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EDITORIAL

County should listen to Pelle

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle told county commissioners last week that he would like to explore sentencing alternatives to ease overcrowding at the county jail.

No details have yet been worked out and solutions could be years away, but Pelle wants to get the process started before the jail becomes seriously overcrowded.

Pelle hopes to bring in a consultant to offer suggestions, but he already has some of his own. One suggestion is to look at moving some inmates into halfway houses, a less expensive alternative to jail.

Pelle also proposes replacing the Boulder County Treatment Center at 22nd Street and Canyon Boulevard in Boulder and consolidating other alternative-sentencing programs, like work release, in the same building.

He also is working with the District Attorney's Office to let more inmates awaiting disposition out of jail on personal recognizance bonds.

All good ideas, provided enough safeguards are in place to protect county residents.

But it might also be time to get serious about creating a drug court in the district.

Authorized by the 1994 Crime Bill, drug courts handle substance-abuse cases through supervision, drug testing, treatment services and sanctions and incentives.

They generally de-emphasize sending people to jail.

Drug courts also have a good track record of keeping non-violent substance abusers from falling off the wagon — and back into jail.

Denver has had a successful drug court for a number of years.

Pete Craven, chief judge of the 9th Judicial District serving Garfield, Pitkin and Rio Blanco counties, ran a successful drug court there until his death late last month. But colleagues say the program Craven created will live on.

Boulder County is getting a new judge in August, in addition to getting a new judge last year, along with support staff for the new judges.

Those extra judicial resources could now give the county the wherewithal to get serious about creating a drug court.

That would be one more way to keep the county's jail from bursting at the seams, and it could save taxpayer money in the long run, in reducing both the cost of housing inmates and the even higher cost of building new facilities.

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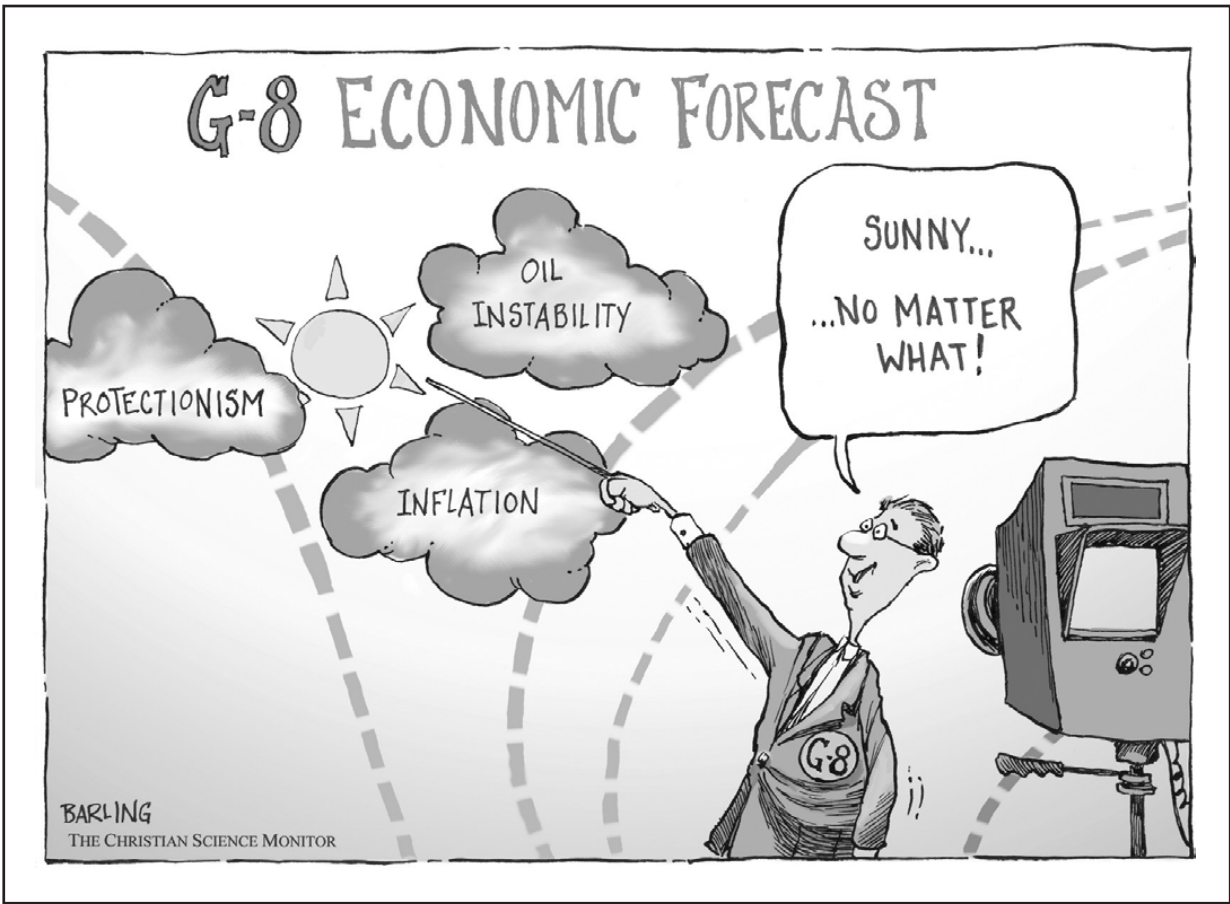
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For verification, please include your address and daytime phone number. (We do not publish them.) Letters must be 300 words or shorter. Do not send e-mail letters as an attachment.

