

“Silly season” it is

You can't say it coincides with the beginning of Autumn because it started a few weeks back.

When the burdensome public records request was made on state government by the Republican Party head, the Governor's brother Steve Freudenthal called it "silly season."

For a long time, it was just the Republican side that indulged in trying to stoke a fire from spent embers but now the Governor's office seems to have been unable to resist the temptation to join the silliness.

At a time when the nation, state and local government is up to its collective chins in problems, Wyoming state politics has decided to plumb the depths of inanities about one another instead of discussing issues important to voters and residents.

Ray Hunkins has tried to introduce some issues into the debate but Republican Party leadership has pretty much taken his candidacy down. With seven weeks to go (from our publication date), perhaps both Dave Freudenthal and Ray Hunkins will agree to discuss and debate what is really important in this state. And it isn't what spending is buried in a credit card billing.

Having just reviewed the filings through August 28, 2006 for the Governor's campaign, I think trying to cast suspicion that Ray spent some of his campaign money on the people brought to town by Drake Hill to review the public records he requested is a bit tenuous at best.

If the effort is to show Wyoming voters that Ray Hunkins' campaign has spent money on out-of-state consultants, advisers, etc. (which both he and the guilty person, Drake Hill, deny), the Governor will be called up to explain his spending on consultants, advisers, etc., from out-of-state. His money has traveled to Denver and D.C. in large amounts. Tens of thousands of dollars.

Where these guys think they need to go to get the help they think they need for a Wyoming campaign isn't really an important issue in the scheme of things.

What was more interesting to me was the receipt by the Freudenthal campaign of \$1,000.00 check after \$1,000.00 check after \$1,000.00 check from out of state.

Why do individuals from all over the country care who is Governor of Wyoming? Why would ultraconservative Republican Pete Coors, for example, contribute a \$1,000.00 to Dave?

Does it really matter where your campaign contributions originate? How about the generous political action committee contributions? One candidate's "special interest" is another's "involved industry."

Should it concern voters who recently said "no" to tort reform that their Governor is getting sizeable PAC contributions from The Doctors' Company PAC (\$3,000.00) and Wyoming Medical PAC (\$1,000.00)? Does it?

An aside: It should be required that every time a PAC name is shown, the special interest they represent should be shown with it. Now, they can hide that fact from voters. For example, the Governor received \$10,000.00 from "ConPAC." ConAgra? Nope. Contran Corporation, a Dallas, Texas holding company owned by a Texas billionaire.

To the Governor's credit, his campaign spends most of its money with Wyoming vendors. They are spreading it around very generously. A review of Barbara Cubin's spending showed little was with Wyoming vendors. Bravo, Dave.

The "consulting" fee paid to Ron Sniffin is a bit odd, though. Ron Sniffin of Lander. Related to "Sniffin" Bill" Sniffin? The "R"?

With these revenue and spending disclosures made, though, can't we put the minor matters to rest and begin to focus on issues? Ray touched on an important one - even if he may be aligning himself with the wrong side - having to do with veterans' benefits.

How about the cost of the new prison at Torrington and how the estimates could have been so wrong? How about the need for state office space and how that will be solved? How about the future of revenues in the state and what to do with budget surpluses? How about a "plan" in the event that the Hathaway Scholarship Plan proves to be just a boondoggle for the University and does not advance post-secondary education for Wyoming high school graduates?

How about better dealing with the meth crisis? Treatment centers will be necessary. How many, where and who will pay for them? Infighting about meth will put another generation of Wyoming residents at risk. If we dealt with the drug crisis in Wyoming, maybe we wouldn't have to keep building new prisons.

To be honest, I don't give a rat's patootie how much the seats in the photogrammetry plane cost. I do care about how drugs are destroying our youth.

“Dog” arrested

Here's a good one. Bounty hunter Duane "Dog" Chapman and two others who work with him (including a son) have been arrested for extradition to Mexico. Even though our FBI, CIA, the Russian KGB, Interpol, Scotland Yard, all three CSI franchises and Andy Griffith couldn't locate fugitive Andrew Luster (a Max Factor heir), "Dog" journeyed into Mexico with the boys and two camera men and brought the rat to justice. Bounty hunting is illegal in Mexico and US bounty hunters aren't legally allowed to traverse national borders to ply their trade. Now Dog and his boys have themselves been arrested. Not because they caught the creep who had drugged and raped women and videotaped his exploits (now doing 124 years in a US prison), but because Dog refused to turn Luster over to Mexican authorities. Glory to be had, even though they didn't catch the fugitive, Mexican authorities wanted it themselves. We all know how dedicated they are to law and order. Can you say "borders"? Obviously if the capture were illegal, Luster will have to be released from prison. Won't he? Free "the Dog," you boneheads.

That Featherly isn't my son

It was brought to my attention that someone with the "Featherly" surname was in the WT-E's Blotter Briefs listing awhile back and that bedwetters on a local Internet forum were anonymously reporting that it was my son.

Well, tortured souls, it wasn't. And isn't.

You see, unfortunately I don't have a son. So my family name will end when I cash out. I do have two daughters and they have five children between them but their selfish husbands did not agree to take our last name, so my grandchildren do not carry the Featherly name. Unreasonable sons of a gun.

I don't often look at the Blotter Briefs in the WT-E. I think that listing is intended for voyeurs and I feel kind of dirty for looking. When I've seen the name of a recognized person being picked up for DUI, I don't feel compelled to further trash or tromp on them here. I just shake my head in disapproval and move on.

Accepting that some sane people may have seen the list, I thought I should look into who the person was and report on it. So I went digging until I found the paper and the listing. It was the July 23rd WT-E but there was some big rodeo going on in town and I was running a statewide political campaign and missed it.

The first name and age told me that I probably knew who the kid was. Upon further review with the Sheriff's office, I confirmed my suspicion and found out what the violation was about.

The young man (22) is my nephew's boy, showed a Duluth, Minnesota address, and was charged with shoplifting. I recognized his first name and I know his father well and am proud of him. I had no idea the kid was in town. He doesn't know me and I don't know him and he made no contact with me while he was here. I wouldn't recognize him if I saw him. He is not my son but he is blood and I would have helped him out had he contacted me. That's what we do.

Believe it or not, Featherly is not that unusual a surname. Not as common as Smith, Jones or Anderson, but there are enclaves in Upper New York (where my family originated), Michigan, other areas of the Midwest and California.

I was officially designated family historian about ten years ago - just before our Featherly matriarch (my Aunt) died. She instructed her children to turn the family history records that date back to the late 1700's over to me. Minor name changes took place as "Feather" became "Feathers" and that evolved into today's Featherly. Who knows why.

From my paternal grandparents, nearly 500 descendants have been born. Some terrific and a source of pride to the rest of us. Some not so terrific but still family. It is said you can pick your friends but you can't pick your relatives.

A non-relative Featherly has an Orange County Park named for him. Featherly Regional Park off Riverside Freeway 91 opened in 1970 - on Santa Ana Canyon Rd. in Anaheim. Visit it if you wish.

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