

# Shock. And, awe!

## The 2006 general election is devastating for Wyoming!

by Dave FEATHERLY

Little of what happened Election Night 2006 in Wyoming and Laramie County would be considered shock or awe. But repercussions from results in other states render Wyoming representation- less for the next two years.

Not that the three Wyoming congressional representatives could ever have been considered among the powerful or influential, but having the Republican Party in the majority at least provided some measure of comfort for Wyoming residents- with our Republican slate.

With the vice presidency occupied by an ostensible Wyomingite, even though he (Dick Cheney) has not really lived in the state for years, and with the veep presumably able to handle the Secretary of Defense (Donald Rumsfeld), the local military base seemed secure and this sparsely populated state seemed to be under an umbrella of protection because Cheney held that lofty position. Even the mediocre level of representation at the federal level was covered by the guy in the V.P.'s mansion.

But now we have nothing.

We still have all three of the officeholders (Thomas, Enzi and Cubin) but they now hold no more value to the state than do Alan Simpson and Malcolm Wallop.

It cannot be said that Mrs. Cubin didn't warn voters. She told them if Nancy Pelosi were elected Speaker of the House, Wyoming would be in deep doo doo. Pelosi will be and we will be.

What she didn't volunteer is that if Gary Trauner had been elected, Wyoming would still have a voice in Washington - by virtue of being a member of the new majority party - the Democrats.

This latest election cycle brought many truisms home to roost for this writer. I was reminded of a major one in the primary election. That one is that **AN INCUMBENT IS VERY, VERY DIFFICULT TO BEAT**. I've written about that phenomena often on these pages. But, coupled with another truism, that **BEING A REPUBLICAN OFFICEHOLDER IN THIS STATE MAKES IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO LOSE**, proved insurmountable roadblocks toward unseating Cubin this year.

Bill Winney was a much better candidate but the Republican/incumbent twin towers were too much to overcome in the August primary election. Bill's qualifications and experience were much superior to those of Mrs. Cubin. The only thing she had going for her, beyond the Republican/incumbent advantage was her time in office. She traded on her seniority, which now is worthless. A freshman like Bill Winney would have at least as good a chance to be influential as one of the least influential members of Congress (Cubin) will have working under a majority party of the other persuasion.

Gary Trauner came close to taking her out but failed in the same counties that we did in the Bill Winney campaign. Yellow dog Democrats have nothing on Wyoming's **ANY REPUBLICAN REPUBLICANS**. The northwest corner of the state would give an incarcerated Republican incumbent 60% of the vote, regardless of the opponent. They simply will not consider another candidate.

Had I been willing to write an analysis of the primary election against Barbara Cubin, Trauner may have been better prepared and may have been able to do somewhat better in the **ARR** counties, like Campbell, Crook, Weston, Big Horn, Park and Johnson.

A Cubin opponent can beat her decisively in Laramie and Natrona counties, and a Democrat like Trauner also in the Democratic counties of Albany, Carbon, Sweetwater and Teton, but it won't be enough to cancel the **ARR** voting up north. They are absolutely rabid.

The primary election positioned Bill Winney as the Republican to-go-to in the future. With restructured Wyoming State Republican Party leadership, the Party can come back in 2008. Without Bill Winney as the candidate and without that change (Hill out), a Democrat challenger could take the Wyoming U.S. House seat. Senator Enzi may also be vulnerable - depending on the behavior and successes of this Democratic Congress.

Aside from Bill Winney, there are few Republicans waiting in the wings. Fred Parady might have been one but his destruction in the State Treasurer primary election set him far back. Neither the Wyoming House or Senate has bred any

legitimate contenders for the federal offices. With Parady destroyed and Becket Hinckley out of the picture and Grant Larson barely winning re-election in Teton County, who is there? Most others in state government are too old or lack the charisma to be elected at this level.

Of the five statewide executive offices, Maxfield and Joe Meyer lack the ambition and McBride couldn't be elected to any statewide office again. The media can't run interference for him in another election. Too many people now know his shortcomings. That leaves Rita Meyer as the one Republican possibility.

