

## Why the Cheyenne Herald provides so much coverage on the death of Dwayne Sells. Is it too much?

by Dave Featherly

I've been asked why this advocacy journal has dedicated so much space to the coverage of the death of a single person. If I have a particular ax to grind.

Before trying to explain why I've spent so much time, done so much research, and written so many words on the subject, let me provide some background.

First, I'm not a biker. The last time I sat astride a motorcycle was over 40 years ago and it was an Indian and I squeezed my knees so hard on the gas tank that I was afraid there'd be an explosion. I was not comfortable. It was my younger brother's bike and he was reckless enough to let me ride it a couple times.

I'm not a drinker. I have never been inside the Outlaw Saloon or the Eagle's Nest. Nor have I ever been inside the Green Door, the Clown's Den, the Cheyenne Club or most any other Cheyenne bar. I once had a beer in the Cloud 9 bar.

I did not know Dwayne Sells. To this date, I have never spoken with anyone with the Sells family name. Dwayne and I had no friends in common (before these stories) that I am aware of. I never attended a meeting with him that I know of.

I am not anti-law enforcement. I have no beef with, nor bone to pick with, any Cheyenne police officer working on this case.

I do not know any of the people identified as fighters, customers, bouncers, owners, or others who were in the Outlaw Saloon that early morning.

I do share the Sells' family's anguish of suddenly losing a family member to a violent death. In 1982, I received the telephone call that my brother - next older than me in a large family - had been shot and killed. The call. Losing a family member is always hard. Without warning and without an opportunity to say good-bye is even harder.

But I cover this story in depth because no one else would. Others tried to dismiss Dwayne Sells as though his death wasn't that meaningful. This advocacy journal is just that. An advocacy journal. Our causes and our stories are often those other media won't be bothered with. I have met incredibly supportive friends of Dwayne. All preach nonviolence and patience. My words are meant to calm, not incite. I am not positive what happened that night but I am positive that the investigation hasn't been completed. So I will continue to provide the best coverage I can - until the case is resolved.

## Closer to home

Jack Quirk can almost see his house from the VA Hospital

by Dave Featherly

Still a little drowsy from the medications he's received over the past two months, I tried to convince Jack Quirk that he had been taken to Denver's University Hospital strapped to the runner of a helicopter - like we used to see on M.A.S.H.

But his devoted wife and companion for the past 48 years, Elaine, overheard what I was trying to do to her re-emerging mate who was now getting his bearings after a rough two months, and she told him he'd actually been allowed inside the chopper for the trip south.

So many men have undergone heart bypass surgery that every gathering of four or more seems to have one able to share his personal experiences in the matter. Generally, a guy will relate that he had a triple - or quadruple - bypass and was home eating beef again four days later.

When a patient signs the surgery consent form, seldom do they think that two months later, they'll still be in the hospital, just beginning to re-enjoy consciousness and beginning to walk again.

But, occasionally that's the scenario that plays out. Such has been the case with Jack Quirk.

Fortunately, the retired Marine had built his body strength to withstand the complications he faced after his bypass surgery. Playing racquetball several mornings a week, often against opponents a generation younger, probably wasn't intended to someday hold him in good stead for a tough recovery from what is supposed to be almost routine surgery.

Confident that he'd be back but wondering how he'd look and what he would sound like after being silent for over a month, it was just a waiting game.

Finally, on Thursday night, the 8th of September, he was well enough and without the life-sustaining tubes - he could speak again. There was no mistaking who was on the line. The old jarhead carried the remnants of that prolonged silence with a voice hoarse from non-use, but you could still recognize the familiar gruff voice belonging to Jack Quirk. It was a voice that was wonderful to hear. I saw him the next day. He looked like great - little the worse for wear.

Each day, each hour, his voice will return to normalcy. His determination stronger than ever, he has goals for himself - once well enough to tackle them. He's in good hands at the VA. And he's close to home. Two minutes, he estimates.

## "A city in the black." "We've paid cash for everything."

If anyone wonders how the American public is gullible enough to fall for the many scams perpetrated on naive, uninformed and ignorant residents, they just need to listen to Jack Spiker speak and Channel 5 report on his words.

Recently, *your* station ran a story about the financial difficulties being encountered by the City of Fort Collins. It was hard to distinguish whether the purpose for running the story was to relish in the discomfort of our Colorado neighbor or whether this local television channel actually believes they have viewers in northern Colorado.

Part of the reportage by *your* very own Jimmy Olson was a comparison to the financial condition of Cheyenne. He read that Cheyenne was in the black. At his youth, he may not actually know what that lingo means. He may think it means the electricity is out. In financial terms, being "in the black" means to be profitable. Cheyenne is not profitable. Cheyenne has to borrow money coming into the city from the State as a one-time remittance, in order to balance their annual budget. They try to deceive the taxpayers and voters - and, in fact, are very successful at doing that - by claiming to have a surplus of money - called "reserves" - that they don't actually have. Channel 5 toddlers don't know how to ferret out the facts. In broadcast school, they are now taught how to spike their hair and overdo the make-up. Little time must be spent on reporting. They want to be on-air "readers," not reporters in the field.

To compound the shallowness of this story, the ever-shifting Channel 5 cameras moved into the mayor's office. Everything being "wonderful" here in the Magic City on the Plains, he told the TV-5 children that wonderful new amenities, including the community house, depot and parking garage, had been paid for with **CASH**. It might be splitting hairs, because even the parking garage WAS paid for with **CASH**, but it wasn't City cash. It was cash gained through the sale of bonds - falsely presented as revenue bonds, and cash that has to be paid back. That is called "debt." After such a broadcast and the mayor's participation, phones all over town must have lit up to advise residents that they'd just won the Canadian Lottery - one they didn't enter.

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## How many countries are we going to have to conquer before gas prices drop below \$2.00 a gallon?

Motorists driving Suzuki Swifts are experiencing the pump shock previously reserved for SUV owners.

\$2.99<sup>9</sup> a gallon? What the hell is that about?


Didn't we just invade and conquer our own oil producing country? How, all of a sudden, could the Gulf Coast off New Orleans be producing twenty percent of our oil supply? When we drove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait to protect Japan's oil supply, weren't we told that almost all of our oil came from that region - that we had to buy oil from our enemies because we had no alternative source?

So, who's next? Fire up the tanks.

Saudi Arabia should be vulnerable. And they have unlimited oil reserves. The Sheikhs will be shrieking when we train our smart bombs on their palaces.

Gas prices are dropping in other parts of the United States. Not here. If the price remains at about \$3 a gallon and if you drive 30,000 miles a year and get 20 miles per gallon, that 1,500 gallons of gas will cost \$4,500. People buy interest-only homes here for little more.

The government says there is no inflation. Cheyenne Light just announced an average 27.9% increase in natural gas rates (subject to WPSC approval). Gasoline went up 25% overnight. No inflation? Who's zooming who?



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September 10, 2005

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