

Don't send DVDs

Twice in the past couple of weeks, DVDs have been sent to the Cheyenne Herald. In one case, there were several discs and a note that said it would take a dozen hours to view them.

While I appreciate the confidence shown in my ability to investigate, analyze and find solutions to issues that confound those who have been trained to do those things, I simply don't have the time to sit for twelve hours in front of a television or computer screen, watching DVDs.

I seldom watch movies. Not often do I

watch anything on TV other than some sporting events and a sitcom or two. Few hour long programs - just not my thing.

Now, if I were retained as a private investigator (which I'm not holding myself out to be or offering to do), at least I'd be paid for the task. I would still dread doing it but it would be part of the job I had offered to do. But it isn't and I can't.

The same thing holds true for thick packets of documents. Unless I ask. There are too many stories in the Naked City, I just don't have hours to read on one.

Contracts with elected officials

I have written it here before and I'll repeat it again: People who own or operate businesses do not surrender their right to operate those businesses if they seek and win public office.

by
**Dave
FEATHERLY**

To believe otherwise would eliminate much of our talent pool of candidates. If only public employees and employees of others could seek public office, that would be tragic. Recently, several Cheyenne city council members worked for the State and others were public employees elsewhere. Some may prefer that to having small business owners on the council.

I do not.

There is great wailing in the country now that the Republican vice presidential pick has no foreign policy experience so that should disqualify her from being a candidate for that office. Some believe that only politicians should be eligible to be on the ballot for president or VP.

I do not.

To eliminate successful businessmen and women as candidates for president and vice president would take away a pool of talented and proven leaders I think should be a part of the mix. Because the salary for president is only \$400,000, most top business executives have no yearning to be president and will not seek the office.

Here in Cheyenne, there are a handful of the current members of the city council who own their own businesses. Some in the public believe they should not be able to do business with the city. They may believe those members should also not be allowed to do business with government at any level - federal, state or country - or with local school districts.

I do not.

During the nearly seven years I've published the Cheyenne Herald, I've been asked to do stories on abuses of power by elected officials. And, certainly, there have been some. But, my concern about their behavior isn't whether they've been reimbursed for a single questionable lunch, it's about how they've conducted themselves in their official capacity as lawmakers. Spending \$5.9 million dollars of the resident's money to buy a ranch and misrepresent its potential use is far more bothersome to me than if the mayor has lunch with a constituent at IHOP and charges the lunch to the city.

It once bothered me that a councilman used city council letterhead to imply that he was corresponding as president of the city council instead of as an individual who just wanted to appear important.

But it didn't bother me enough to spend much time on the issue. In Cheyenne, critics tend to get bogged down on minutiae while major problems go unnoticed.

And the level of envy, jealousy and outrage is sometimes unhealthy. There is a recent and recurring example of this.

Jim Brown says some things that make me cringe. When he made a comment about "a rose among the weeds" and it related to the southside, he went too far.

I happen to live on the southside and I travel through various neighborhoods down here on a regular basis. Because this area of town is often considered "the original city," buildings tend to be older. Some even do become rundown. But the southside does not hold a monopoly on rundown houses and untended yards. In fact, many of the yards south of the UP tracks, still in the city, are terrific examples of care of and pride in owners property.

But in spite of Jim Brown's sometimes poorly chosen words, I do not think he has to forsake doing business with governmental agencies because he is a member of Cheyenne's city council.

At the risk of boring readers, I will repeat a story about Jack Spiker's behavior when he was a city councilman. New desks were going to be bought for the council offices and Jack sold the desks wanted. He would not bid on the job because of an appearance of impropriety. So, the city paid more than they would have through Jack and the desks came in incomplete. He made the repairs even though he did not get the money for the desks. I told him then, as I have repeated on these pages, an elected official does not have to surrender his options in business just because he is an elected official. He does need to be careful it's on the up and up.

The governor's wife and brother are both local attorneys. Should they not be able to do business with government agencies because they would be accused of gaining an advantage because Dave is governor? Some believe they should not do business with state agencies.

I do not.

Should we assume that anyone who enters politics is crooked before getting there or will convert to being dishonest once elected? Some think that is true.

I do not.

There are a variety of reasons why Jim Brown's company does more business with the City of Cheyenne than it did before he became a councilman. One is that his competition has left Cheyenne - presumably to seek greener pastures in Colorado or elsewhere. Jim did not follow them. Another is that his business has grown and he can handle more business - both government and other. Another is that City has more needs in the field he serves. The IKON Center is a large account and other repair and replacement work comes up over time.

If anyone has evidence or proof that Jim Brown has been shown favoritism in increasing his revenue from the City, please provide it to me. If you just think something must be wrong because it's the City, that's not good enough. I will track a reasonable suspicion to ground - but won't spend time on unfounded imagination.

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