Dave Freudenthal could be the reincarnation of Mike Sullivan. Mike was a very popular governor but that was as far up the food chain Wyoming voters would allow him to climb.

Wyoming voters have shown a penchant for allowing a Democrat to serve as governor, but that's it. And winning re-election as governor is pretty much a given. Freudenthal had some popularity going for him and great financial times in the state but the incumbency was more important. If you disagree, let's sit down and talk about Jim Geringer sometime.

The shock and awe perpetrated on the national Republican candidates did not seep into Wyoming politics too much. There were a few upsets but, once again, the power of incumbency was huge.

Craig Thomas was not seriously challenged. He had a zillion dollars in his campaign war chest and his opponent, Dale Groutage, was ignored by the national Democratic Party and he could not mount a sustained or effective challenge.

Gary Trauner ran a smooth and positive campaign. Had he been more direct about the weaknesses of Cubin, he would have pulled out this election.

The one most directly responsible for Gary Trauner's defeat was Dave Freudenthal. He refused to use his immense popularity to benefit the candidates of the only two Democrats on the top of the ballot who had a good chance to win - Trauner and Michelle Hoffman.

He did, at least, provide a tepid and half-hearted endorsement of Gary Trauner. But it was so limp because Dave did not want to risk offending the Republicans he wanted for his own re-election.

He offered no encouraged or support to Michelle Hoffman. Behind the scenes, I was told that he pulled up the beleaguered candidacy of Jim McBride. There is little doubt in my mind that the state's two largest newspapers did not report on the incompetence of McBride so as not to offend the governor who was accessible to them, took care of them, and they liked.

Freudenthal was not running as a Democrat. He was running as a faux-Republican. His risks were less by offending Democrats with his support of a Republican incumbent (McBride) than by honestly telling Republicans that McBride was a lousy and unqualified candidate.

The advantage for Dave in having McBride at WDE is that he has a lackey who will vote with him at the State Land and Investment Board. He needs two Republicans. He will have McBride and Meyer. Joe, that is. Max Maxfield doesn't have the stiffest back bone either. Rita Meyer may have to stand alone. She will.

Maxfield and Joe Meyer will continue to look upon these elective offices as their entitlement and Wyoming voters have confirmed that belief. The Democrats have resigned themselves to second-class citizenship and were not able to field legitimate candidates for all offices. Max had no general election opponent. For God sakes, how could that happen? He is not a particularly strong candidate - the primary proved that. Nonetheless, he and Joe will exchange nameplates on offices and hang on for four years.

In Laramie County, of the incumbents running, only Dr. Larry Meuli lost. Democrats did not field candidates for Sheriff, Clerk, Assessor, Clerk of District Court, Treasurer, HD7, HD10, HD12, HD42 and HD43 in the primary. Republicans did not field a candidate in SD7. Write-in candidates were successful in HD12 and Sheriff.

Of the federal, state, county and city offices (not school boards) in which 19 incumbents sought re-election, 18 were re-elected. Three appointees won as though they were incumbents. All eight judges facing retention were retained.

A lesson from this shock and awe event: Do not wait to become a write-in. The candidate on the ballot will solidify many votes which are hard to change. A very good candidate, Delmar Stone, was proof.

On behalf of the supporters of

## Judy Case for City Council

Thank You, Voters of Ward 1  
for voting to keep Judy on the job.

PAID FOR BY ETHEL STERLING

### Questions surround garbage-to-diesel guru

**KELLY KEARSLEY; The News Tribune**  
Published: November 12th, 2006 01:00 AM  
<http://www.thenewstribune.com/business/story/6227817p-5439397c.html>

*Editor's note: Cheyenne residents should have an interest in the story filed in Washington State on Sunday, November 12. Once again, the character with whom the City of Cheyenne (mayor, city attorney and city council) entered into a contract with to dispose of the municipal trash here and import more, is being disclosed for the scoundrel that the Cheyenne Herald told its readers he is.*