

# Rita Meyer is the right choice. The best choice.

I had told myself, and you, that I would not take sides in the political races this year. In the past two election cycles, I served as campaign manager for the Winney for Congress campaigns and I just decided that I would harvest all the advertising I could and not become an open and vocal advocate for any candidate.

Granted, I do discuss campaigning and politics with candidates. Sometimes with more than one candidate for the same office. It is also my responsibility to prepare the best and most productive advertising for all candidates who buy ads on these pages and I won't sabotage one's ads so another candidate has a better chance of winning. Over the past eight and a half years, I have tried to earn a reputation for honesty and I wouldn't risk it for such a small amount of money. If I have a price, it's a helluva lot more than even full page ads sell for in the Herald.

I thought Rita Meyer would advertise with me because she had advertised in the Cheyenne Herald when she ran for auditor four year ago but that was a recent decision and didn't affect my thought process. While I haven't come out and openly endorsed Rita here, I have said more than once that it is about time for Wyoming to elect a woman Governor. I've reminded voters that only three women before Rita, in 120 years, have even been on the ballot and the only one to win a governor's race was Nellie Tayloe Ross, who was elected in a special election to complete the term of her deceased husband but when she ran for a full term, she was defeated. Mrs. Ross was elected to be Wyoming Governor in 1924 and began to serve that term in 1925. She was a Democrat. 85 years between women governors seems long enough to me. How about you?

Wyoming, shockingly, has never had a Republican woman governor. Only two other women, Kathy Karpan (D) and Mary Mead (R), have been on the ballot for governor in Wyoming, the Equality State.

I support Rita for more reasons than just because she is a woman and I find it embarrassing that the Equality State has not elected a female Governor. Of course, if they're not on the ballot, voters can't elect them and they haven't been on the ballot. Rita also has experience in the Governor's office, under Geringer, and in other state office, serving as Wyoming State Auditor for the past 3 1/2 years.

What made me decide to use space in this final issue before the primary election to openly and enthusiastically support the Rita Meyer candidacy has been an accumulation of things. The straw that broke the camel's back about my remaining somewhat mute about my preference in this race was a television commercial a couple nights back for Colin Simpson.

Where I come from, in business there is a line, "It's easier to climb the corporate ladder of success if your Daddy owns the ladder." Still, in this campaign, I was beginning to believe the Simpson kid was going to try to earn the job - that he wasn't going to try to ride Daddy's coattails into another political office. Not so.

I was wrong. Woefully wrong.

That new TV commercial started with a recent picture of Colin and his Daddy on screen. No introduction. Just the silent visual presentation in case there was a voter in Wyoming who didn't know Colin was Alan's son. Colin's along for the ride.

I was already pretty perturbed with Ron Micheli for sending a letter to a judge in Casper, trying to influence the sentence for a confessed rapist. It was later disclosed that Micheli has received a bunch of money from the same federal government he wants to "leave us alone" and I have been at least as upset by the incredible spending of Matt Mead.

You'd think hobby rancher Matt Mead would have seen how trying to buy a statewide election in Wyoming isn't always very productive. He could have considered the personal wealth dissipated by Mark Gordon just two years ago. Gordon did not survive the U.S. House primary.

Candidates like to boast about being "a fourth generation rancher" or "third generation politician." I look at those claims a bit differently than they intend. I ask myself what these guys have done for themselves, what they've earned on their own? How much of what they have is the result of being born into it? Call me old-fashioned but I believe that success and wealth earned are more impressive than success and wealth inherited. Sweat equity trumps being named in a will.

So, we have two "Sonny Boys" in the race, Colin Simpson and Matt Mead, along with one fourth generation rancher with a proclivity for huge political gaffes and one self-made woman. The choice is easy.

Let me mull over those choices for a second. Should I vote for one of the males whose Daddy owned the ladder or the woman who has earned what she has, a woman who, the ads say, "was born poor."

That's probably what attracts me to Rita Meyer's candidacy. The born poor part.

I kind of like that. I've kind of been there.

Both Simpson and Mead wanted to be chosen to succeed Craig Thomas in the U.S. Senate after Craig's unfortunate and untimely death in 2007. Neither was a finalist and the list was developed by the insiders in the Republican Party - the State Party Central Committee. That gave me pause even though I saw how foolish the same body was in forwarding Jim McBride's name to the Governor.

In that "round" voting in the elimination process to succeed Craig, ten of 28 were advanced to the second round. Matt Mead finished in a tie for sixth and Colin Simpson was ninth. In the second round, Mead tied for fifth and Simpson was eighth, both leapfrogging a guy named Frank Moore. In the final round, from which three names would be forwarded to Dave Freudenthal and he had to choose one to become the replacement U.S. Senator, Mead finished just out of the money at fourth and Simpson did not make the Top Five. Tom Sansonetti finished first in each

of the three rounds but must have beaten Dave too often at tennis and was not chosen. John Barrasso was.

If those who knew the guys best did not think they were deserving of even being considered by the Governor for the Senate, voters should contemplate that. Ron Micheli finished third in the first two rounds, then fifth in the final elimination.

Polls are showing Rita slightly ahead of Matt Mead. When you consider that Matt may spend upwards of \$2 million in this campaign, and has been advertising since about 1959, that's a very impressive showing for Rita. Very, very impressive.

Wyoming voters do elect woman candidates to office - Rita is proof positive of that. But, for most offices in recent elections, the prime requisite has been the big "R" behind the candidate's name. This election, and the one for State Superintendent of Schools, is different. The field is both crowded and competitive.

When you review Rita's qualifications, it is hard to find anything missing. She has the job skills, she has the military background important to conservative voters, she has the right social stands, she has already handled the State's money, she's married, a mother, and she was endorsed by Sarah Palin. And now me.

Ron Micheli has endorsements from most of the extremist Republicans and former officeholders. So what? Issues don't much separate the four candidates. This election could be decided on respect.

If the candidates could all probably handle the job and a look at their qualifications comes out somewhat equal, the respect that Rita deserves for what's she accomplished on her own - not what she inherited and not the result of lineage - tips the scale to her for me.

Dave Freudenthal may be luckier than Lou Gehrig considered himself on July 4, 1939. Energy revenue poured in. Dave and the Legislature could hardly spend it as fast as it came to them. At the end, he finally had to tighten the belt. No more multiple jet airplanes. No more handouts to gain favor. Hell, he even had to find his wife a better paying and more secure job. He even placed his cronies in better positions while he still could.

The next Governor will have to deal with more austere times. Less revenue. Guys who have everything handed to them their entire lives may not know how to handle that challenge. Rita Meyer is better prepared to manage the leaner times ahead.

As we get closer to the primary election, polls continue to show Rita with a slight lead over Mead (I think Simpson and Micheli are out of it) but there is one looming threat. It may be impossible to prepare for the eventuality. But, it could come. It probably *will* come.

In the last weekend before the election, too late for Rita to respond effectively, Alan Simpson could step off the bus in Cheyenne and make a scurrilous attack against her. That is his style and that is his history. Will he do it again? Beware.

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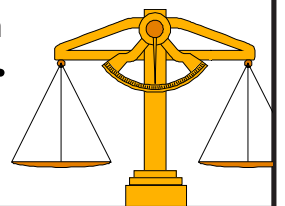
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