

"ANYTHING TWO PEOPLE KNOW IS NOT A SECRET."

# THE CHEYENNE HERALD

the local advocacy journal

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## Grier's closing is not another "opportunity" for downtown

The recent announcement that Grier's will close is not good news for the downtown. In spite of how the mayor and some councilmen will spin it, it is devastating news.

Once in a great while, when a younger generation takes over a venerable store, it will improve and expand. More often, it will slide downhill. With what has been claimed to be "explosive" population growth here over the past six years, it is disappointing to see retail stores fail.

In the recent past, downtown was the hub for furniture shopping. Now all that will remain is the downsized store of the mayor's. Albert's Telesonic, Z's, Mossholder's, Harrington's, Pacesetter (maker?), a mattress store or two, and now Grier's are (will be) history.

Downtowns have been difficult to impossible to sustain as a retail draw and Cheyenne is no exception. All that remains of the major retail or service businesses downtown is The Wrangler. Frontier Printing was taken over by a younger generation and pulled up stakes for Loveland, Colorado. Dinneen's and Grier's were being run by a younger generation and will disappear. The Tribune-Eagle is putting in new printing equipment but it is uncertain whether more or better jobs will be a part of that change.

A Marriott franchise extended-stay hotel is supposed to go up on the former location of Wyoming Home. But they have added a caveat that unless the public provides a 374' enclosed walkway from the parking garage down the alley behind their property, they ain't delivering.

"The Foreclosure King" bought the Hynds Building and promised remodeling and renovation to that long-abandoned building. The dream of occupancy of a once-magnificent building, empty since 1986 and no factor for years before that, may be shattered. Now, they've thrown down the same gauntlet. It is interesting to note that when several downtown property owners were encouraging, "demanding" might be a better word, the City to use public funds to provide them more parking, unfulfilled promises were made by the owner and prospective tenant of the Hynds Building. More broken promises.

But the parking garage wasn't a Kevin Costner movie. We built it with public money (bonds backed by mineral royalties revenue) but they didn't come.

There were promises galore to use the new parking structure - IF it were built entirely with public funds, no private contribution from the promisors whatsoever - that did not materialize.

Between the construction period that claimed many business victims and the aftermath, there is no evidence that the garage has brought any new life, vitality or occupancy to the downtown. In fact, just the opposite has resulted.

There will be some who argue that the demise of Dinneen's and Grier's was just a "sign of the times." Yet, American Furniture, the "category killer" Grier's had to fear, has not opened in Cheyenne. In fact, there have been no openings of new furniture stores in Cheyenne this decade.

The auto makes sold by Dinneen's did not go out of favor - they are still being offered by dealers in the market. But from Westland Road, not downtown.

The Plains Hotel made a gallant effort to turn their fortunes around by attracting considerable Casper money into remodeling it. Has that investment paid off? Locals don't see much of those results - hotels are geared toward travelers and visitors, not locals. At least give McMurry credit - he tried. And he didn't come into the downtown with his hand extended. He didn't demand a skywalk from the garage. The Plains went out and dealt with their parking problems in a different way. One that didn't help the use of the garage but one that dealt with their needs.

Every time a major property is vacated in the downtown, the "glass half-fullers" announce that it presents another "opportunity." So would the closing of The Wrangler but that is an opportunity we don't want. Or need. The downtown presents more opportunities now than can be realized in a lifetime. The old Downtowner is being remodeled and the former LaCosta Restaurant is near reopening.

With Grubb & Ellis leaving a large downtown space, Z's empty, Dinneen's block and a half serving as a surface parking lot, The Hynds still abandoned, and now Grier's bidding adieu, no more opportunities are needed. More pizza places will not bring back the downtown. All the real estate and mortgages offices will close when the real estate downturn occurs.

Enough "opportunities" already.

## The Thomas Replacement

Wyoming hasn't seen so much jostling for position since Reggie Slater left UW.

If anybody doubted the power of incumbency, the stampede of willing Republicans to be "named" to a seat (given the seat) rather than face the voters for it, should have removed all doubts.

