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Work early and work late
Early voting can swing an election

Most political candidates realize the importance of beginning a campaign in time to reach the earliest "absentee" voters - those who vote before election day.

That term is inaccurate in Wyoming. Those who vote before election day should be referred to as "early voters," not absentee voters. In some states, an excuse must be presented to vote ahead of the scheduled election day. Not so in Wyoming. Anyone can vote early here - for any or no reason.

One reason not to vote before election day is that last-minute disclosures which would change a voter's mind can, and do, get revealed at the last minute and the early voter has voted in a way contrary to how they would have voted on election day.

Such was the case with Jim McBride, the governor's choice for superintendent of public instruction. Those who voted before the Cheyenne Herald's disclosures about what a fraud McBride was, had cast a vote for someone they may have come to despise. Too bad. Vote wasted.

Also, late advertising may change, or make up, voters' minds. The full-page ads run by county commissioner candidates Jeff Ketcham and Diane Humphrey four consecutive days in the WT-E, as well as the multiple "support ads" placed in the Cheyenne Herald on October 30, both combined with the public endorsement of the two incumbent commissioners by Skip Eshelman, who had received over 16,000 in the general election two years earlier - all of these actions contributed to the mildly surprising win by

Ketcham and Humphrey.

Surprisingly often, the early voting percentages mirror the percentages for candidates on election day. Not always but very often.

In the November 7th election, there were three very close elections for local office - and another statewide, even though not close in Laramie County. There was another race that was close in Laramie County, but not the squeaker described by the WT-E.

The three very close ones were: Judy Case and Kurt Zunker in Ward 1. Amy Edmonds and Leo Garcia in House District 12, and Lori Millin and Dr. Larry Meuli in HD8. At one point late in the evening, Judy had only a three vote lead, Leo was ahead and Lori had a substantial lead.

While the commissioners race was not a blow-out by any candidate, it was hardly a squeaker either.

In the commissioners race, had the results been based on the early voting, the county commissioners chosen would have been Diane Humphrey and Larry Atwell. The last-minute advertising blitz and support advertising on behalf of Jeff Ketcham and Diane Humphrey shoved Larry Atwell away and Mike Dowling further away from the winner's circle.

	Dowling	Ketcham	Atwell	Humphrey
	4	3	2	1
Early	22.65%	24.51%	25.85%	26.79%
Nov. 7	21.29%	26.49%	24.78%	27.29%
Total	21.64%	25.97%	25.06%	27.16%
	4	2	3	1

**Circuit Court Judge
Denise Nau
near miss on retention!**

Although there was no organized movement to deny Judge Denise Nau retention on the Laramie County Circuit Court, she came precariously close to being removed from the bench.

The only public voice in opposition to her retention came from former Circuit Court Judge Robert "Yogi" Allen.

Yogi was an immensely popular judge in his time but his letter to the editor of the other newspaper couldn't have been the only reason Judge Nau did so poorly with the voters. Could it?

Over 43% of Laramie County voters said "No" to her retention. On election day, the percentage jumped to 44.6%. As the WT-E would put it, she "squeaked" through. Imagine the results if there had been an open and vocal campaign to have her removed. There can be little doubt. She would be gone.

The Cheyenne Herald was never presented anything advocating her removal. Undercurrents of opposition have been present for a long time but no one sent a letter seeking her removal or advising the Herald that there was an organized effort afoot to cause that outcome.

This vote also seems to reflect the strength and effectiveness of the Yogi Allen letter of opposition.

This is yet another example of why it's best to wait until election day to cast your ballot. To have voted for her retention then read a letter from a former judge you may have great respect for should make you regret that early vote.

Nearly 61% of the early voters supported Judge Nau's retention. At the polls on November 7th, less than 55.5% did so.

Yogi's letter was published on October 26th, with less than two weeks of early voting remaining.

Judge Nau was the only jurist to come close to removal. The other judges, except District Court Judge Kalokathis received between 76.6% and 79.5% in favor of retention. The totals for retention:

Justice Burke	78.06%	Supreme Court
Justice Golden	77.86%	
Judge Arnold	78.53%	District Court
Judge Kalokathis	72.39%	
Judge Grant	77.38%	
Judge Campbell	79.49%	Circuit Court
Judge Coates	76.62%	
Judge Nau	56.78%	

**When will F.E. Warren
Air Force Base close?**

What will we do? When should we start making plans for it? Will the closing be due to the vindictiveness, spitefulness and plain old nastiness of Wyoming's sole member of the U.S. House?

Remember Barbara Cubin's staged news conference in front of F.E. Warren AFB? Where she brought some gung-ho Southerner on site to try to scare the bejeebers out of Wyoming voters by loudly and confidently predicting that, if Nancy Pelosi, that San Francisco liberal, became Speaker of the House, Cheyenne's coveted Air Base would be shuttered? The threat posed by a woman from the urbane Bay Area was to be much greater than the comfort offered by an Alabama doofus on some subcommittee.

The two newspapers in town are on opposite sides of this issue. The local daily has stated privately, but on the record, that they supported the Base closing so that land could be used for city growth. The Cheyenne Herald opposes FEW closing, recognizing its considerable contribution to the local economy.

Ms. Pelosi will have her hands full fulfilling Ms. Cubin's prophecy of closing FEW - after all, Wyoming has the vice president. What, you think he's been rendered impotent in the power thing - that he'll spend the next two years shooting birds (hopefully no more friends)? The Veep's stooge is still at the Pentagon - they decide which bases to close. What, he's gone, too? We are doomed.

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