

"For every reason. Spin! Spin! Spin!"

After the recent DDA special election beatdown, the Byrds and the Bible came into my head. Those responsible for the loss offered reasons (excuses) for the loss. None of the reasons reflected self-assessment. None accepted responsibility for costing the downtown \$650,000 or so over the next four years.

As usual, when insiders lose - whether at the polls or in court - circumstances beyond their control were responsible.

"The low voter turnout."

If you look at the accompanying table (box), you will see voter turnout, except in 1997, has always been abysmal.

"Supporters did not vote."

Perhaps. But neither did opponents. A review of the polling list indicates that several downtown property owners who would have almost certainly voted "no," did not vote either.

"The weather was bad."

A light mist fell on the day of the election. Of the 96 votes cast, 21 came from what election officials refer to as "absentee" ballots. *Actually, early voting can be either in person at the county clerk's office or by requesting a ballot to submit through the mail.* The city clerk informed the Cheyenne Herald that 21 absentee ballots were requested and all 21 votes were cast.

How weather on this election day compared to previous election days is unknown. The fact that voter turnout was consistent with all but one previous election refutes the stand that weather played a role. To believe weather kept voters from the poll would dismiss supporters as fair weather voters only. They would never want to admit that.

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

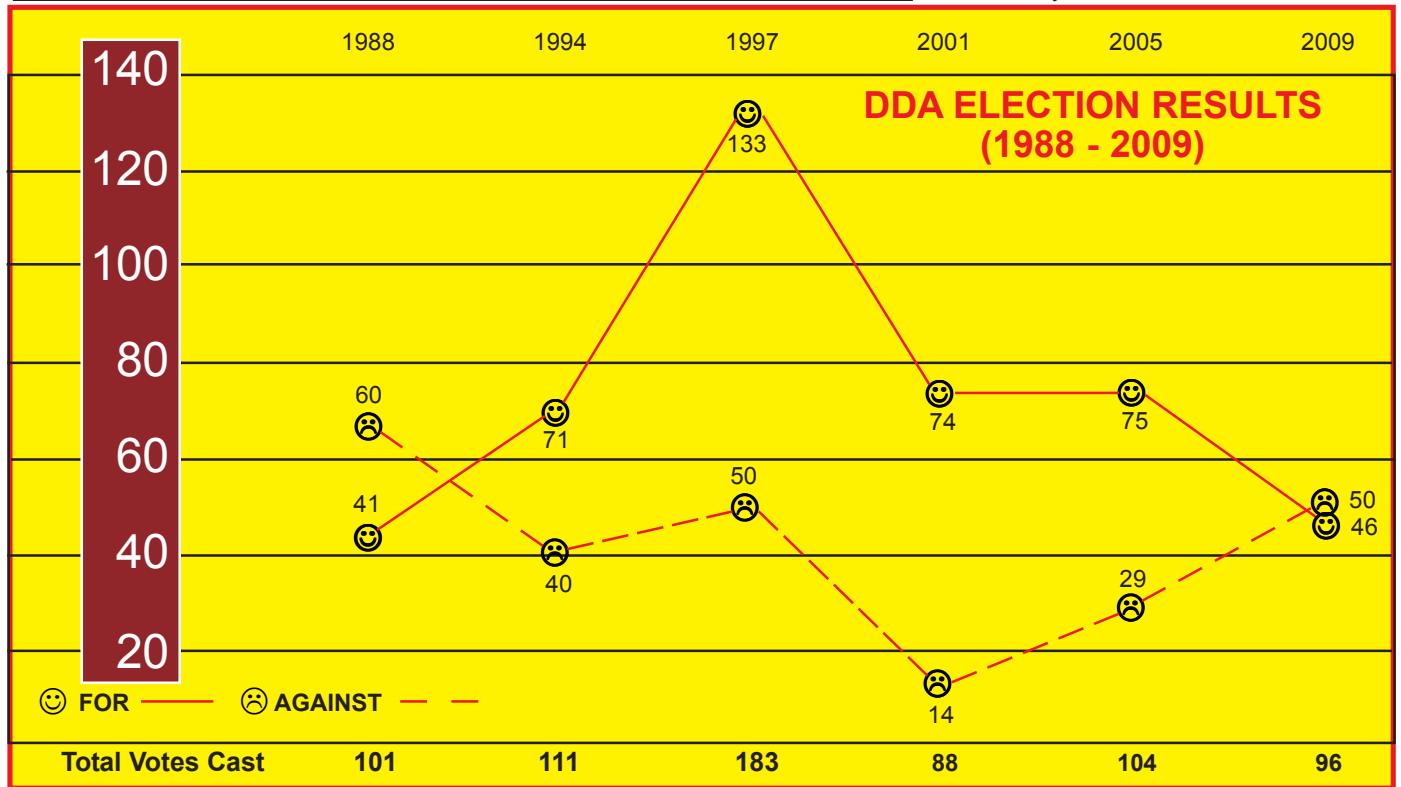
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. I swear it's not too late.

