

Scream the accusation, whisper the apology

It happens frequently. Too frequently.

A serial scammer finds something in their peanut butter, their chili, their menudo - a mouse in their soft drink. The list goes on.

The more lurid the tale of discovery - "oh, man, I was just spooning my ol' pork and beans and all of a sudden, I got a mouthful of elephant tusk. It musta been six inches long..." Coming from a four-inch tall can. These idiots that perpetrate the hoaxes can cause inestimable financial and reputation damage.

The mass media plays into the hysteria by running story after story of the accusations. A recent story about a woman known to make false accusations against companies finding a human finger tip in her chili in a San Jose, California Wendy's garnered unwarranted attention, which suggests credibility.

The American consumer has a right to expect that a story presented as fact should have at least the smallest amount of investigation attached to it.

But even in Cheyenne, when the Tribune-Eagle prints false information, it will be picked up by fellow AP wire service subscribers and reprinted as truth. A later correction does not undo the damage.

Wouldn't you think that the police or health department could tell the difference between a finger cooked in the product from one being dropped in after the customer was served the chili?

But much of the media is too impatient to risk losing a good lead. "Finger found in Wendy's chili" gets more attention than "Wendy's customer attempts extortion."

Wendy's business in stores in the region plummeted. They're not the first retail enterprise to suffer from a false accusation - or an exaggerated one. And they won't be the last. With a complicit media - each seeking the next banner headline - wanting to believe the worst of business, the problem will persist.

Had any other parent accused Michael Jackson of child molestation, the trial verdict may have been different. But even when they may be telling the truth, scammers like that mother with a bad reputation are not to be believed.

So what happened to the accuser of Wendy's? She just pled guilty to fraud and will do some time in prison. She is, she said, oh so sorry for the damage done to Wendy's business which led to the layoff of employees, cutback in hours, and million of dollars loss in sales. Did you see any news of her guilty plea?

Treehouse Rebuild #1

In spite of the defenses of the mayor and his underlings that the new treehouse in Lions Park was a work of art and a tremendous addition to the park and attraction for the children, it is steadily being dismantled and rebuilt.

Now if only this rebuilding will be the end of the embarrassment.

But it may not be.

The mayor has taken the position that such an attraction does not have to be handicapped-accessible in any way. That isn't quite what the Americans with Disabilities Act and the subsequent lawsuits against cities like Flagstaff, Arizona, suggest.

The purpose of the ADA legislation was to insure equal and fair access to those with disabilities. When the law was signed, those not in compliance were given til January 26, 1995 to bring their buildings, stores, etc., into compliance.

Now, fully ten and a half years later, the City of Cheyenne is still resisting the requirement to make public recreational attractions accessible to the handicapped and those with disabilities. New construction is always covered by the Act. The City has lost so many lawsuits



brought against it by residents but still believe they are exempt from compliance with any laws - state or federal.

A city department head claimed the city has an "exemption" from compliance. They thought the same about annexation laws, city vehicles in accidents, etc. Not!

The subject of treehouses wasn't dealt with in the original Act but was added as an addendum later. If there is an exemption for municipalities when they construct new recreational attractions, there would be a dilution to the law which would render it ineffective and unnecessary. Cheyenne will likely get a chance to defend its disrespect for the law. Again.

How many times can an advertiser use the word "suck" in their ads to be offensive?

DISH NETWORK is now running repetitive ads on television, including major network channels, disparaging the cable television network most consumers now subscribe to. In an effort to tell a table of friends that their competitor is unworthy, the actors say over and over that cable television "sucks." As objects and animals skid toward a television set in the commercial to illustrate how cable must suck, everyone within earshot is treated to the use of a word young children may get their mouths washed out with soap for uttering. Suck. Sucks. Sucks. Suck. Over and over, ad nauseam.

The word is a shortcut to having a larger vocabulary. And to adults it isn't all that troublesome. But if a school child will get sent to the principal's office for using the same word they are repeating from a television commercial, it isn't a good word to use. Try a little hard, DISH.

Reward

The Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless (WCH) is offering a reward for information that will lead to the recovery of the tools stolen on September 8, 2005, and/or lead to the arrest of those taking this property.

Contact Virginia or Steve at 634-8499.

Virginia Sellner of WCH told the Herald that what was stolen was "a huge tool chest filled with pliers, wrenches, and the like — things to use to tighten up gears, bolts, screws, etc. on bikes and then we had several electric saws — and a bunch of other thins."

WCH provides bicycles for its clients to get around Cheyenne. The bikes are usually the only transportation for those who seek services there. It is unlikely that the stolen property will be recovered so it would be helpful if readers of the Cheyenne Herald could donate tools of the sort necessary to make repairs to the bikes which are so important to the WCH clients. Portable and hand tools of almost any kind would be usable by WCH.



Anyone wanting to donate tools can take them to the WCH building at 907 Logan Avenue. WCH is also fund-raising for a building expansion if you can help.

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