

Rush was no Fluke

Marty Trillhaase

JEERS ... to Nez Perce County commissioner candidate and Lewiston gadfly David Estes. Not content to let talk radio hatchet man Rush Limbaugh trash Georgetown University law student Sandra Fluke, Estes managed to out-Limbaugh Limbaugh.

After Fluke testified before a Democratic congressional panel about the need for insurance-covered contraception, Limbaugh called her a "slut" and a "prostitute."

In his online newspaper, The Idaho Observer (theidobserver.com), Estes wrote: "Her claim is that the price of contraceptives is too high for college students. Limbaugh called the student a slut and a whore. Another name should have been added to Limbaugh's list of adjectives: stupid."

Fluke, Estes said, personifies an "astounding" immorality that is responsible for abortions, divorce, AIDS/HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

"Slut and whore are kind words for this individual," Estes wrote. "Her actions are despicable and disgusting."

You could have read it for yourself, except Estes said he pulled the editorial from his website.

Limbaugh and Estes have misrepresented Fluke's testimony. She never discussed herself. Instead, Fluke cited a Georgetown colleague who, unable to afford uninsured birth control pills, suffered polycystic ovarian syndrome and subsequently lost an ovary. Fluke talked about another woman whose endometriosis went untreated when she could not secure insurance coverage for the pill.

Eventually, Limbaugh apologized. But in reply to a Tribune email, Estes wrote: "... I was the author of the editorial piece and I stand by the article. The statistics presented [are] only a fraction of STD statistics on the [Centers for Disease Control] site. There is a direct correlation between sexual behavior and sexually transmitted diseases. We do not need our national leaders advocating or supporting such behavior mentioned in the editorial.

"Hope you make this a campaign issue. My newspaper needs the publicity."

Consider it done, Dave.

JEERS ... to departing Congressman Jay Inslee, D-Wash. He didn't just pull a Palin. Actually, it's worse.

In 2009, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin fled Juneau in mid-term for lucrative speaking fees, book contracts and a perch at Fox News.

Last weekend, Inslee, a 15-year House veteran, left Congress to run full time for governor against Republican Attorney General Rob McKenna.

Inslee is on track to become the first Washington Democrat to lose the governor's office since 1980. So Saturday, Inslee sought a game changer. He's going home.

Why did Inslee bother seeking re-election in 2010 when it was abundantly clear he'd try to succeed the retiring Chris Gregoire?

Transforming the matter into a test of Inslee's character, however, is what followed. Under Washington's Constitution, a vacancy in the House would trigger a special election as long as it occurred eight months before the next general election - or March 6.

But Inslee's newly reconfigured district is now a toss-up. Republicans coalesced behind John Koster while Democrats are divided among six candidates. In a rushed special election season, Koster would have the advantage.

Inslee waited long enough to guarantee his office will remain vacant for the rest of the year.

At least Palin left the lights on. Her lieutenant governor, Sean R. Parnell, took her place.

Don't worry, says Washington Democratic Party Chairman Dwight Pelz. Inslee won't be missed. "We all know Congress is gridlocked and not much is happening there," he said.

Tell that to the more than 700,000 people living in Inslee's district who no longer have a voice in the House of Representatives.

And tell that to the retiree who can't get his Social Security check, the patient with Medicare issues, the veteran who has a problem with Veterans Affairs or the person caught in the bureaucratic maze of immigration. Without a congressman to rely on, all have been left out in the cold.

JEERS ... to seven Republicans on Idaho's Senate State Affairs Committee. The chamber's premier panel, its members include President Pro Tem Brent Hill, R-Rexburg, Majority Leader Bart Davis, R-Idaho Falls, and the dean of the Senate, Denton Darrington, R-Declo.

Wednesday, all seven got behind Boise Republican Sen. Chuck Winder's bill requiring any woman seeking an abortion to undergo an ultrasound. Both Democrats on the committee voted no.

Winder's bill may go one step further by subjecting some women to a transvaginal ultrasound - a procedure with all the elements of the crime of rape.

How could a committee of senior, seasoned, otherwise reasonable Republican senators ignore what they heard from a jam-packed public hearing?

- There is no exception for medical emergencies.
- There is no exception for rape and incest victims.
- A physician must complete a form naming the patient. Says the American Civil Liberties Union: That information might be disclosed.

CHEERS ... to Idaho Democrats. The party fielded candidates in 25 of Idaho's 35 Senate seats and 56 of its 70 House slots. That's a big improvement over 2010, when Democrats ceded 17 Senate and 30 House races.

After years of neglect, northern Idaho's six legislative districts are filled with Democratic candidates. Among the notables: former Kootenai County Clerk Dan English, who is running for the seat now held by tax scofflaw Phil Hart, R-Athol, and former 2nd District Judge John Bradbury, the first Democrat to seek a Senate seat from Nez Perce County since 2008. - M.T.