In 2004 and 2006, Barbara Cubin was considered vulnerable and increasingly unpopular with Wyoming Republican voters. Yet, only Cale Case and Bruce Asay in 2004 and Bill Winney in 2006 took up the challenge to vie against her in the Republican primaries of those years.

Many of those now raising their hands and collectively shouting "pick me, pick me," did not let their ambition exceed their caution in those years and remained safely behind their living room drapes, peaking out only to see how the challengers in those elections made out.

The unfortunate passing of Senator Craig Thomas brought out a bevy of candidates resembling an American Idol audition.

There are almost half as many candidates as there are voters that will have the difficult responsibility of culling the herd to three names to submit to the Governor.

And it is a remarkable group.

From the term-limited former state treasurer Cynthia Lummis to a roster with at least a dozen names unfamiliar to this writer, 31 people in all signed up for this game resembling playground dodgeball. In spite of all those who looked both ways

before crossing this street and saw no incumbent coming, the whole process is a positive one and the quality of candidates is high.

*The Cheyenne Herald will go where few dare to tread. We will pick the survivors of the Round of 8 and then the Round of 3. But not the final selection - that could jeopardize their chance with Gov Dave.*

Before doing that, it has been the position of the Cheyenne Herald that Susan Thomas should have been approached by the Republican Party to see if she would take the seat - at least until the November 2008 election. If she wanted to continue her teaching career, she should have been able to take a leave of absence as did former Cheyenne mayor Gary Schaeffer and return to teaching in January of 2009. Fred Parady told the Herald that no such contact was made - that it was "a self nomination process." That's fine even though at least one candidate said he had been approached to be a candidate.

It is also my position that a "caretaker" should be appointed. A person who makes a commitment not to run in 2008 (like Gerald Ford did in 1974, only mean it). The WT-E surely will support this position because they do not want an appointed person to have an advantage of running as an incumbent in the following election (their position about the county coroner's office in 2006).

As of June 14, only Ray Hunkins had made it known that he would be a "seat warmer," if chosen. That is the right route.

*Please see page 8 for a list of candidates and my predictions*

### Flag desecration at Olivet Cemetery story inside



Stock photo of a veterans cemetery

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## Wyoming's next U.S. Senator - the winnowing Process

The applicants - in alphabetical order:

Round of All	Round of 8	Round of 3
Bruce Asay John Barrasso Cale Case	Bruce Asay John Barrasso	
Doug Chamberlain Ben H. Collins, Jr. David R. Edwards	Doug Chamberlain	
Dennis Fox Larry French Brian Gamroth		
Jan Gray John A. Holtz Ray Hunkins	Ray Hunkins	Ray Hunkins, or
Paul Kruse * Nora Lewis Cynthia Lummis	Cynthia Lummis	Cynthia Lummis
Randall Luthi <del>Clif McCrady (withdrew)</del> Matt Mead	Matt Mead	Matt Mead
Ron Micheli Frank Moore Bill Paddleford		
Thom Rankin Tom Sansonetti Jack R. Sapp	Tom Sansonetti	
Joseph Schloss * Colin Simpson J. Randall Stevenson *	Colin Simpson	Colin Simpson
Clark Stith * Nate Stratton Jeanna Wright		
Charles C. Young		

This story was written on June 14-15 - before the Central Committee meeting in Casper.

In my opinion, selection of the final three will boil down to calling in favors. An interesting twist to this is that in the 2006 gubernatorial race, Cliff Hansen (Matt Mead's grandfather) and Alan Simpson (Colin Simpson's father) were honorary co-chairmen of the Ray Hunkins campaign and Cynthia Lummis was the so-called campaign manager. All four may be calling in favors from the same Central Committee members.

Of the list of 31, Bruce Asay, John Barrasso, Cale Case, Doug Chamberlain, Ray Hunkins, Cynthia Lummis and Thom Rankin (not a Republican and a pre-vote elimination) have run statewide races with Cynthia being the only winner. The problem for her is that Dave Freudenthal is unlikely to pick her if she is one of the three names forwarded. But she has to be one of the three unless she withdraws.

