The election eye . . .

It looks like a very busy political summer

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When the 1979 Idaho Legislature in its final spasm turned around suddenly and approved the May presidential primary some observers believed the decision would give candidates and voters a welcome summer rest.

The plausible thinking was that after the late May primary, nominees would rest during June, July and August, then resume campaigning in September for the early November general election.

This was the pattern when there were June primaries many years ago, but conditions have changed. Politics appear to be more costly, more time-consuming and taken more seriously.

Certainly there will be a lull, but not as much as was hoped for by many outside the politicalarena.

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As if he is afraid of losing precious time, U.S. Rep. Steve Symms, the Republican nominee for U.S. senator, already has scheduled two events in July, a fund-raising "Apple Pie Social" July 10, and another where he will be the distinguished guest of the energetic Republican Women, at an event dubbed an "Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social" July 16. Both will be at Tautphaus Park.

June has been busy, with the State Democratic Convention at Pocatello two weeks ago and the State Republican Convention at Boise this weekend.

East Idaho Republicans also are scheduling their annual fund-raising barbecue Aug. 21 at Tautphaus when an outstanding speaker usually is on hand. This event generally attracts a crowd upwards of 500.

Then during the July 4th Independence Day Parades and the July 24th Pioneer Day Parades, most of the top competing candidates will be on hand. Many manage to appear at two or three parades the same day, or they have their wives represent them.

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The titular battle between Democrat Sen. Frank Church and Republican Symms, of course, will dominate the political campaign. It looks like Church will have about $1.5 million to spend and Symms is planning on a $1 million warchest. That's a lot of greenery and it takes time and effort to spend such an outlay.

It really raises questions why two candidates will spend at least $2.5 million for a position that pays only about $60,000 a year, most of it from outside sources.

Hopefully, the other candidates, including those for the two Congressional posts, Legislature and county offices, will conduct their campaigns on a more modest plane.

Most candidates say they plan to rest for the summer, limiting activites to organization and fund raising, then swing into the stumping phase in early September, likely after the Labor Day holidays. The local candidates, of course, will be even more circumspect. Only the legislators, county commissioners, sheriff, prosecuting attorney and coroner will need to be elected in the counties.

It looks like a long, hot summer on the campaign trail but maybe a relief from previous years when the early August primary forces candidates to work hard in June and July.

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Republican leaders

U.S. REP. STEVE SYMMS, left, and Idaho Republican Chairman Dennis M. Olsen, Idaho Falls attorney, are among the leaders at the Idaho Republican Party Convention at Boise Friday and Saturday.