

"ANYTHING TWO PEOPLE KNOW IS NOT A SECRET."

THE LEGENDARY CHEYENNE HERALD

the local advocacy journal

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May 28, 2008 ♦ Issue No. 148 ♦ Next issue June 17, 2008 (three weeks)

Mark Gordon's contributions to Democrats

*Even the advertising-controlled print media has picked up on my story.
Three months late and without attribution to the Herald, but what the hey.*

by Dave Featherly

Well, well, well.

This time around, even the mainstream print media in Wyoming couldn't ignore one of my stories.

It took the belated action of an Associated Press reporter named Mead Gruver to start the ball rolling. I first wrote about Republican candidate for the U.S. House Mark Gordon making frequent and sizeable contributions to Democratic candidates and causes for a prolonged period of time in my February 14, 2008 issue.

On May 20, just short of a hundred days later, an AP reporter called and wanted to talk with me about the infamous "flier" someone had circulated from Casper nine days after my first story on this matter appeared.

His focus was on who may have done it and why. The best I can offer is: I don't know and I don't know. Well, the "why" is probably pretty easy. Someone wanted to tell the Republicans he mailed the so-called flier (you can see it on the Cheyenne Herald website, along with a series of letters I wrote or received about the 8 1/2 x 11" sheet) that Mark Gordon had made several donations to Democratic candidates for political office. The mailer limited examples from just a few years and named only Gary Trauner, John Kerry, Ted Ladd, Kathy Karpan, the National Democratic Party and one of several donations to the Sierra Club. The total was \$8,500.

As I've pointed out several times on the pages of the Cheyenne Herald, Mark Gordon has made considerably more contributions to Democratic candidates and causes in the past 18 years than the \$8,500 (including to a Democratic candidate in Utah), that was itemized on that flier.

I should point out that I usually wouldn't talk with a reporter from the controlled media or AP - it just isn't in my interest to help them develop their stories off mine.

But, in this case, I did and we spoke for about ten minutes.

The next morning, the story related to our conversation caught my eye in the WT-E. It was on page A3 and the headline read: **"Flier takes Wyo. House candidate Gordon to task for contributions."**

The subhead: "Mark Gordon says he gave \$6,500 to Democrats to show his disappointment with Republican politics."

Everybody in the state who's familiar with this story knows it wasn't the flier that brought the story to daylight. It was the Cheyenne Herald - nine days earlier. The AP reporter knew, too. He brought up knowing about my earlier disclosures and we spoke about where the mailer might have picked up my p.o. box no. to use as a return address on the envelopes. It was likely from my February 14th story about Gordon. Obviously, my story had to be out first for the creep to borrow from it and use my box no. as his return address.

The AP reporter knew that the contributions shown in the mailer matched the disclosures in my story of February 14, 2008. But I had more. To other Democrats.

I know the controlled print media is envious and jealous of my work but it is very poor journalism, not to mention unethical, to hitchhike on a story, know its origin and not give proper credit or attribution. That is the level of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle. Is it for the Casper Star-Tribune as well?

When I read the AP offering in the WT-E, I thought it odd that the reporter had ended the story as he had and I began to write a retaliatory piece in my head.

While the story ran two columns by 13" tall, the only mention of my conversation with the AP reporter was at the conclusion of the piece. It read: *"The flier carried a return address with the same post office box as the Cheyenne Herald, a bi-weekly advocacy newspaper written and published by one person, Dave Featherly. Featherly is also campaign manager for another Republican House candidate, retired Navy officer Bill Winney."* That's how the WT-E ended the AP story.

I immediately regretted helping the AP stringer pursue a story that I "broke" three months earlier. I knew I would receive no attribution - no credit where it first appeared. I quickly decided that the AP would never again receive my guidance, direction or input. But then I wondered - did the lousy Tribune-Eagle edit the story - shorten it - in a way to try to create suspicion that I had prepared and mailed that flier?

