

Mary Souza's Newsletter

December 9, 2013

Dear Newsletter Readers,

I am so happy to be sending you our very best wishes for a joyful Christmas. Thank you for your continued support and I hope your homes are filled with love and warmth this holiday season. Below you will find a copy of my My Turn column that appeared in last Friday's Press. Please check my note at the end, after you read it. So, from our family, pictured above in September, to yours, Merry Christmas! (the left photo is from the winter of 2008--Rick and our son Matt--let's hope we don't have that kind of snow again this year!)

My Coffee with Steve

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving, we certainly did. Nestled among our many blessings, we gave thanks for our wonderful supporters who so generously offered their time, energy and treasure during the recent campaign. And we prayed for our town and for the newly elected officials who will take over in early January, that they will fairly and equally represent all the citizens of Coeur d'Alene.

On that note, let me tell you about the 2 hour coffee conversation I had recently with Mayor-elect Steve Widmyer, at his invitation after I called to congratulate him on election night. Our visit went well. Steve has been on my newsletter list for many years, and has occasionally emailed me along the way, often agreeing with my views, adding his ideas, and asking for information on issues of his concern. We discussed all those topics and much more during our get together.

Many of my voters have emailed me, upset about the unseemly and dishonest behavior of some prominent Widmyer supporters, with particular anger at the lies and bias in the Press and its blatant political promotion for Steve. But we always knew it wouldn't be fair; we knew the Press would not be our friend because the strings of control are not attached to us, so we cannot be maneuvered by the powers that be.

Let's hope and pray that Steve doesn't respond to those strings either. He's got them now, no doubt about it, and we discussed as much during our coffee. The question is, can he push them away and do the right thing for the people of CdA? I sincerely hope so.

Many of you have also expressed concern about me personally. I want to assure you that I am doing well. Back before I announced my run for mayor, my wonderful husband and I searched our hearts and agreed that we would both be ok with either winning or losing. And we are. We ran an honest campaign of positive ideas, gave it every ounce of our energy and did not compromise our values. Best of all, we met a great many wonderful people in the process.

Running for mayor of CdA was an incredibly fascinating, challenging, and rewarding experience. Thank you. I'm reminded of the wise words of President Teddy Roosevelt when he said, "It's not the critic who counts...the credit belongs to the person actually in the arena...who, if they fail, at least fail while daring greatly, so their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." I've also been inspired, all the way through the campaign, by the words of Mother Teresa, when

she said, "Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway. For, you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway."

So, Steve, thanks again for the coffee conversation. I pray you open a new era of respectful communication between citizens and local government. But you've got some serious challenges ahead. City Hall does not operate like private business, and change does not come easily. I will be anxious to see how it goes and am honestly hoping you will move forward on the ideas you discussed with me. You have my very best wishes as our next Mayor. Please make us proud.

I sent in this My Turn column last Wednesday. The Press put it up online within hours, with a quick group of their fiercely negative attack bloggers commenting right away. I ignored their nasty comments and said nothing. After the print edition came out on Friday, I emailed the Press circulation department to cancel our subscription. It felt good not to be supporting the poor journalistic integrity we saw during the campaign and after, and I haven't missed it one bit.

But lo and behold, someone called me today to tell me about Sunday's Press opinion page. Apparently Editor Mike Patrick decided to print a "sampling" of the online comments from under my My Turn earlier last week. (5 attacks, 2 supportive) What is amazing is that the rules for the print newspaper opinion page have always been that you must use your real name and give your home town. This past Sunday, on the Press' print opinion page, Mike Patrick allowed anonymous commenters to use their made-up names. (5 anonymous, 2 real) No home towns listed. How low can Mike go? And no one knows who these commenters are or if they are all the same person with various fake names! This is what I mean when I say the journalistic integrity of the Press has truly taken a monumental downturn. Count me out.

Have a great week! --Mary