

# Nameless, gutless

**Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune**

JEERS ... to the wimps who would stop Lewiston's proposed anti-discrimination ordinance while hiding in anonymity.

If approved Oct. 27, the measure would ban discrimination on the job, in housing and in public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or familial status.

That would make Lewiston the ninth Idaho city to act because Idaho's lawmakers have refused.

But Boise attorney Jason Mau suggests broadening a religious exemption to such a degree that the ordinance becomes a paper tiger.

So who is behind this?

Mau won't talk. His clients won't let him.

"That's like coming to our meetings on Monday night with a bag over your head," quipped Councilor Bob Blakey.

Speaking up in a public meeting is risky. You can encounter criticism, even ridicule. But it's just a taste of the fear gays and lesbians face. If they speak up for themselves, they face the prospect of being fired, evicted or denied services.

"It's either ironic or hypocritical," Councilor Michael Collins said.

If you want laughs, put a bag over your head.

If you want respect, take it off.

JEERS ... to Idaho County Commissioner Jim Chmelik. After doling out \$10,000 to Utah state Rep. Ken Ivory's American Lands Council, he's now funneling up to \$2,000 to Doyel Shamley, president of the Nevada-based Veritas Research Consulting.

Chmelik was elected to communicate with other officials such as Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Supervisor Rick Brazell.

Why does he need help?

Could it be that instead of working toward a collaborative forest management plan revision, Chmelik was busy running for lieutenant governor - a campaign in which he carried only 33 percent of the GOP primary vote?

CHEERS ... to U.S. Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho. Speaking Friday at Clarkston, Risch maintained a pragmatic, nuanced posture on the Obama administration's airstrikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

"If we are going to use military force against another country, the American people ought to have something to say about it," he said.

Absolutely. If anything defines the Imperial Presidency, it's been the practice of launching hostilities without first going to Congress.

A member of the Foreign Relations and Intelligence committees, Risch was careful to thread the needle - not undermining the legitimacy of the White House to act but suggesting it is "on thin ice at best" without congressional authorization.

Give Risch points. He's shown restraint and thoughtfulness at a time when both are in short supply.

JEERS ... to state Rep. Lawrence (Boss) Denney, R-Midvale. Before he became the GOP's nominee for secretary of state, Denney was the first Idaho House speaker to get dumped. One reason was his mishandling of the Phil Hart affair.

Hart was the Hayden lawmaker who refused to pay his income taxes and stole timber from state endowment lands worth an estimated \$22,827.

Monday, Denney told the City Club of Boise his hands were tied "by a pesky little document that nobody really follows anymore called the Constitution." In other words, the people elected Hart and only the voters could remove him.

But expulsion was never the issue. The speaker could have yanked him from all committee assignments - including his seat on the House Revenue and Taxation Committee. Instead, he waited until Hart was good and ready to go.

When Hart's timber theft surfaced, Denney punished state Rep. Eric Anderson, R-Priest Lake, for launching an ethics probe.

Does Denney think we're that gullible?

JEERS ... to New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, chairman of the Republican Governors Association. Under Christie, the RGA is trying to deceive you.

Rushing to Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter's defense, the RGA began an attack ad campaign on Democrat A.J. Balukoff. The GOP called Balukoff - who has never run for any office other than Boise School Board - a "typical politician."

Then it twisted a 1999 Lewiston Tribune story beyond recognition. At that time, the Tribune reported Balukoff was part of a bipartisan coalition favoring public financing of campaigns. The

group announced it had opted to wait until 2002 before beginning an effort to put the question before voters.

The group's chairman, Robert Riddle of Hayden Lake, said it clearly enough: "It won't be tax money for sure. It will be some sort of public financing."

Whether that meant allowing Idahoans to make a voluntary contribution as an income tax return checkoff, we'll never know because the initiative campaign never got off the ground.

That didn't stop the RGA ad from stating Balukoff "even wanted to use your tax dollars to fund political campaigns for politicians."

Christie's crew even got the source wrong.

It credited the Lewiston Morning Times.

JEERS ... to Congressman Raul Labrador, R-Idaho. In defending Idaho's same-sex marriage ban, Labrador managed to detour around 149 years of American history, the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the role of the judiciary.

Otter and Attorney General Lawrence Wasden are making a last-ditch effort to stop gay couples from marrying in the Gem State. The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down Idaho's ban, but Otter and Wasden have appealed.

"Marriage should not be redefined by unelected judges who continue to trump the will of the people of the various states," Labrador said.

Left to "the will of the people," Southern schools would have remained segregated. Interracial marriage would be illegal. Hispanics could still be denied housing or employment. And women could be denied credit. - M.T.