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More than 250 Show for Tea Party

- Heavy on nationalism, criticism of Obama, event generally low key

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"The left is trying to marginalize this movement by saying we're racist," said Jason Whitman of Cody, a speaker at Saturday's tea party event in Sheridan. "We're not racist homophobes. We're Americans and we care about our country."

Whitman was one of several speakers who spoke to the crowd of more than 250 at Saturday's event. Whitman is an optometrist from Cody who is running for state legislature in House District 24.

"The tea party ideals are the ideals of our founding fathers," Whitman said. "The tea party advocates a return to that vision."



The Sheridan Press/Blaine McCartney

Anthony Bouchard, executive director of the Wyoming Gun Owners Association, holds up a copy of the Wyoming Freedom Political Action Committee brochure that lists concerns about gun control, health care and out-of-control spending during a tea party speech Saturday afternoon at Grinnell Plaza in Sheridan.

Whitman went on to say that a lot of Americans are "mad as hell" and are "tired of the federal government coming in, intruding on our personal lives and businesses."

Whitman clarified that he is not anti-government, but is anti-big government. "I am tired of the federal government shredding our Constitution and especially the Obama administration, which is one of the worst offenders," Whitman said.

Whitman's comments were met with several rounds of applause from the mostly quiet, subdued crowd.

But, Whitman and other attendees at Saturday's tea party did make several references and comments about the small group of Obama supporters in the crowd.

"Jason Whitman did engage the Obama supporters who were there a little bit," one of the event's organizers, Kristy Tyrney, said this morning. "But I always tell people we are bipartisan. We have had conservative Democrats and Libertarians join us before and they are always welcome at our events."

Kay Pearson of Sheridan said she attended Saturday's tea party event in order to "engage people in conversation so (she) could better understand the tea party."



The Sheridan Press/Blaine McCartney

From left, Remelle, Denis and Terry Olson listen as the "Star Spangled Banner" is played at the start of a tea party demonstration Saturday afternoon at Grinnell Plaza in Sheridan.

But, Pearson said, she had an unnerving experience when a woman carrying a sign that said "repeal" approached her.

"She said, 'You don't belong here,'" Pearson recalled. "She told me that this was their party and told me to go get my own."

When Pearson told the woman that she was there to hear what they had to say, the woman told her "we don't want you here" and told Pearson to leave.

Pearson was holding a sign advocating Organizing for America, an organization whose goal it is to build on the movement that elected President Barack Obama by "empowering communities across the country to bring about our agenda of change."

Organizing for America State Director Bryon Lee was also on the receiving end of some hostile words from tea party goers. Lee was referred to as a communist and called judgmental and was even pushed at one point.

Aspects of Obama's agenda of change were sharply criticized at Saturday's tea party event.

Anthony Bouchard, founder of Wyoming Gun Owners, spoke at Saturday's event in defense of states' rights.

"We have legislators too afraid to say no in our state," Bouchard said. "Say no to Obamacare, no to more federal intrusion in Wyoming, no to more control over our individual rights, no to more out-of-control spending."

Bouchard also spoke about Wyoming House Bill 95 known as the Wyoming Firearms Freedom Act. Bouchard criticized Sen. Bruce Burns (R-Sheridan) for offering a resolution that took "the teeth off that bill."

Bouchard also pointed out that Burns joined Wyoming Democrats in voting against the introduction of the Health Care Freedom Act in the Senate.

"A no vote on that bill was a yes for Obamacare," Bouchard said.

The Health Care Freedom Act proposed to amend the Wyoming Constitution by creating a new section specifying that the federal government shall not interfere with an individual's health care decisions and prohibiting any penalty, fine or tax imposed because of a decision to participate in or decline health insurance, or to pay directly or receive payment directly for health care services.

Other speakers at Saturday's tea party event included Tyrney, Ty Naus, Ken Pendergraft, and Roger Brunk all of Sheridan.

Wyoming Gov. candidates say religion not playing role

CHEYENNE (AP) — The four Republican candidates for governor say religion isn't playing a role in the race even though one of them is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ron Micheli is a Mormon rancher from heavily Mormon southwest Wyoming. He is a 61-year-old former legislator and former director of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.



