

The Iconoclast

"A true man will speak, not in humble whispers, lest he offend potentates and powers, but in clarion tones, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, till at last his words of fire burn through dull understandings and into cold hearts."

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2009

The Cowbirds of Summer



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
THE SKYBOX IS THE LIMIT

Perry Webb and the Springdale Cowbirds love them some high living in the Skybox at Arvest Ballpark. You could argue that they are spending a ton of money on "catering" in an effort to make the ballpark profitable, since they led the campaign for the tax to subsidize the enterprise. Or, you could argue that they are blowing Chamber dues and Springdale "economic development" funds to have a grand time with their friends.

A quick review of the [American Express bills that Perry Webb ran up for "food and beverages" in the Cowbird's Skybox during the 2008 season](#), courtesy of SpringdaleFOI, will give you enough of an idea that you can decide for yourself whether it was wise spending of taxpayer dollars. Let's start with the bill for **\$393** for "food and beverages" attributed to entertaining the **First Baptist Church**. It is not clear what the church has to do with economic development, but the real question is why the Cowbirds entertained only **Ronnie Floyd's flock** and left every other church of every denomination in town to buy their own peanuts in the cheap seats?

The largest single night catering expense was **\$1,425** on April 22 for entertaining guests from "WM," which rhymes with a big box retailer or a garbage company, followed closely by a **\$1,300** tab for **Cargill** snackers on July 25. Someone named **Shinall** made two trips to the Cowbird Skybox for a total bill of **\$1,762**. **Walker Brothers** were feted guests on four different occasions that tallied a total of **\$2,526**, and Dr. **Whitaker DDS** was invited three times and rang up **\$1,977** in expenses. **Dent-a-Med** made three trips around the bases for **\$1,344**. **Springdale Liquor, Hewitt, and Turnbow** had a combined catering bill of over **\$1,000** for two games, but **Waste Management** was identified on two days for **\$1,779**.

There are other big ticket expenses for entertaining the **A&P Commission** and **City Council**, public trustees who gave \$177,000 in co-mingled tax dollars to the Cowbirds. The **Rodeo** promoters and the **school board** also got cut in on the catering orgy. Many of the catering expenditures don't list any business as the beneficiary of the catering, but there were no Hispanic names on the published guest list. However, six different games identify **Perry Webb** as the king of the skybox for a day, just another untaxed bonus for all the jobs he brought to Springdale last year as Sam's Club was heading south.

Did the **Springdale City Council** know this is how Perry Webb and the Cowbirds were spending the taxpayers' money for economic development? Did they even bother to ask before appropriating another round for 2009? What does **Mayor Doug Sprouse** have to say about all of this? That might depend on whether he got to watch a game or two with Perry this season.