

Where are these bozos getting their training?

Do we have a Judicial Waterboarding Commission? Does someone suction all of the theretoforeheld legal knowledge from the brains of these people before they can be named a district court judge?

Of course, some of the district court judges are political rewards of some sort but other attorneys in Wyoming bear some responsibility for narrowing the search to unqualified fellow attorneys.

It has been horrifying to continue to review Wyoming Supreme Court rulings involving Peter Arnold on the matter of child custody cases. But his ineptness appears to be contagious.

On April 28, 2009 (2009 WY 58), Justice Golden wrote the unanimous decision on **Steele v. Neeman** (S-08-0117), an "Appeal from the District Court of Campbell County - The Honorable Dan R. Price II, Judge"

How is someone "the II" (the Second). If they have the same first and middle names as their father, they'd be "junior." If they're not, they would be neither "junior" nor "II". Evidently, Price has the same name as his grandfather. Isn't it interesting how families so quickly run out of original names to tag their children? An interesting use of "Jr." comes from country singer Hank Williams, Jr. He is not a "Jr." but in the business, it's a helluva lot easier to climb the ladder of success by using a daddy's name (a daddy who had nothing to do with young Hank) than building a career as Randall Hank Williams. In show biz, names we see on the marquee aren't birth names very often so young Randall Hank taking Hank Williams, Jr. is not different from a Michael Douglas becoming Michael Keaton because there already was a Michael Douglas. No, there is no "Junior" in my family. Our daughters would not have liked that.

In this case, Justice Golden summarized: **"In this child support action, Melodie Steele (Mother) sought an upward modification of child support against Robert Neeman (Father). The district court modified the child support amount, but downward to less than half the statutorily determined presumptive amount. The district court cited the child's poor relationship with his father, which included lack of visitation, as the reason for deviation. We reverse."**

These macho male judges allow testosterone to rule, not the law. By God, Price II had to believe, under these circumstances, sympathy is with the father so the kid can just do without.

In the 1991 divorce, Father agreed to pay child support until his son reached the age of 20. But, when the Mother went back to court in 2006 to seek higher child support, the Father asked that child support be terminated. Completely.

According to the record, "Father gave as his reasons for his motion the fact that Child had turned eighteen and Child had petitioned to legally change his surname from that of Father to that of Mother." She had remarried and the boy wanted to take the surname of his stepfather.

Perhaps the "Father" failed somewhere along the way.

The record reflects: "Father and Child spent three days together in 2005. No evidence was adduced as to how the two interacted during those three days. Otherwise there had been no visitation between Father and Child since approximately 2000. No reason was provided."

Father also said he tried to call his son about once a month but only got the answering machine and the boy didn't return his calls. The record: "He leaves message. He has no knowledge of Child every returning his phone calls. Mother testified Child has made some unidentified attempt to contact Father."

However, over all of these years of failing to make connection with his own son, the Father never went back to any court to try to enforce visitation rights or even contact. Actually, it looks like the only way he can claim to be the boy's Father is by his child support payments.

The District Court found that the calculated child support payment should be \$736.24 a month. The Second wrote: "The child spends and historically has spent little or no time with the father and also has shown very little interest in developing a relationship with the father. The child has not even been using his surname and has been going by mother's current last name. Also, there is a petition filed to change the child's last name from Neeman. It is apparent to the court that the father is merely a financial source for the child and nothing more."

So, Price II reduced child support payments to \$300.00 a month until the child reached the age of 20. Price the Second did not write about how the father had or had not ever tried to play an active role in his son's life. Not important when testosterone sets in, it seems.

Once again, the Wyoming Supreme Court had to set a judge at the district court level straight: "A parent is supposed to be a 'financial resource' for his/her child. It is a responsibility of parenthood. This responsibility exists regardless of visitation or negative feelings between a parent and child. The district court erred when it used these criteria as the basis for deviating from the presumptive child support established under § 20-2-304. The district court's decision is reversed. This case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this opinion." Without the Supreme Court, our laws would too often be ignored.

Herald -- n. An officer whose business was to proclaim war ... He was invested with a sacred and inviolable character. A proclaimer; one who publishes or announces; A forerunner; a precursor; a harbinger. v. To introduce, or give tidings of ... To proclaim, to announce, to foretell, to usher in.

It's time to junk those little parking ticket scooters

Downtown businesses operate under great handicaps in this era.

Unlike 50-60 years ago, the competition is severe. Until the early 60's, downtowns were the major retail center of every city.

The first fully enclosed, climate-controlled mall opened in 1956 in Edina, Minnesota. Southdale was a project of the premier Twin Cities retailer, Dayton's Department Store. In 1962, a second enclosed regional mall opened in the Twin Cities, again anchored by Dayton's. That was Brookdale and a third "Dale" was opened in 1969 - Rosedale. These were the forerunners of enclosed shopping malls in the country. A fourth, Ridgedale, came later.

Dayton's also founded one of the three still existing and largest discount store operations - Target. They, Kmart and Wal-Mart were all founded in 1962.

From that point on, it was Katy bar the door for downtowns. The challenge faced by Cheyenne's downtown is not new and it is not unique. Some downtowns have met the challenge better than others. Cheyenne is one that has not met the challenge at all. They have not tried.

A few decades back, I was with the third largest retailer in downtown St. Paul (second if we included our mail order volume). We had a retail store in downtown St. Paul, another in downtown Minneapolis and later, a third in a Minneapolis suburb, Richfield, in a strip shopping center. Both of the downtown stores occupied street level space, with upper floors and basement warehouses and offices. At one point, I was asked to serve on the Executive Board of the St. Paul Downtown Council. I also represented our company with a suburban Merchants Association. So, for a very long time, I confronted the difficulties of operating

downtown retail stores successfully as well as from a small strip shopping center.

The major discounters started in 1962 and have become progressively stronger every decade. Before they took over retailing, the "catalogers" were strongest - Sears, Wards and J.C. Penney. Now, Wal-Mart is so far out front in annual retail sales that they can't see the second place operator. Then, "category killers" like Toys R Us, Best Buy, Home Depot, Lowe's, Michael's, etc., did not exist. There were few chain restaurants to draw business away from the established family restaurants downtown. Clothing, shoes, jewelry - all were sold downtown.

Then along came competition and things changed. Both as an independent retailer and member of the St. Paul Downtown Council, we did consumer surveys to determine what they liked about us and what they disliked. The top four negatives always involved parking. Not enough, unsafe, inconvenient, costly, etc. Our stores were on streets with parking meters all around the block. We also paid for customer parking in off-street lots on both sides of the stores. The perception has long been that parking was a problem.

What has Cheyenne done to confront that perception? They have motorized scooters on constant patrol to cite those who do venture downtown to shop or eat. Residents who will shop or eat downtown are penalized. That needs to stop. Put the onus on employers to remove their employees from street parking and junk those scooters. First, allow downtown employees to park free in the unused parking garage and lot on 15th St. Then, deputize a couple dozen property owners. Allow them to call tow trucks on employees (or other employers) who habitually take parking intended for consumers. That will end the problem in a month.

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January 13, 27	July 21
February 17	August 4, 18
March 3, 17, 31	September 2 (Wedn.), 15, 29
April 14, 28	October 13, 27
May 12, 27 (Wedn.)	November 17
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