

# Curious case

**Marty Trillaase/Lewiston Tribune**

JEERS ... to Sherri Ybarra. Ever since the Mountain Home educator narrowly claimed the GOP nomination for Idaho state schools superintendent in a crowded primary race, this question has dogged her: Is she serious?

Not if you go by her snubbing about 460 Idaho school superintendents, principals and special education administrators gathered under the umbrella of the Idaho Association of School Administrators summer leadership conference in Boise.

To implement her program, Ybarra needs their confidence - if not their votes.

Democratic candidate Jana Jones was there Monday.

But for some reason, Ybarra said she was unavailable - although Idaho Education News reporter Clark Corbin found her having coffee in the same downtown Boise neighborhood where the conference was underway. She was waiting to meet with a state legislator.

This is getting to be a pattern. In the 2012 election - when outgoing schools chief Tom Luna's disruptive school overhaul package was the galvanizing issue on the ballot - Ybarra couldn't find the time to vote.

The curious case of Sherri Ybarra just got curiouser.

JEERS ... to the Idaho County commissioners. They made an error worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. And now it's the Nez Perce Tribe's problem?

For about 28 years, the county somehow failed to notice that it was collecting garbage at 92 rural residential units and 15 city units without getting paid.

That's because the county included garbage fees in its property tax bills - and tribal properties are exempt from paying property taxes.

The county calls that an "anomaly in our billing system."

Ya think?

In his July 24 letter, Commission Chairman James Rockwell told Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Chairman Silas C. Whitman to cough up \$327,625 for the years 1995-2014.

And expect another bill when the county figures out what was owed for the years 1987 to 1994.

By accepting garbage services, the tribe may have entered into an understanding - but even the most severe statute of limitations would free it from back-dating a bill to the Reagan era. At most, it might have to cover four or five years worth of services. That's no more than \$95,425.

Plus the county is dealing with a sovereign nation.

So Rockwell and the commissioners have a weak hand of cards here. They might want to start with a little contrition.

CHEERS ... to University of Idaho President Chuck Staben. Meeting with the Idaho Statesman's editorial board last week, Staben may have become the first authority figure to state the obvious: Legalization of marijuana on the Washington side of the border warrants a more flexible response on the Idaho side of the state line.

No one is in a better position to know this. Staben presides over a campus just eight miles away from Pullman.

"Marijuana use is illegal in the United States, and I am not advocating it," Staben said. "But an arrest can really harm a student long term - an arrest that might be out of proportion to the situation."

Certainly a UI student who is arrested and convicted in Idaho for what would not be a crime for anyone 21 and older in Washington faces some life-altering consequences. There's the criminal justice system to work through. Under the federal Aid Elimination Penalty, students who are convicted of drug offenses will lose their eligibility for financial aid.

And in the digital age, a drug conviction can follow a young person anywhere - from job interviews to the landlord.

Good for Staben.

JEERS ... to state Treasurer Ron Crane. In an op-ed published on this page last month, Crane took issue with characterizations - based on a legislative auditor's findings - that he had spent \$10,000 of your money each year on a "Smart Women Smart Money" conference through a nonprofit organization he created.

"As an additional point of clarification, I did not, do not, nor have I ever, owned the Smart Women, Smart Money conference. I do not, nor have I ever, served on the board of directors. It is controlled by a separate board of directors who volunteer their service and believe in my efforts to promote financial literacy to the women of Idaho."

But here's what records on file with the secretary of state's office show:

- Crane served on the original board of the Idaho Women's Money Conference, Inc. - a 501(c)(3). On April 18, 2002, Crane signed the articles of incorporation. Serving with

Crane on that original board was Liza Carberry, who at the time was the investment manager in Crane's office.

- Although Crane since has left the board, his staff members remain on it. In 2012, for example, the annual report lists among the directors LeAnn Sullivan, Crane's administrative assistant, who gave the treasurer's state Capitol office as her address. Listed as president was Beverly Norman of Nampa, who is one of Crane's neighbors.

Perhaps Crafty Crane would like to explain his definition of "not ever."

CHEERS ... to former U.S. Sen. and Gov. Dan Evans, R-Wash. In the Seattle Times Saturday, Evans offered a compassionate view of unaccompanied children who are escaping violent drug cartels in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

"What should we do today about immigration? First, receive the children fleeing from repression in Central America the same way we welcomed refugees from Vietnam 40 years ago," Evans wrote.

That's a reference to the tide of people who left Southeast Asia at the close of the Vietnam War in 1975. As governor, Evans went out of his way to welcome those new arrivals to the Evergreen State - at a time when many of his counterparts, notably then-Calif. Gov. Jerry Brown, tried to stop refugees from entering their states.

Once again, Evans stands in contrast to another governor - Idaho's chief executive, C.L. (Butch) Otter, who last month declared his state off-limits as a "destination or staging area" for an "influx of unaccompanied and illegal immigrants." - M.T.