Ron Micheli
Gov. candidate, Mormon Rancher

Mormons make up about 10 percent of Wyoming's population. Micheli says he doesn't have a strategy for concentrating the Mormon and agricultural votes to lock up the Republican nomination.

Republican candidates Matt Mead, Rita Meyer and Colin Simpson likewise say they are trying to win over every voter and not just voters of a particular faith.

Lummis seeks second term in U.S. Congress

CHEYENNE (AP) — Republican U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis is announcing her bid to seek a second term in Congress.

She will be in Cheyenne Monday afternoon and plans appearances this weekend in Gillette and Casper.

Lummis was first elected to the job in 2008. She replaced fellow Republican Barbara Cubin, who decided not to seek re-election.

Lummis beat Democrat Gary Trauner 53 percent to 42 percent in the election.

Lummis made campaign appearances over the weekend in Worland, Thermopolis and Evanston.



Cynthia Lummis

TR Royalty



Courtesy photo/Jason Rogers

Tongue River High School seniors Alden Ferguson and Aleksandra Fedko were named the 2010 prom king and queen Friday evening at Tongue River High School in Dayton.

Obama to stump for financial overhaul

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is heading to New York City later this week to push for a financial overhaul package in a venue rich with presidential history.

The speech Thursday at Cooper Union in Manhattan will mark a year since Obama first outlined his ideas for reform and nearly two years since the financial market meltdown.

It comes as a Senate showdown looms on a package of new regulations that Republicans have so far unanimously opposed. Over the weekend, GOP leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) urged top Democrats to go back to the drawing board and assemble a package that can win bipartisan support.

But Democrats accused McConnell and others of helping big banks fend off needed regulation.

Announcing the Cooper Union speech Monday, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Obama wants to "remind Americans what is at stake" if the rules of the road on Wall Street remain unchanged.

In his weekly radio and Internet address, Obama said, "Every day we don't act, the same system that led to bailouts remains in place, with the exact same loopholes and the exact same liabil-



Barack Obama
United States President

ities. And if we don't change what led to the crisis, we'll doom ourselves to repeat it."

Obama first spoke at Cooper Union as a candidate in March 2008 — attacking lax regulatory practices he said had allowed the likes of Enron and WorldCom to "push the envelope, pump up earnings, disguise losses and otherwise engage in accounting fraud."

The 151-year-old college has also seen memorable speeches

by candidates Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, as well as sitting Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Bill Clinton.

A year ago, Obama delivered his prescription for regulatory reform at Federal Hall, opposite the New York Stock Exchange, appealing to Wall Street executives to help — not hinder — the drafting of rules to avoid another market collapse.

"It is neither right nor responsible after you've recovered with the help of your government to shirk your obligation to the goal of wider recovery, a more stable system, and a more broadly shared prosperity," he said then.

Montana in-home day cares under scrutiny

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — A national child care organization has given Montana zero out of 140 points for what it says is the state's lack of oversight at small family child care home facilities.

The National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies in a report last month said the state fails to protect the health and safety of children.

The state's child care regulations have come under scrutiny after 70-year-old Albert Elmer Gaub was charged earlier this month with felony rape. Authorities say Gaub had sex with a 4-year-old girl under his supervision. He and his wife operated the

Cuddles and More child care business out of their Missoula home.

In its report, the association said the state Department of Public Health and Human Services Quality Assurance Division fails in three areas.

It said the state doesn't require routine inspections of home day care facilities, doesn't conduct comprehensive background checks on providers, and approves licenses for home care facilities before inspecting them.

"These are businesses," said Linda Smith, executive director of the association and a Montana native.

"Would you allow a restaurant to serve the public food before there has been a health inspection?"

Jon Ebel, spokesman for public health, said licenses are approved before inspections so children are present when the inspection takes place.

He also said that the department, though required to check just 20 percent of family and group child care facilities annually, has inspected more the last few years.

"During the last fiscal year, 44 percent of the registered family and group homes were inspected," Ebel said.

