

Courage under fire

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

CHEERS ... to Lewiston City Councilor Ged Randall. When Monday's 5-2 city council vote made Lewiston the ninth Idaho city to outlaw discrimination against people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, no one showed greater political courage than Randall.

Councilors Bob Blakey, Mike Collins and Jesse Maldonado were elected last fall on a pledge to pass a human rights ordinance. Mayor Jim Kleeberg proved himself their ally.

Initially, Randall appeared to be tied to Taxpayers Against Unfair Taxation Chairman David Estes, who opposes equal rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people. Yet Randall joined Blakey and Maldonado in the troika that crafted the ordinance. His support built a broad-based coalition to buttress human rights in Lewiston.

Randall's colleagues say that reflects the broadening of someone who, when confronted with the realities of governing, grows in office.

Just the same, the only councilor who may have given himself a case of political indigestion Monday was Randall - and he did it for noblest of reasons.

CHEERS ... to former Lewiston City Councilor Brad Cannon. More than a year ago, the list of Idaho cities filling the void left by an obstinate Legislature was expanding: Boise, Moscow, Sandpoint, Ketchum, Coeur d'Alene, Pocatello. Even conservative Idaho Falls.

Where was Lewiston?

Cannon wanted to know. So in the summer of 2013, Cannon asked City Attorney Jamie Shropshire to draft an ordinance. What followed was a discussion that extended into the fall campaign, giving the human rights ordinance the jolt of adrenaline it needed.

JEERS ... to Idaho Libertarian gubernatorial hopeful John Bujak. He would rather spend \$10,000 on his campaign than pay his child support.

On Oct. 22, Bujak pleaded guilty to contempt of court for failing to pay child support owed for August 2013.

To be found guilty of contempt of court, you must have the means to comply with a judge's order and choose not to. In other words, Bujak pleaded guilty to having enough money to make child support payments and refused to pay.

His response: Someone leaked the story because he's draining votes away from Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter and Democrat A.J. Balukoff.

"Probably as I gain more traction, there's going to be more smearing," he told the Idaho Press-Tribune's Kelcie Moseley.

Smear?

Pleading guilty to being a deadbeat dad two weeks before the election is a relevant point for voters to consider - alongside the Idaho Supreme Court recently labeling Bujak an unethical lawyer and lifting his license to practice for 12 months.

JEERS ... to Sherri Ybarra, the GOP's candidate for state schools superintendent. To her growing list of gaffes - plagiarizing her opponent's Web page, not voting in 15 of 17 Idaho elections, claiming endorsements she didn't have and failing to disclose a divorce - comes an even more serious transgression: resume fraud.

It's bad enough that Ybarra told voters she planned to complete a doctorate at the University of Idaho in August when she in fact obtained an educational specialist degree, which involves substantially less work.

At least she had an advanced degree.

Which is more than you can say about her claim of having been Idaho's "Educator of the Year" both in 2005 and 2006.

As the Spokesman-Review's Betsy Russell reported, Idaho bestows a Teacher of the Year award. Ybarra was among 10 Mountain Home teachers nominated to compete for the award - at the school district level - but she didn't win.

JEERS ... to state Rep. Cindy Agidius, R-Moscow. Alone among Idaho's 105 legislators, she took a pass on the controversial guns-on-campus bill. She's been spinning it ever since.

On March 7, the Tribune's William L. Spence reported Agidius missed the vote to attend a funeral - even though she could have arranged to pair her vote in advance.

Asked how she would have voted, Agidius told Spence: "I really hadn't decided. I spent a lot of time talking to people about my concerns. On any given day I could have made an argument on either side. I can't say - it would have been a tough decision."

That story changed when Spence interviewed her earlier this month. After researching the bill, Agidius concluded she would have voted no.

How convenient.

Guns on campus was a National Rifle Association bill. Had Agidius opposed it, she might have attracted a challenger from the right in a county that voted for Tea Party insurgent Russ Fulcher over Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter in the GOP primary election.

Now that she's against the measure, she's in sync with the University of Idaho community that urged defeating guns on campus - just in time to fend off a challenge from Democrat Paulette Jordan.

JEERS ... to the north central Idaho legislative candidates who dodged Vote Smart's National Political Courage Test.

Vote Smart, a nonpartisan voter advocate, is one of the few places where a candidate doesn't control the venue.

Only 9 percent of the people running for Idaho Legislature answered the questionnaire. Among them were Rep. Shannon McMillan, R-Silverton, and her Democratic challenger, Jessica Chilcott of Sandpoint.

Among the no-shows are Sens. Dan Schmidt, D-Moscow, Sen. Dan Johnson, R-Lewiston, and Sheryl Nuxoll, R-Cottonwood, Reps. Agidius, John Rusche, D-Lewiston, Thyra Stevenson, R-Lewiston, and Paul Shepherd, R-Riggins.

Same goes for Senate challengers John Carlson of Moscow, Pete Gertonson of Lewiston and Casey Drews of Osburn, and House candidates Jordan, Gary Osborn of Troy, David Susai of Deary, Caroline Nilsson Troy of Genesee, Dan Rudolph and Mike Kingsley, both of Lewiston, and Kenneth Myers of Sagle. - M.T.