

Unity on this Republican bus? Dream on

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

For Idaho's Republican heavyweights, getting together to crisscross the state the final weeks of the campaign is a time-tested strategy. Get everyone on board - state officers, legislators, members of Congress. Who knows? They may even find room for the party's new finance chairman, former U.S. Sen. Larry Craig.

Then get out the word: Vote a straight ticket for the unified Republican team.

There's just one problem.

Unity is in short supply.

Has anyone forgotten that Congressman Raul Labrador almost challenged Gov. C.L. (Butch) Otter, only to back his GOP primary opponent, state Sen. Russ Fulcher, R-Meridian?

Before he bagged the GOP nomination for secretary of state with 37 percent of the vote in a four-way race, his party left state Rep. Lawrence (Boss) Denney, R-Midvale, for dead - making him the first sitting House speaker to get ditched.

Just before he departed for a quixotic bid to lead the U.S. House, Labrador presided over a state GOP convention in Moscow that deadlocked over who should run the state party. It took six weeks of infighting and a courtroom brawl before things settled down.

Then there's Attorney General Lawrence Wasden's pesky habit of following the Constitution. Such as when he sued Otter and his fellow state Land Board members to get them to end sweetheart deals for the people lucky enough to lease state cabin sites at Priest and Payette lakes. Or when he told Denney and other lawmakers their scheme to sue the federal government into relinquishing public lands was folly. Or when he recognized the state had exhausted its legal options in defending Idaho's ban on same-sex marriage in the federal courts - even when Otter refused to quit.

What about some of the individual blemishes?

It turns out Sherri Ybarra, the Mountain Home educator who snatched the nomination for state schools superintendent with 29 percent of the vote in a four-way race, missed 15 of the last 17 elections. Ybarra also got caught plagiarizing her Democratic opponent Jana Jones' website material.

For a fellow who wants to be Idaho's chief elections officer, Denney would prefer fewer people voted. He's the father of the closed GOP primary and now he's introduced the idea of fingerprinting voters.

State Treasurer Ron Crane has endured criticism that he lost millions in tax dollars on bad investments and squired his colleagues around Manhattan in stretch limousines on the state's dime.

Wouldn't you love to be the fly on the wall of that bus?

Labrador: Anybody mind if I get behind the wheel?

Otter: I'm the governor. This is my bus. I'll drive.

Labrador: Just keep it in the right lane.

Otter to Wasden: How dare you let the U.S. Constitution interfere with our antipathy toward same-sex marriage. What kind of Republican are you?

Denney to Ybarra: You're my kind of voter.

Wasden to Crane: First time on a bus? Miss your limo?

Denney to Wasden: How dare you force me to waste \$61,000 on a lawyer because you oppose privatizing public lands. What kind of Republican are you?

Ybarra to Denney: Hello, Lazarus.

Otter to Ybarra: Good speech. Where ever did you come up with that phrase: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country"? Catchy.

Crane to Wasden: Only Christ Troupis and LeeAnn Callear want you gone. Even the Democrats like you. What kind of Republican are you?

Craig to all: Where's the bathroom on this bus? - M.T.