

Just like Palin

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

JEERS ... to Sherri Ybarra, the GOP's nominee for state schools superintendent and honors graduate of the Sarah Palin Academy of Prevarication.

As Idaho Education News' Clark Corbin reported, Ybarra has missed 15 of the past 17 elections.

Last spring, Corbin had established she took a pass on the 2012 election - in which outgoing Superintendent Tom Luna's controversial school overhaul package was repealed.

Now Corbin reveals Ybarra didn't bother to vote in the 2006 election - in which then-Gov. Jim Risch's maintenance and operation tax shift was on the ballot. That shift destabilized school funding throughout the state. Also up for consideration that year was an unsuccessful proposal to increase Idaho's sales tax and earmark the dollars for schools.

All told, Ybarra has missed four elections for state superintendent of public instruction, four elections for governor and four elections for president.

None of this was known Sept. 26, when she told the City Club of Boise, "We have all missed an election or two in our lifetime, and I am not exempt from that."

When pressed during a debate with Democrat Jana Jones on Boise's KTVB, Ybarra continued to equivocate: "It's not news that I've been sporadic with my voting behavior."

Responded Corbin: "That's not exactly the whole story."

In true Palin fashion, Ybarra then pivoted: She was running for the \$102,667 job to atone.

"That's why I'm here, because I have not been very good at my civic duties and I want to repay Idaho," she said.

By that logic, half the population of the Idaho State Correctional Center could be state troopers.

CHEERS ... to Penny Ysursa of Boise, who made clear Thursday what her husband, Idaho Secretary of State Ben Ysursa, has so far refused to say: State Rep. Lawrence (Boss) Denney, R-Midvale, has no business succeeding him.

Secretary of State Ysursa has every reason to support Denney's Democratic opponent, state Rep. Holli Woodings, D-Boise. While Ysursa has championed your right to vote, Denney has worked to kick independents out of the GOP primary and has broached the idea of subjecting voters to fingerprinting.

Penny Ysursa - who served as a top elections officer under Ysursa's predecessor, Pete T. Cenarrusa - had this to say in the Idaho Statesman:

"Where is Lloyd Bentsen when you need him? I keep reading or hearing Lawrence Denney comparing himself to former Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa. I worked for Pete Cenarrusa, I knew Pete Cenarrusa, he was a friend of mine. Lawrence Denney, you're no Pete Cenarrusa."

OK, Ben. It's your turn.

JEERS ... to Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter. The governor's performance on the same-sex marriage issue has been confusing, embarrassing and profoundly disturbing.

Last Friday, as the state exhausted its legal options to preserve a ban on marriage equality, Otter said he would live with it.

Monday, it was a different story. As Attorney General Lawrence Wasden concluded he could no longer make a good-faith legal challenge, the governor, through his attorneys, Thomas C. Parry of Boise and Gene C. Schaerr of Washington, D.C., asked the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to hold off allowing marriages to take place with these flimsy arguments:

- To do otherwise would "improperly treat the sovereign state of Idaho as an ordinary litigant, entitled to no more respect than a fly-by-night payday loan business or a massage parlor."
- Idahoans - who have become accustomed to watching their Legislature's unconstitutional anti-abortion bills get thrown out of court - will suddenly be dissuaded from voting if the federal courts insist that the U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

That's on top of one of Otter's other attorneys, Monte Stewart, earlier telling the court that only traditional marriage prevents parents from abusing drugs and alcohol, engaging in extramarital affairs, working too much or spending too much time with hobbies and not enough with their kids.

By Tuesday, Otter flipped again: "We have done all we can through the courts for now to defend traditional marriage in Idaho."

What that means for Otter's latest court filing is unclear. What is clear, at this point, is the paucity of Otter's case.

Is he just a politician pandering for votes in a re-election campaign? Or is this what is in Otter's heart?

CHEERS ... to the Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries program. As the Tribune's Eric Barker reported Thursday, the tribe's 20-year effort to nurse the coho salmon back from extinction has produced a coho season on the Clearwater River running today through Nov. 16.

Through Wednesday, 15,091 coho had passed Lower Granite Dam, enough to allow a fishing season the Nez Perce can share with non-tribal members.

"To put it into one word, it's awesome," Mike Bisbee Jr., the tribe's coho program manager, told Barker. "This is the kind of stuff we dream about."

This comes on top of the tribe's efforts to restore fall chinook runs, which have also helped provide a fall fishing season for all.

Think of it this way: Were it not for the tribe, you'd be fishing for steelhead and little else this fall.

CHEERS ... to Clarkston City Councilors Kelly Blackmon and George Nash. They joined in Monday's 5-1 vote to establish zoning regs for the marijuana retail outlets that are authorized under Washington's legalization.

Only Councilor Bill Provost voted no. Councilor Terry Beadles was out of town and could not attend.

Earlier this year, Blackmon and Nash had joined a 4-3 majority in the misguided notion that rejecting a zoning ordinance would prohibit pot sales in the city. Just the reverse. Without a zoning regimen, marijuana outlets could proliferate through the city's entire commercial sector.

For Blackmon and Nash, it was a responsible decision. If the council wants to block pot sales, it can challenge Washington's law by enacting a ban - something Blackmon suggested Monday. - M.T.