

Letter to the Gazette – 10.5.07

Life always brings lessons and this week, I've learned a new one. Being a candidate for public office means that my voice must be silenced in the name of fairness, according to the Colorado Springs Gazette. An interesting stance to take, but one that clarifies to me just how slanted the Gazette really is.

I have submitted letters to the editor over the years with almost all of my submissions being printed. In the last few weeks however, I had submitted two letters which did not get any ink and so I gently questioned the Gazette as to why. Mr. Sean Paige responded on Wednesday, Oct. 3rd and our conversation went something like this: Sean: "You're a candidate now, running against Doug Bruce (untrue – Mr. Bruce has not declared any candidacy). It would be unfair for me to print your letters and if I publish you, Doug is going to demand equal time." Amy: "You just admitted that Doug Bruce is a candidate and yet you printed him this very day. You also printed him just a few weeks ago and countless times prior to that, violating your own '6 week submission' rule and the very reason you just gave me for not printing my letters." Sean: "But he is an elected official." Amy: "But you just said that he too, is a candidate. What about my ability to be heard as a citizen in this community?" Sean: "That status has changed. You're a candidate now and I cannot print you." Etc, etc...

This line of arguing continued until I pointed out that not only did my letters have nothing whatsoever to do with my campaign, but that I wrote the latest one in my capacity as an elected member of the El Paso County Republican Party. To that, Mr. Paige responded that if I was willing to use THAT title, he would print my letter. What? Somehow, just because I use one of the many titles that I have within this community, suddenly I got my voice back? What difference does that make? Am I not still a candidate? According to Mr. Paige, I've lost my citizenship because I am now a candidate, so all of the hats that I wear within the community shouldn't make a difference, right? He then stood on the argument that Mr. Bruce has the privilege of being printed because he is an elected official. Fine. Well, I've been elected (by a smaller body of people) to 4 consecutive terms on the El Paso County Republican Executive Committee. Or does that leadership not qualify me to speak publicly? Should the public not be exposed to my viewpoints on a number of issues as I ask them to hire me to serve them?

Acknowledging that the Gazette is under no obligation to print anyone, the excuse in this case and this "policy" clearly favors the incumbent in any race and is hypocritical at best.

Well, now it turns out that Mr. Paige was not only silencing me because I am running for public office, but he lied about printing my letter if he could use my title within the Republican Party. Upon opening the paper this morning, Friday, I discover no letter, no voice, no truth to what Mr. Paige said to me just two days ago. The price of the Gazette: 50 cents. The value of Mr. Paige's words: worthless.

