

Growth management planning good clean fun

Tauf Charneski consented to an interview for this end-of-the-year issue of the *Daily Insider*, although he wasn't very happy about his limited words during the past year, having been "on the bench," as he related it, and claiming if he had been invited to contribute more minutes the newsletter would have had a much better record for accuracy, timeliness and quality.

Editor: *What's the number one issue Clark County will face in 2006?*

Charneski: **Censorship.** The Fort Vancouver Library District board of trustees has invited the public to make comments as to whether the library should censor the Internet. Can you believe that? The library board always has been our staunchest supporter of freedom of expression. The board of trustees should be congratulated for the two elections in which measures to modernize and expand library facilities were brought to the public, but were narrowly beaten by the 60-percent-majority rule that applies to property tax measures. I hope the trustees don't pander to the p-word, anti-dirty website voters and cave in, swapping free speech in expectation of getting more yes votes. I've been with the library in every election, but that could be over because of the censorship issue.

Editor: *What do you think will be the other issues?*

Charneski: Let's not say issues, necessarily, let's say continued stories during the year.

1. **Interstate Bridge** study. The Columbia River Crossing Task Force is going to have to be definitive right out of the blocks. The \$50 million study over the next four years will either include bridge crossing sites other than the current I-5 location, or it won't. A protracted semi-private approach won't do. Either the study is for enlarging the current bridge, or it is more.
2. **The Republican Party** seems poised to take over the courthouse. It is a very real possibility, and they will mount the most serious effort in years to get Republicans elected to county posts and to take Democratic county commissioner **Steve Stuart** out. Remember, this year the two candidates had a previously unheard of million-dollar race. Look for more big money, and look for it early in 2006.
3. **Cowboys and Indians** are going to try to have an all-out war over the proposed Cowlitz Casino Resort at La Center. I say try, because the battlefield isn't in Clark County. The battlefield will be in Washington, D.C. If tradition prevails, the Indians will win. If politics prevail, then the side which has the most influence with the Bush administration, and in turn with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, will prevail. So far, both sides say they have friends in those high places.
4. **Philanthropy** has never been more in vogue than it has been in the past few years in Clark County. To name only a few, the Propstras, the Firstenburgs, and the Hickeys will be emulated in the coming year. We have skilled professionals in the community: **Elson Strahan, Nancy Hales, Jane Jacobsen, Lisa Gibert**, to name only a few of those, who are helping to make philanthropy a tremendous force in the development of our collective quality of life.
5. **Annexation.** Vancouver's plan of annexation, which has been in print for at least a half-dozen years, still seems to be viable. Talks will begin in earnest over annexation of about 60,000 persons north of the city. Controversial—yes; but the groundwork has already been laid. I don't look for that annexation to be completed in 2006, but probably not far into 2007.

Editor: *What about Growth Management?*

Charneski: What part of Growth Management don't you understand? This is not a general public kind of issue. Annual growth in Clark County has always been about twice that of what growth management plans have been based on. The county is doing a good job of trying to get infrastructure, roads, schools and parks paid for and available so that the impact of growth won't be too disruptive. The operative word is *trying*. I think they will keep trying in 2006, and I think the pro-growthers and the anti-growthers will do a good job of putting up cowboy and Indian battles—but not to worry. Most of the people in Clark County don't pay any attention to growth management battles. Of all the so-called issues, I think Growth Management is just good clean fun.

Just the opposite of the Internet censorship issue.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Friday headlines from at home and around the world

Friday on the air

Town Tabloids and the weather

Pat Bowden faster than a speeding bullet. ✂ **Chance McCulloch** entertaining small throng. ✂ **Warren Cook** taking aim on 2006. ✂ **Christine Martini** updating. ✂ **Greg Flakus** turning in stellar report. ✂ **Maegan Vidal** pointing out correct time. ✂ **Terri Cochran** reporting successful sale. ✂ **Thursday**, rain may taper off, 50. **Friday**, showers, 51. **Saturday**, year ends with a few light showers, 48.