

## If Police Chief Bob Fecht were elected to the Wyoming State Senate, would bogus degree-selling diploma mills be allowed to peddle their non-accredited degrees from Wyoming again?

Ah, the possibilities are endless.

Campaign contributions for this candidate just from the Cheyenne-based degree sellers would be enough to buy full page ads in the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle. Especially if they give their "preferred customer" half-off discount to Fecht.

In case there are those who moved into Cheyenne in recent months and missed the revelation provided on these pages last April about Cheyenne's police chief bob Fecht buying a master's degree from the infamous Lacrosse University of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, they can read that story and more about the issue on the Cheyenne Herald website - [www.cheyenneherald.com](http://www.cheyenneherald.com).

The Herald has no problem with residents purchasing these worthless pieces of paper as gag gifts. They are no different than a singing duck on the mantle or talking bass hanging on the wall. They all provide a few laughs and there is no real harm, except maybe questionable judgment, in spending much money to obtain one.

The problem for the Herald was that the buyer of the worthless master's degree found a way to have the taxpayer's fund the purchase. Then, to compound matters,

the mayor, who was obviously unfamiliar with the difference between a real degree and one intended just as a conversation starter, defended the chief's improper act.

Lacrosse (not to be confused with the University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse) University is a notorious operation - even mentioned in testimony before the U.S. Senate as a diploma mill. There are few with room temperature IQ's that defend that "institution" in any way, for any of its behavior. Its business is providing a piece of parchment paper for a sizeable fee. Period. The document is worthless.

After struggling for the past couple years to get the Department of Education and the State Legislature to recognize these illegitimate sellers of degrees to unsophisticated foreign students and unwise American ones, the very real prospect of them once again gaining a foothold in Wyoming has reared its ugly head.

First, important members of the Legislature who led the successful fight to require accreditation of so-called "educational institutions" are leaving the body. Jeff Wasserburger, Tex Boggs and Becket Hinckley will not seek re-election. Instead, proponents of the scammers will seek a wall in the House on which to hang their ill-gotten degrees of no intrinsic value.

## Does the truth matter anymore?

*Education Department employees know the purpose of Trent Blankenship's trip to Washington, D.C. that coincided with Inauguration Day, 2004. Are they all too timid, too afraid, or too disloyal to come forward?*

On another page of this issue, a story relates how the senseless and needless closing of public offices in Cheyenne cost taxpayers greatly. Not a peep from other media about that abuse of authority.

And when the most recent audit of the City of Cheyenne's spending pointed out that \$380,603 was spent on fire department equipment without proper documentation, you could hear a pin drop at the City's house organ, the Tribune-Eagle.

Then a recent audit came through on the Department of Education. Books that were illustrated by the husband of a DOE employee were questioned. Forget the qualifications of an illustrator in this tiny state without very many such professionals. Forget the process used to contract with him to do the work. All that mattered was that it may have been nepotism. Kind of like the nepotism that sent Joe Wilson to Niger and got his wife, Valerie Plame, "outed" at the CIA. Imagined.

The fact that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction has no real experience or expertise for the job he was gifted does not concern the governor or attorney general. McBride flashes the peace sign, nods his head at appropriate times and defers to a governor of the other party. Those are his qualifications. All he needs.

He could not explain any of the actions of his predecessor because he wasn't "in the loop." He was such a low level employee that he wasn't even told where the coffee grounds were because he'd screw up making coffee. He was salvaged from the junk pile of educracy by Trent Blankenship and his disloyalty should set well with voters in November. For the Democrats.

Trent Blankenship doesn't make himself very available to most of the other media because they've treated him so shabbily. He told me a few days ago that after the audit a year earlier, his department accumulated a "4 inch thick, 3 ring binder" of data to "address audit misinterpretations and groundless concerns" and it was ignored by the auditors - the data provided them did not elicit any response.

It took a dozen people many hours to accumulate the response to audit concerns and it was ignored, Trent said.

When reportage hit on the latest audit, a spending item that was criticized just didn't pass the smell test. The 7 days a week dailies in the state headlined their April 21, 2006 front pages with: "Audit reveals spending errors," and "Audit: Ed spending questionable". Casper went on with a subhead: "McBride asks attorney general to look for any criminal violations". Criminal actions be determined by Wolfman Pat? Right.

[www.cheyenneherald.com](http://www.cheyenneherald.com)

The state's top paper wrote: "And former Superintendent Trent Blankenship allegedly misspent \$1,431.38 in grant money in traveling to Washington, D.C., for President Bush's second inauguration." Joan Barron wrote the article. Is she one of Wyoming's media that Trent doesn't respond to? Is the front page declaration a little payback? Revenge?

Remember, all of this was above the folds in each paper - the feature story in the issue. The width of the front page.

Trent Blankenship was called "Doctor" by the fawning employees who now are eager and willing to twist a knife in his back. Does anyone seriously think a person with even modest education would spend DOE money to go to Bush's inaugural? Of course not.

When I asked Trent what he had made the trip for and who in the department knew of his plans, he quickly responded.

*"... the trip to DC was a trip to discuss with Scott Palmer and others in his law firm their details of the Harcourt contract (for PAWS), and possible actions to take to insure that the PAWS (which is foundational to the development of Wyoming's state NCLB plan) received a timely and favorable review at the US Department of Education. I was also to meet Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a member of their law firm, to discuss assistance with the BIA vis a vis St. Stephens Indian School - he had to cancel."*

He concluded: "The meeting was purposely timed so that I could catch the activities while in DC. The purpose of this meeting was, certainly, no secret in the Wyoming Department of Education. Guess they forgot." He wrote, "I know Annette Bohling knew the reason for my trip, it came out of her budget."

Shots at Trent are accepted in silence by his disloyal former staffers. Yet, Trent kind of feels that responding to these challenges and criticism aimed at him at a distance is like trying to fill the Great Salt Lake with sand, using a spoon. He would just as soon stop trying. As I am the only one he seems to communicate with down here, I will accede to his wishes and allow the wailing of a disloyal employee who got to be Superintendent because of Trent, to stand without correction from Trent himself. That doesn't mean I won't go after the little twerp when he grandstands. McBride: "While I have the capacity to know bad judgment when I see it..." It's too bad Trent didn't have that capacity before he hired McBride and some of the other crybabies and turncoats who now inhabit the spaces of DOE. Crank determine criminal action? His track record ain't too good at that. Not too good at all.



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