There will be a maximum of 71 voters casting votes in this selection process. They are 23 county chairs, one committeeman and one committeewoman from each county and one national committeeman (Diemer True) and one national committeewoman (Jan Larimer). In this case, the least populated county has the same number of votes as the county with the

greatest population so the wooing of votes will be markedly different than running in a primary or general election.

Multiple candidates from the same county will also present a quandary for the 71 voters. Once the round of eight is determined, there should be some smoke-filled back room horse-trading like there used to be at the national political conventions. Sansonetti, who has never been elected to public office, could try to trade his support for a position in the chosen one's office in Washington or in return for serving as a campaign manager (if his buddy is ultimately chosen by Dave) next year. Three of those in the column of eight are almost certain candidates for the U.S. House next year (in addition to Bill Winney), whether Barbara Cubin seeks re-election or not. They may "sell" their votes to one another in return for withdrawing from that race or for an office in Washington if the other wins in 2008. Unless Ray Hunkins is chosen, whomever goes to Washington now will be there until they choose to come home. For years. The courage it takes to "apply" for a vacant Senate seat will quickly disappear next year. Bill Winney proved Barbara Cubin was vulnerable last year - now courage by others' abounds. Many will run.

## Starship?

Trying to emulate the success of the Laramie County Fair Board, the City of Cheyenne is providing a free concert at the 2007 Superday on June 23, 2007.

As though to confirm why the Civic Center operates so deeply in the red, the act booked by the City is **Starship**.

Like the Platters, Drifters and Coasters, groups morphing from the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame group **Jefferson Airplane** play birthday parties and bar mitzvahs around the nation on any given night.

Evidently Black Sabbath and Megadeth were fully booked this June. So the City dropped their sights and is bringing into **"Starship Starring Mickey Thomas."**

Most rock music aficionados remember **Jefferson Airplane** and the group's incomparable lead singer, Grace Slick. Marty Balin and Paul Kantner formed **Airplane** in 1965. Grace Slick joined the band the following year. In 1970, Paul Kantner worked on a solo album and introduced the name **"Paul Kantner/Jefferson Starship."** This group included musicians such as David Crosby, Graham Nash and Jerry Garcia.

Four years later, Grace Slick and Marty Balin rejoined this group as lead vocalists. In the '80s, both left the group and Mickey Thomas became lead vocalist. Kantner sued for use of the name **Jefferson Starship** and it was shortened to **Starship** by Thomas.

Mickey Thomas joined **Jefferson Starship** in 1979, after Slick and Kantner left the group. Thomas is no slouch on his own - singing lead on songs like "Sara" with this group and "Fooled Around and Fell in Love" with the Elvin Bishop Group.

Members of **Jefferson Airplane** had a brief reunion, including former lovers Grace Slick and Paul Kantner. Now there are two group using **"Starship"** in their titles. One is the group coming to Cheyenne, fronted by Mickey Thomas and performing music of 1979-1990 era. The other is **"Jefferson Starship,"** or **"Jefferson Starship-The Next Generation,"** with Balin and Kantner as leaders. A different female vocalist is featured. Grace Slick last appeared with them in 1999. The **"Starship"** of Mickey Thomas is not allowed to put **"Jefferson"** in front of the name or suggest his band is a successor to that group.

[WyomingNETWORK.com](http://WyomingNETWORK.com)

What's your opinion? Read and participate in the forums at [www.CheyenneNetwork.com](http://www.CheyenneNetwork.com)

## MEETINGS

### Nar-Anon Family Group

Drug problem in your family? Relative or friend of a user? Nar-Anon helps families of the user attain serenity and a more normal home life.

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3005 Thomes Ave.  
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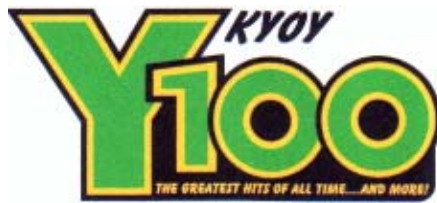
Contact: Tina T. 634-1580 or 256-6791

### Crystal Meth Anonymous

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