

# Wayne's world

**Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune**

JEERS ... to Idaho Freedom Foundation President Wayne Hoffman. He has rallied to the defense of state Rep. Mark Patterson, R-Boise.

Patterson's shady biography includes a guilty plea to assault with intent to commit rape in 1974, a subsequent trial for rape in 1977 in which he was acquitted, a record of fabricating his educational and professional accomplishments, and conflicting accounts about his ability to recall the events in 1974.

Two days after the Idaho Statesman's Dan Popkey exposed Patterson's background, IFF pressed the send button on an email extolling the virtues of House Bill 219 - Patterson's effort to make criminals of cops who "knowingly and willingly participated in an action with the purpose of confiscating firearms defined as legal. ..."

Hoffman distributed the email to 5,000 of his dearest and closest friends, including nearly every Idaho lawmaker.

Arguably the most empty-headed bill of the session - Attorney General Lawrence Wasden's office said it wouldn't protect gun rights but just might disrupt federal-state drug and gang task forces - the measure won 55 House Republicans' votes, including Lewiston's Thyra Stevenson and Moscow's Cindy Agidius. The Senate buried it without a hearing.

Hoffman says that bill "advanced constitutional objectives in a good way." And for good measure, Patterson is one of IFF's stalwarts - the conservative lobby's Freedom Index rates him the seventh most constitutionally principled member of the Idaho House.

"We just thought it was an interesting little tidbit to share," Hoffman told the Spokesman-Review's Betsy Russell.

If Hoffman wants to cloak a misogynistic, twice-accused and once-convicted sexual offender who has a casual relationship with the truth with the IFF imprimatur, that's his business.

But why is he tap-dancing away from it?

Patterson's behavior is "not our deal," Hoffman said. "We don't have a dog in that fight."

And the timing of the email? Just a coincidence. It was prepared Nov. 8 - before Popkey's piece - and then released after the story emerged.

"That's just the way things work out sometimes," said the man who heads up an online newsgathering organization, [IdahoReporter.com](http://IdahoReporter.com).

Who are you going to believe - Hoffman or your lying eyes?

JEERS ... to the Lewiston School Board. Lewiston must address its ancient, crowded high school. So when the board explores the eminently reasonable idea of moving freshmen from the junior to the senior high school, patrons have every reason to ask: How can that be done with the current facility? Does it require additions and renovations - or a new high school?

Not on the table tonight, Superintendent Bob Donaldson told about 160 people Monday at Jenifer Junior High School.

How can it not be on the table? If Lewiston can expand the high school student body without new resources, then what has the community been arguing about this past decade?

And if it can't, then the whole idea of merging ninth-graders into high school is hypothetical at best. At worst, it fuels skepticism about the school district's plans.

CHEERS ... to the Asotin County Commission. When Chairman Brian Shinn and his colleagues expanded hours of operation at the Asotin County Family Aquatic Center, they made the correct - and the smart - political move.

By boosting the county's sales tax from 7.5 percent to 7.7 percent, voters this month shored up the financial foundation of the center. In return, they were promised the center would be available to them more often.

But the commission honored its pledge out of a moral obligation, not a financial one. It's likely the additional sales tax revenues won't get collected and remitted back to Asotin County until March or April.

The new hours take effect Dec. 2.

JEERS ... to Washington state Sen. Michael Baumgartner, R-Spokane. With Washington reeling from the prospect that Boeing will take its 777X project to another state, Baumgartner resorts to grandstanding.

Boeing may bolt because local members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers rejected the corporation's terms - job security in exchange for concessions on pensions and health care costs.

Says Baumgartner: It's time to punish the unions.

"I urge Gov. (Jay) Inslee to take real action now and bring the Legislature back into session to put Washington on the path to becoming a right-to-work state," Baumgartner said.

For Baumgartner, throwing red meat to his right-wing base is self-serving. But his idea won't go anywhere in a state where Democrats control the House as well as the governor's office and many Republicans prefer cordial relations with organized labor.

If Baumgartner wants to see what right-to-work can accomplish, let him come to Idaho - which now leads the nation in the production of minimum-wage jobs.

CHEERS ... to the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry. It wants Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter and the GOP-controlled Legislature to expand Medicaid coverage to 104,000 working poor adults.

Under Obamacare, the feds will pay 100 percent for three years and never less than 90 percent thereafter. Without Medicaid, these working poor will go without coverage - but not without care. And when they do get help, it will be Idaho taxpayers, businesses, health care providers and those already insured who pick up the tab. Medicaid expansion would save taxpayers about \$80 million a year, businesses about \$18 million a year and health care consumers about \$482 million a year. It will expand Idaho's economy by \$750 million a year and add almost 16,000 jobs.

IACI President Alex LeBeau's solution: Follow Arkansas' approach. Use Medicaid expansion money to purchase private insurance. It's a good fit for people who are working but earn too little to buy coverage. Besides, it's privatized Medicaid. What's not to like? - M.T.