

Cheers & Jeers:

Into the muck

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

JEERS ... to Idaho Freedom Foundation Executive Director Wayne Hoffman. Appearing Saturday at the Latah County Republican's Lincoln Day banquet, Hoffman became the latest adherent to Godwin's Rule, which holds a long argument ultimately devolves into Nazi analogies.

Hoffman got his opportunity while debating against Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter's plan to establish a state-based health insurance exchange whereby small companies and individuals can shop for policies. Under Obamacare, the federal government will set up the exchange if the state opts out.

By taking that step, Hoffman said, Idaho was no different than the Vichy French, who after being overrun by Nazi Germany in 1940 submitted to occupation.

"It was the French government who put French Jews on the train to Auschwitz," Hoffman said. "I don't think they truly understood what they were doing."

How could he trivialize the systematic execution of more than 6 million human beings? And why would Hoffman leap into the same muck as Sen. Sheryl Nuxoll, R-Cottonwood, by essentially equating Otter with Nazis or Nazi collaborators?

Nuxoll may not know any better.

Someone as erudite as Hoffman certainly does.

JEERS ... to Idaho Senate Resources and Conservation Chairman Monty J. Pearce, R-New Plymouth. In leading the Senate's 19-16 drive to oust Idaho Fish and Game Commissioner Joan Hurlock of Buhl, Pearce said something you never should tolerate from any elected official:

"Just trust us."

Pearce said he couldn't say all he knows about Hurlock. What could that be?

Carpetbagger? True, Hurlock moved to Idaho about a decade ago. But if being native-born is a prerequisite to public office, you'd have to clear out the state Capitol first.

Not sufficiently active as a hunter and angler? Hurlock held licenses from 1999 to 2003 and then again in 2012. But gaps in his hunting and fishing activity didn't block Bob Barowsky of Fruitland from joining the commission.

Gender? Pearce apparently urged only the second female Fish and Game commissioner to step aside and, instead, seek a seat on the state nursing board.

Could it be this? Hurlock supported renegade Republican Rex Rammell - who challenged Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter, the man who appointed her.

Hurlock wrote four \$100 checks to Rammell's campaign. That puts her in league with the fellow who angered traditional hunters by offering well-heeled tourists the chance to walk up and shoot one of his pet elk trapped within his rickety fences.

The same guy who endorsed the idea of an "Obamatag."

The same one who got caught poaching an elk and calling Fish and Game wardens Nazis.

Supporting such a character would make anyone a questionable choice for Fish and Game. Is this what Pearce knew but couldn't talk about?

Is Pearce that clever? No, really, is he?

JEERS ...to the National Rifle Association. Its take-no-prisoners stance was on display in Olympia.

State Rep. Mike Hope, R-Lake Stevens, is a Seattle cop with a lifetime "A" rating from the NRA. Until now, that is.

Hope thinks everyone who gets a gun - whether from a dealer or a private citizen - should undergo a background check.

For that, he's been frozen out. For two months, he's been trying to talk to the NRA. His calls go unreturned.

Now the gun lobby is flooding Hope's district with postcards that read: "Urgent: Your State Rep. Mike Hope co-sponsored Sweeping Gun Control Bill."

Hope told the Seattle Times' Danny Westneat: "It looks like I went straight from an A to an F."

CHEERS ... to Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn.

Washington students are required to take five different tests to graduate - the highest number in the country.

Says Dorn, three tests are enough. Dorn's legislation to that effect also would expand local school control.

It's a wise step back from the over-emphasis on statewide tests that drain time away from teaching and learning, drive the curriculum and often distract teachers from creatively encouraging critical thinking skills.

JEERS ... to Idaho state Rep. Brent Crane, R-Nampa. In a state that creates artificial scarcity by deciding who and who can not sell liquor by the drink, a business has two choices - wait for one of these licenses to go on the market or pay a lobbyist to persuade lawmakers to pass an exemption.

That's how golf courses, ski resorts, airport lounges, conservation centers and equestrian facilities sell liquor.

When Tamarack Resort wanted up to 12 licenses, Crane said OK.

Only when the Nez Perce Tribe approached lawmakers with a similar request for its new Clearwater River Casino event center did Crane show restraint.

"I know the tribe has struggled with the issue of alcoholism, and I don't see how this legislation will help them deal with that," Crane said.

Congratulations on your newly acquired sanctimony, Rep. Crane.

JEERS ... to Idaho Public Television General Manager Peter Morrill. The host of "Idaho Reports," Greg Hahn, has taken a new job as Boise State University's associate vice president for communications and marketing. Although Morrill scaled back Hahn's role, he will remain on the air through the close of the legislative session.

Any way you look at this, it's a conflict of interest. Would Morrill retain Hahn if he took a job as spokesman for Sen. Jim Risch or Idaho Power Co.? Why is the state's largest university - which depends on the Legislature for its support - any different? - M.T.