there were 3,064,760 active duty military personnel. That represented about one in every 65 Americans or 1.5% of the population. As our population has grown, the number of active duty military personnel has shrunk. Not that there has to be a direct correlation between active duty military and population but I would remind you that most recent "wars" have been fought on the ground. At least to a great extent. While the American people prefer attacks from 30,000 feet in the air, that isn't always possible.

By 2000, the population of the United States had grown to 281,400,000 and there were 1,384,338 active duty personnel, less than one-half of one percent. A nearly doubling in population with less than half the number on active duty.

Barack Obama now proposes to further downsize the military.

Is the world a markedly safer place now than it was in 1970, when one in 65 Americans was in the military? Hardly. Can we protect our interests in the world with only planes and aircraft carriers? Not likely.

While it might be a tough sell to convince the American people that young men and women (among the most unemployable) in active duty military service would reduce unemployment and save tremendously on other social programs, it is true.

Military personnel have regular paydays and are paid with checks that don't bounce. They can buy cars. They can buy houses. They pay their bills and, for the most part, behave themselves and stay out of trouble with the law.

With unemployment at catastrophic levels and unlikely to honestly decline in the foreseeable future, now doesn't seem like the best time to continue to gut our defense capabilities. And to take a half million off the unemployment rolls would help in so many national security and employment ways. Think about it.

A new "meth house" in Cheyenne?

There is a current story involving the smoking of meth in a local house that bears eery similarity to the story that led to the erroneous and malicious labeling of an Avenues house as a "meth lab." That lie was told, I remind you, by then-police chief Bob Fecht and embellished upon while he was a Wyoming State Senator.

A reprehensible and indefensible act.

There was never an allegation that meth was smoked in the Avenues house while an infant, preschooler or pre-teen child was present.

I would remind readers, that while Fecht later misled neighbors and residents (not to mention fellow legislators) about the seriousness of the contamination, he did not believe there was any real danger in the house - not until a lie served his nefarious purposes. A disabled resident was allowed to live in the dwelling and a young teenager who had lived there for a couple weeks before "the raid," was allowed to return inside the house to retrieve belongings after the arrests were made and charges filed related to meth use. I've been in there several times.

The latest story, with headlines using "undocumented worker" as the hook, provided law enforcement with a lot to work with. Including, incidentally, deportation of one of those involved. A local public defender once again proved just how inadequate they are. He said his client, the meth user and deportee,

"has little criminal history and was inexperienced with meth."

Say what? Inexperienced?

That story, in other local media on January 6th, provided three (four unless there was a typo on one address - 410, 420?) addresses at which meth was being smoked related to this story and defendants.

The main subject of the story admitted to smoking meth in the presence of his 13 month-old son. I could find no reference in the story as to how law enforcement dealt with the multiple residences in which meth had allegedly been smoked.

I asked the CPD Chief questions regarding this matter and he referred them to one of his officers. Another answer missing from the story in another local medium was whether the meth users had been questioned about where they got the meth or whether they manufacturer it themselves. Several meth users in town have told me that when they were arrested, they were never asked where they bought the drug.

The differences in how the Avenues house matter was handled and how this one is being handled boils down to two things: Different police chiefs and the location of alleged violations. Mention "the Avenues" as the scene of meth use and people pay attention. Mention the addresses in the current matter and no one reads. Fecht used that to his advantage.

Fits me to a "t"

A Christmas "stocking stuffer" gift from my younger daughter was a small book, entitled simply, "dad." Not full of schmaltzy Hallmark greeting card pap, the 3" tall little book(let) contains pithy quotes about being a Dad. One I found particularly full of meaning and truth as it applies to me is:

Fathers are what give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough, so they can provide grandchildren who are smarter than anybody's ...

The words are attributed to newscaster Paul Harvey but, in my non-humble opinion, apply to every father with daughters who has ever lived.

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