Ecclesiastes 3:17 (Turn! Turn! Turn! by Pete Seeger, words altered slightly. Last six words added)

Nothing in past elections suggested that opponents were the more determined voters. In fact, eight years earlier, only 14 downtown property owners voted "no."

The rejection of 2009 can only be attributed to dissatisfied property owners who finally adopted the *Network* stand. "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore." The DDA has squandered so much money, with nothing to show for it, and property owners just decided enough was enough.

Insiders on the DDA board and City elected officials can spin the devastating defeat however they want. Simply put, the DDA got it handed to them. As shown in the last Herald, they could muster only four "yes" votes beyond the insiders. From 282.



Cheyenne Community Clinic

Has the United Way outlived its usefulness?

Decades ago, before the United Way scandal, payroll deductions were helpful and captive ways to insure employees made regular charitable contributions.

It was an effective peer pressure method to get a higher percentage of employees to subscribe to payroll deduction giving. Donors didn't think much about how their money wasn't being used. A very small percentage of those giving via payroll deduction had any idea how the money was being distributed - and cared less.

Locally, the United Way office decided not to set donation goals anymore and instead of the giant red thermometers around town, there is just a small unimpressive sign beseeching the public to make donations to the United Way.

Donations made to chosen charities offer specificity to the donor. If the person has a family member with diabetes, their contribution can go to that cause. Or cancer, heart disease, kidney failure, etc., they can give to that cause. Or, can they?

By agreeing to a payroll deduction plan United Way has a corner on, the donor doesn't know whether any of their donation or how much is going to the cause they'd like to support.

If they asked, or checked with United Way, they may find that none of their contribution goes to a cause they would choose.

Another question donors should ask themselves is: "Who polices the police?" United Way determines which organizations to pass along your money to but has no one (except their own board who made the decision in the first place) looking over their shoulder. When they criticize a desperately needed group like the Cheyenne Community Clinic for shortcomings, who is in a position to criticize the United Way for its own shortcomings?

Let's assume for sake of argument that Cheyenne Community Clinic was not perfect. Would United Way of Laramie County claim they are? Who audits the auditor? Who insures that not too much

of the donations made through United Way are not being spent on salary and other questionable expenses?

And why would Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County government blindly follow the lead of United Way and withhold funds from Cheyenne Community Clinic?

Who in United Way knows how to run a medical clinic? Who in United Way donates their time to this clinic or any other clinic that provides free medical care to those without insurance or are truly needy?

It is not a good thing that the Clinic has thrown in the towel. Maybe they're just burned out fighting the establishment. It's too bad, and probably too late, but they should have made their appeal directly to the public. Do you know what would have happened if they had? The United Way would have terminated their support. They will not tolerate the competition. So, the Cheyenne Community Clinic was damned if they did, damned if they didn't.

There are two important lessons here. First, never become dependent on United Way if you get their support. And, second, if you donate through the United Way payroll deduction system, rethink that. Donate directly to causes you support. With the internet, you can set up your own monthly donation schedule. Think about it.

In Memory

Phyllis Atchison

April 20, 1923 - November 8, 2004