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# Huckleberries: Closed Republican primary in Idaho attracts Democrats

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• • • Upon arriving home for an election day break Tuesday afternoon, I found my neighbor, Tom, waiting for me. Tom is a true-blue Democrat. He had a list in his hand, containing the names of GOP legislative candidates Luke Malek, Paul Amador and Peter Riggs. I pointed out that he couldn't vote in the GOP primary, if he had registered as a Democrat. Tom thought he had. But I urged him to check with the officials at the Precinct 52 polls. Later, I learned that Tom had been listed as unaffiliated. He registered as a Republican Tuesday – and for the first time in his life voted in a GOP primary. Also, he told his son and his son's friend to do the same thing. Three Democrats voting Republican, for mainstream Republicans. That made me wonder: Did the scorched-earth Republicans who sued successfully to close their Idaho primary in 2011 outsmart themselves? They had alleged that Democrats were crossing over, under the open primary system, and voting for centrist Republicans. No one has proven that was the case. In the first election cycle or two after the change, the tea party/Redoubt wing of the GOP was successful in getting uber-conservatives elected in Kootenai County and North Idaho. On Tuesday, things changed. The word was out that Democrats and independents were losing a chance to have a voice in local and state government by not voting in the GOP primary of ruby-red Idaho. I suspect more Democrats and independents voted in the North Idaho GOP primary contests this year than ever before. And that number is going to get larger. What goes around comes around.

## I'm shrinking

In the recent Idaho GOP Primary campaign, Wayne Hoffman of the controversial Idaho Freedom Foundation and uber-conservative allies threw everything they had at centrist Republicans Sen. Shawn Keough and Rep. Luke Malek. The net result? Keough of Sandpoint and Malek of Coeur d'Alene won by larger margins in their contested contests this year than they did in 2014. Sen. Keough dispatched tea party candidate Glenn Rohrer 55.7 percent to 44.3 percent Tuesday. In the 2014 primary, Keough beat Danielle Ahrens, another GOTPer, 53.8 percent to 46.2 percent. On Tuesday, Malek defeated Arthur Macomber 58.4 percent to 41.6 percent. In the 2014 GOP primary, he beat Toby Schindelback 52.71 percent to 47.29 percent. So much for Hoffman and the Big Bad Wolf of Idaho's Far Right.

## Huckleberries

Poet's Corner: As sidewalk dining expanded in downtown Coeur d'Alene in spring 2003, the late Tom Wobker (aka, The Bard of Sherman Avenue) took note. He penned "Sidewalk Cafes" on

May 14, 2003: “On Sherman it is thought a treat/To have your lunch out by the street, To dine alfresco ’neath the sky/And watch the pickup trucks go by” ... Someone with an urge to dig and collect rocks is vandalizing Tubbs Hill in downtown Coeur d’Alene – and Huckleberries has the photos to prove it ... Tweetable: “My dog has learned to operate the windows in my car but apparently still isn’t smart enough not to eat trash” – Liz Burch/KHQ @KHQLiz ... Fellow who called 911 dispatch from Harrison, Idaho, area Friday morning apologized. He didn’t need help. He was just “tweaking.” P’haps he needs more help than he thinks ... Former Coeur d’Alene School District trustees don’t fade away. They get themselves elected to the Kootenai County Grand Old (Tea) Party Central Committee. After helping conservative hard-liners overthrow the school board for a short period, former trustees Terri Seymour, Brent Regan and Ann Seddon now represent Precincts 39, 61 and 66, respectively ... Interestingly, current board Chairman Christa Hazel, a moderate who defeated Regan in a 2013 trustee race, won as a write-in in Precinct 47. Should make for interesting gatherings of the local Elephant here.

## **Parting Shot**

The homemade chocolate chip cookies handed out in Precinct 24 in Post Falls Tuesday didn’t attract many voters. Councilwoman Kerri Thoreson of Post Falls was only voter No. 13 at 10:30 a.m. But the cookies sure beat the “I Voted” stickers that you usually get. P’haps County Clerk Jim Brannon could encourage a higher turnout than the miserable 22.61 percent Tuesday countywide by ordering all polling places to give out homemade cookies?