

The importance of the bottom of the ballot

Ned Cantwell Ruidoso News

Posted:

RuidosoNews.com

Looking Askance

Do you know how it is when you near the last few pages of a really good book and start to get depressed because the story is about to end? You don't? That just shows you are probably a much more emotionally stable person than me.

That's how many of us are feeling right now, though, as the countdown to November 6 election day marches on and we realize this glorious season will soon be over. Pardon my unabashed patriotism but I believe the campaign process loudly shouts, "I Love America!"

How educational it is for us citizens who begin to understand the value of aggression. Why can't I, for instance, run attack ads against fellow journalists who compete for your time and therefore induce readers to skip this column?

"Blogger Joe Monahan. He thinks he is a writer? Call Joe Monahan. Say, 'Joe, you wouldn't know a dangling participle if it crawled up your leg!'"

"Albuquerque Journal columnist Leslie Linthicum. Bad for New Mexico! Bad for journalism!"

Far overshadowing campaign aggression, though, is the sweetness factor. Call me a sentimental old slob if you want, but after watching her television advertisement 194 times I still choke up when Heather Wilson decides, as a high school kid, to go to the Air Force Academy. What a powerful moment.

And this Martin Heinrich fellow. He sleeps on the floor of his Washington Congressional office and hurries home on weekends to go grocery shopping with the boys? What a guy. If only both me and my shadow could cast a ballot, Heather and Martin would get my votes for U.S. Senator.

Being a responsible correspondent (unlike Monahan or Linthicum), it is my intent to bring you columns that serve the public interest. Reading over what is so far on this page I find I am not yet in the same zip code with meaningful journalism. So here goes.

Let's talk about the New Mexico ballot. The fun is on top. POTUS. Who will sit in the Oval Office? You will be considering the merits of Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala who team up on the Green Ticket. You might look at New Mexican Gary Johnson who would be both the first New Mexican president and the first Libertarian president. There are Constitution Party choices as well as Independent Party nominees. Also, a couple of more well known fellows seek the job.

Here's my public service announcement for New Mexicans. When you go into the voting booth, your decision on the presidential choice will arguably have far less direct effect on your fellow New Mexico citizens than how you vote on the bottom of the ballot issues.

The bottom of the ballot is not a fun place to be. It's where the nitty gritty work stuff is. If you were on the lam from the law, you would take up residence on the bottom of the ballot because no one ever looks there. The bottom of the ballot is the guy who drives the float in the Rose Parade.

It is the bottom of the ballot where you will find no less than five amendments that will change the New Mexico constitution. Amendments two, three and four will streamline the Public Regulation Commission and put an end to the nonsense that goes on there. Think New Mexico, which gets Five Stars for its policy initiatives, recommends a YES vote on those three Constitutional Amendments.

Three bond issues will fund projects important to many New Mexicans and I might point out Bond Question C financing higher education needs to pass.

Here's the thing. You can't just waltz in there November 6 and X these things. You need to go to the library, get a sample ballot and study it. As a New Mexico citizen, that is your responsibility.

Take that, Joe! Take that, Leslie!

(Ned Cantwell - ncantwell@bajabb.com - approves