

# Carlson publishes book

**Dan Hammes/St. Maries Gazette Record**

The people are familiar, many of the stories, however, have not been told before.

Chris Carlson drew on 40 years of experience in public life to publish his second book, "Medimont Reflections." The book comes two years after his first book, "Cecil Andrus, Idaho's Greatest Governor," a biography of the former governor hit book stores.

"This book is a compilation of 13 essays on issues and notable Idahoans who I have been involved with in 40 years of being in the public arena," said Mr. Carlson.

The Medimont resident taught at Kootenai High School before going to work for Cecil Andrus. He served as press secretary for Governor Andrus and had the same role when the governor served as Secretary of the Interior. In addition to his career in politics, Mr. Carlson served on the Northwest Power Planning Council, was the public affairs director for Kaiser Aluminum in Spokane and founded a regional public affairs business that thrives today.

It is that expansive resume of his work in public affairs that provides material for this book.

"I think people will find this pretty interesting. There is a lot of variety and no shortage of interesting anecdotes and incidents that will make it worth both the readers' time and their money," Mr. Carlson said.

Mr. Carlson cites the time Paul Newman visited Idaho because of his interest in the World Center for Birds of Prey. Mr. Newman supported the effort to create the sanctuary and was in Idaho to visit his daughter who worked there.

"This was at the height of his career so when people reported seeing Paul Newman in Silver City and Murphy a lot of people thought they were mistaken. But in fact, it was really him."

Mr. Newman is not the only celebrity in the story behind the creation of the Birds of Prey, which is included in the book. Robert Redford also was involved and plays a role in that essay.

"The Birds of Prey is a good example about how long it takes to get things done. It took 22 years from idea to inception for that sanctuary to become a reality. It is an interesting story more Idahoans do not know."

While celebrity name-dropping is benign, the book will likely cause some controversy.

The veteran of several Idaho political campaign devotes one chapter to the influence of the Mormon Church in Idaho.

"I call the chapter the 800 lb. gorilla. People just don't like to talk about the church's influence on the Idaho political scene but they should because it is fairly extensive."

Mr. Carlson writes about incidents from the campaigns of Larry Echohawk and Mitt Romney to demonstrate the influence the Mormon Church can have in Idaho elections.

The lifelong Democrat also devotes a chapter to the 1956 race for the U.S. senate between Glen Taylor and Frank Church. While the outcome of the election is a matter of historical record, Mr. Carlson speculates on whether a stolen ballot box changed the outcome.

Another chapter is devoted to two powerful – and pioneering - women in Idaho politics, Gracie Pfost and Louise Shaddock.

"Few people know that in 1956 when Louise and Gracie ran against each other for Congress it was the first time the two major parties nominated women to carry their banner in a major race. You could say Idaho voters were at the forefront of the women's movement in that regard," Mr. Carlson said.

The author admits that the book is heavy on politics but believes readers who do not follow politics closely will enjoy it.

"It is going to be attractive to political junkies but there are some items included in this book that belong on the historical record that I have not seen anywhere else."

Mr. Carlson will be at The Paperhouse May 31 from noon to 2 p.m. to meet the public and sign copies of his book. It is the first of several events planned in a statewide book tour. The book costs \$15.95 and is available at book stores and on the web.