Many, if not most, AP stories are not picked up by the WT-E.

They must have to pay for using them - like ASCAP or BMI. So, the best place to read about local news is on the Billings Gazette Online website. I went there to see if the AP reporter had backstabbed me like the WT-E made it appear.

He hadn't.

The story was also in the Casper Star-Tribune that same day. In their paper, credit was given the AP reporter by name. But, in the CS-T, after the ending used by the WT-E at the bottom of the column to the left, the story went on:

"Featherly's paper has reported on Gordon's Democratic contributions but said that neither he nor the Winney camp had anything to do with the mailing."

"That just isn't my style," Featherly said. "Why put it out anonymously?"

When the AP reporter called, he had said that he was familiar with my paper (the Herald) and my website and he knew that I wanted to be known for my exposes. Anonymous is not how I operate.

Then, *"Featherly said the fliers carried Casper postmarks and about 40 were sent to his post office box in Cheyenne as undeliverable."* He also referred to the stupid letter I received from someone in the Attorney General's office but he didn't point out that I had told him (AP reporter) that same character had not answered my letter to him challenging his threat. That letter has been sent to that doofus twice - a similar letter has been sent twice to Wyoming's unesteemed Secretary of State, Max Maxfield. Neither replied.

By the way, the title of the February 14, 2008 story that first broke the Gordon contributions to Democrats is **"What the hell is he thinking?"** and is on page 3 of that issue if you visit cheyenneherald.com

On April 15, 2008, I published a detailed listing of Mark Gordon's contributions - as available from the FEC website - since 1980. Since that story appeared, Mark Gordon has sent me a letter with a copy of a cancelled check, proving he had also given \$1,000 to the Mike Enzi campaign in 1996 and the FEC did not have it listed. That story is titled **"Mark Gordon - Suddenly a Republican"** and appears on page 3 of the April 15 issue on the Cheyenne Herald website.

I thought the story might slow down a bit. I was wrong. On May 23, the Casper Star-Tribune (which I subscribe to but only sporadically get delivery) entitled the main editorial: **"Campaign donations are a legitimate issue"**. Again, a press association member stole my story without attribution. The CS-T may have a new editor who was trained in Cheyenne.

The editorial read, in part: *"Unfortunately, the issue came to public scrutiny without anyone owning up to the disclosure, which came in the form of an anonymous flier mailed to GOP members."*

Not so, Long John Silver. By the time the flier made the rounds, the Gordon campaign knew of my earlier story about his contributions. I believe the Casper and Cheyenne newspapers, as well as many other newspapers around the state knew, because many closely monitor my website. As did the Gordon campaign, state Republican Party, WPA members, and many broadcast outlets. That goofy flier came nine days after my first story.

The CS-T editorial said Gordon had given *"a total of \$6,500 to Democratic candidates and the state Democratic Central Committee over the past few years."* Actually, Gordon has given nothing to the state DCC. He gave \$6,500 to Democratic candidates alone, including three Democratic opponents of Barbara Cubin (in 1994, 2004 and 2006) and \$2,000 to the John Kerry campaign. He also gave \$2,700 to the Democratic National Committee and \$7,100 to the Sierra Club. During the same period, he did give to Republicans Craig Thomas (\$500) and Mike Enzi (\$1,000). When he gave to the two Republicans, he also gave equal amounts to their Democratic opponents in the race - Mike Sullivan and Kathy Karpan.

The CS-T on May 23 - *"But Gordon hasn't slighted Republicans. He's also donated nearly \$8,000 to GOP candidates during the past decade, ..."*

No he hasn't. He gave \$1,500 to Republican candidates in '94 and '96 (and none since) and \$1,790 to the state Republican Party. He began to donate to the national Republican Party **AFTER** Barbara Cubin announced she would not seek an 8th term and he decided to run. **THEN**, Gordon started giving big to the Party. **NOT** while he was financially supporting Democratic candidates, their Party and the Sierra Club.

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