

The kind of do-nothing “progressive” the Tribune-Eagle would probably endorse again for the City Council

It's that time again. The deadline is just around the corner for citizens to file to run for the State Legislature, the County Commission, the City Council, and the Mayor's office. Soon most of the self-declared candidates will be making the pilgrimage to the offices of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle in hopes of securing an endorsement from Reed Eckhardt and those on his editorial board who're easily covered by the Managing Editor ... oops, Executive Editor.

Some realize that the WT-E's endorsement isn't worth much these days so they don't even bother to seek it. They no doubt remember that Reed and the boys tried VERY HARD to unseat County Commissioners Jeff Ketcham and Diane Humphrey last time around to no avail. Reed and his cronies have also gone after City Council members Judy Case and Pete Laybourn repeatedly. In spite of Reed's venom (or perhaps because of it), Judy won again last time and Pete would probably do likewise if he decides to run for the Council again.

And who can forget how Reed Eckhardt and the Tribune-Eagle pulled out all the stops to get the rec center passed earlier this month? Tens of thousands of words to push the rec center proposal, but the voters rejected it anyway.

One of the things which makes the WT-E's candidate endorsements so ineffective is the superficiality of the process. That phony interview process has produced some interesting results which, with the benefit of hindsight, are even more ironic (if not downright laughable) today.

Six years ago, for example, Reed Eckhardt and the Tribune-Eagle endorsed Brent Beeman for the Cheyenne City Council. In doing so, the WT-E wrote:

“If Cheyenne is going to retain its young people, it needs City Council members who are willing to step up to the plate

and do whatever it takes to keep this community moving forward. Based on that we like Brent Beeman.... He has the ideas and enthusiasm that will help Cheyenne to continue to grow and prosper.... Cheyenne's future looks bright. In order to keep that light burning, Ward 3 needs a City Council candidate who is willing to keep Cheyenne on a pro-growth path. We like Brent Beeman for that role.”

According to newspaper archives, candidate Beeman received the WT-E's endorsement even though he was unfamiliar with what LEADS does ... a fundamental failing for anyone who claims to be a “pro-growther”. Perhaps the newspaper liked the fact that Beeman thought the Village West annexation was legal (it wasn't), that a downtown parking garage would pay for itself (it hasn't and won't ever), and that the City should annex Warren Air Force Base.

Brent Beeman was on the City Council for four years. During that time, he collected \$48,000 but even veteran Council watchers find it nearly impossible to remember anything he did, proposed, or even said during those 48 months.

Councilman Beeman is perhaps best remembered as the Council member who used his City-issued VISA card to make a cash withdrawal from a credit union so he could reserve a seat on a National Guard plane to Hawaii. When he was asked about it, he said that Council secretary Maggie Carter has told him it would be okay to use the VISA for that highly-inappropriate purpose.

Beware, candidates who lust after the WT-E's endorsement. It just might be the kiss of death for your political aspirations. Be afraid, be very afraid.

One Citizen's Opinion

I used to turn to the comics page to get a laugh out of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle. Now I just go straight to the editorial page and say a silent prayer that the morning's paper contains another goofy rant written by Reed Eckhardt.

In the aftermath of the Rec Center defeat at the polls, Reed has offered two real side-splitters ... (a) that the Rec Center proposal went down to defeat because it wasn't promoted heavily enough, and (b) that someone should pay for a reputable poll to find out why Laramie County's voters rejected the Rec Center. (It's interesting to note that Reed did NOT suggest that some of the WT-E's bloated bank account might be used for that purpose.)

In an earlier issue of THE HERALD, I wrote about how Reed Eckhardt had recently promised that he would NEVER, EVER read, or even open, any more emails from me to him. Such a promise is totally consistent with an earlier pronouncement from him when wrote, “If I never hear from you again, Jim, it will be too soon.”

That's really too bad, because I often have some very good insights which I'm more than willing ... even eager ... to share with Reed and the others who call the WT-E their home-away-from-home.

The day after the recent election, for example, I sent a thoughtful and sincere email to Reed Eckhardt. He should have known it was a thoughtful and sincere message from me because it said so right there on the SUBJECT line ... “A thoughtful, sincere message for Reed Eckhardt and his progressive pals”.

Reed says he won't read my emails but we all know what a faithful reader of THE HERALD he's become over the past five years. For that reason, I've decided to use this space in this issue to reprint

some of the post-election ideas (thoughtful and sincere as can be) that he would have read if he had had the guts to open my email ... which we know he didn't. Here's some of what he missed.

“No, the Rec Center didn't lose because of gas prices, the faltering economy, the war in Iraq, global warming, the recent typhoon in Southeast Asia, or the disastrous presidency of your hero, George “Doesn't-Have-A-Clue” Bush. It lost because the citizens of Laramie County finally got sick and tired of being sold a bill of goods by you, Jack Spiker, and your ‘progressive’ cronies. They remember all too well the promises you so-called civic leaders have made about the parking garage paying for itself, the depot museum becoming a ‘world class’ attraction, and the Norris Viaduct coming in on-time and on-budget. None of those promises are within a country mile of coming true, are they, Reed?”

“If you and Mayor Milquetoast want to blame the two people most responsible for the failure of the Rec Center proposal last night you need only look into your own bathroom mirrors. Do you remember, Reed, when you ink-stained geniuses at the WT-E suggested that County residents should have to pay additional fees to use the City parks and other amenities because they've been getting a ‘free ride’ without paying their fair share for City services? If you don't remember I can assure you that thousands of County residents remember it well and discuss it frequently.

Frankly, I sensed a major change in attitude about the Rec Center right here in town almost immediately after the WT-E quoted the Mayor as saying that while \$90,000 may be a lot of money if it were coming out of his own bank account, it would be a mere trifle if it were being paid from the bank account belonging to the collective citizens of Cheyenne.

“I guess you can blame him for saying some-

thing so pathetically stupid and inappropriate and he can blame you for printing his stupid comment in your newspaper for everyone to read and digest. For the anti-Rec Center crowd, seeing his ignorant statement on the pages of your newspaper was truly a gift from the gods.

If I were advising anyone who might be running for Mayor this fall, I'd tell them to have that idiotic comment about \$90,000 being an insignificant amount of money printed in 72-point type and plastered all over town as an example of the irresponsible leadership the City has been saddled with for the past few years. And I'd have that candidate repeat over and over and over again, ‘Jack Spiker thinks spending \$90,000 of his own family's money is serious business but spending \$90,000 of PUBLIC money is a mere triviality. If you elect me your next Mayor, I'll make sure that EVERY dollar of PUBLIC funds is taken seriously and spent wisely.’ Over and over and over and over ...”

(NOTE: The reference to \$90,000 by the Mayor concerned the projected yearly shortfall where the costs of operating the Rec Center would not be covered by membership fees and would have to be supplemented from the City's General Fund.)

A final thought ... I'm not against a Rec Center. If one is proposed in the future which is to be built in a more centrally located part of the City and which doesn't contain the outrageous projected expenses (\$400 shower curtains, \$600 urinal dividers, \$167,000 public address system, \$500,000 water slide, \$928,500 worth of gutters and downspouts, etc.) as the recently-defeated Proposition contained, I'll vote for it. Unfortunately, I don't think this current cast of characters at City Hall would recognize a good and reasonable Rec Center proposal if they saw one.

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