

Huckleberries print column (Oct. 16, 2007)

Coeur d'Alene Mayor Sandi Bloem shouldn't appoint Dan Gookin as her ambassador to the city of Hayden, if the City Council wannabe upsets veteran incumbent Ron Edinger in the Nov. 6 election. Not that Coeur d'Alene and Hayden exchange ambassadors anyway. Huckleberries Online regular Thom George discovered an interesting entry by Gookin while digging through the archives of my blog this weekend - a graphic posted as a comment on Jan. 5 by the local activist in which a Nazi swastika was used to symbolize Hayden urban renewal. I had launched the thread by posting a story by Erica Curless, titled: "Hayden searching for its center: Brainstorming sessions seek ways to transform strip into ideal downtown." I asked this question: "What would be the first step Hayden would have to take to develop a legit downtown core?" The question attracted 22 comments. Midway down the thread, Gookin posted his graphic: "Downtown Hayden Revitalization Plan 'N.'" It consisted of a swastika-shaped building in the middle of a circular area. Lines pointed to various amenities in and around the swastika "building": medical center, shopping, City Hall, art gallery, library, theater, etc. One commenter said he needed to wipe the spittle off his computer monitor because he was laughing so hard at Gookin's graphic. The Huckleberries Online crowd often are irreverent. I viewed the graphic as over-the-top political incorrectness but within bounds of political discussion on the blog. Ten minutes after Gookin's post, I commented on the blog that I didn't have the nerve to run the graphic on the front page of Huckleberries Online, addressing Gookin: "You heard that Richard Butler didn't win that mayoral race back when, right?" So, you see - the media aren't the only ones who keep unfortunate stereotypes alive.