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Open Forum

Watch out for bikers

Longmont is soon to play host to a large contingent of motorcyclists, when Star Touring and Riding Association will hold its annual STAR DAYS meeting and rally here on July 27 through 30. As with most riding groups, while many of these individuals are intelligent, defensive riders, some are not. With this event will come upwards of 1,200 riders, causing even more congestion on our streets than usual and creating hazardous traffic situations.

To maximize the enjoyment of the STAR DAYS event, and to minimize the problems associated with the increased traffic, here are some tips to ensure that the STAR members all make it home alive and in good condition.

First, accept that these individuals are here and will be on the roads. Try to be considerate of other drivers (and especially riders) who will be on the roads. A motorcycle is no match for a car or truck in an accident, so look twice before you pull out or make a turn in traffic.

Second, although some riders are careful, accept that some riders are reckless and arrogant, and just let them go. Nothing is worth a human life when it comes to traffic disputes, and there will be other riders looking out for these individuals while they are here, so give them space and leave them alone.

Finally, if you don't need to spend time driving around Longmont, stay home. The fewer "cruisers" and sightseers on the road means less congestion for those who actually need to go somewhere.

I hope these tips will assist the traffic officers to maintain civil traffic flow and allow Star Touring and Riding Association to enjoy themselves, spend money and go home in a healthy condition, without accidents or traffic injuries.

BENJAMIN C. HARPER JR.
Longmont
group riding safety expert
certified group
riding safety instructor
former regional director for
Colorado, Utah, Wyoming
founder and former president
of Twin Peaks Chapter No. 182
Star Touring and
Riding Association

Enforce laws

A Colorado statute [CRS 34-1-305(1)] states that local governments are prohibited from permitting any use, such as erection of houses and roads, on land that would interfere with the future extraction of commercial mineral deposits, such as sand and gravel, from that land.

This law is ignored repeatedly by city, town and county governments. Even if adjacent property is currently being mined, authorities having jurisdiction routinely permit development. As an example, this is happening all along land near St. Vrain and Boulder creeks in Weld County.

Unfortunately, the statute does not require an assessment of the value of the minerals on land that would make it fall under this prohibition. Municipal and county governments in southwest Weld County being focused on growth, understandably, do not require engineers' evaluations of mineral resources that might preclude development.

If a law is put on the books, there should be responsibility placed on an agency for enforcing it. If it knowingly is being ignored, it has no value.

JOHN FOLSOM
Longmont

Revamp health care

For the United States medical system, this is the best of times,

this is the worst of times. Modern medical care allows us to help patients to a degree far beyond previous capabilities. Yet our system is breaking down so that we may not be able to deliver this high-quality care in the future.

This is the best of times for insurance companies. In 2005, the United States spent 16 percent of its gross national product on medical care while all other developed countries spent 9 percent. One major area of extra spending is administrative. This overspending is not by Medicare, which spent only 3 percent of its 2002 budget on administration. It is the private insurance companies, which spent 12.8 percent of their 2002 total revenues on administration. Would it be better to have a single-payer system with lower administrative costs?

It is rapidly worsening times for patients and employers. Out-of-pocket costs are rapidly increasing for co-pays and deductibles, while insurance premiums increase yearly in double digits. This amounts to rationing of health care; that is, people with less money must forego some medical care. Would it be better to institute a planned, fair means of rationing as we realize that medical expense cannot be limitless?

Times are desperate as usual for physicians who must devote more and more time to the requirements of the government and other agencies. As a result, there is precious little time to devote to patients. Yet it is time with patients through which the mystery and art of medicine arises. Do we prefer our physicians to be technicians devoid of original thought and feeling?

I believe it is time to make the fundamental changes in our health-care system that would preserve the quality, compassion and equality of that system.

LAIRD CAGAN M.D.
Longmont

Tell the truth

Why argue about civil war? It is moot to argue whether Iraq has entered into civil war. On July 10, Shia militiamen executed 42 people who revealed IDs with Sunni names. Later, 17 Shias were cut down by car bombs near a Shia mosque. These are more in the frequent occurrences of tit-for-tat killings. For at least the past 30 years, Israel and Palestine have exchanged killings with no end on the horizon — proving you don't need a "civil" war to be at war. What do Americans need to know before we realize that our presence in Iraq offers nothing to the solution? Our soldiers have long ago given up on the peacemaking part of the mission and are now showing the signs of resignation to general chaos and, reportedly, are also contributing in the murder of the innocent. On Larry King recently, President Bush said he invaded Iraq because Saddam Hussein was harboring terrorists, a claim that has long ago been proven completely false. Lies get us into Iraq, and the lies keep coming to keep us there. Truth is the only thing that will work now, and we need to accept it and proceed accordingly before it is too late.

TOM LOPEZ
Longmont

Cover the war

There appears to be an absence of news from Iraq in the Daily Times-Call. We have lost 2,500 of our great young people in the military — so far. George W. Bush's spokesman said it's just a number. I don't think the soldiers, Marines, friends and families feel that way. The number of wounded continues to climb. President Bush still clings to the grandiose idea that there can be peace in the region, even with

the Iraqis wanting us out and the Palestinian-Israeli war that will never end. Iraqis back to Abraham, Sarah and Hagar — a family affair!

I don't feel like celebrating anything as long as we continue down this road of death and destruction. There has to be a better way to catch terrorists. Our military is doing the best it can. It is a leadership problem.

ROSEMARY WINTER
Longmont

Kindness remembered

Recently my wife and I visited Longmont for the first time to see our daughter and husband, who moved here about a year ago. During a stop at King Soopers on July 1, I failed to pick up my wallet at the checkout counter when I left the store. About 30 minutes later, I realized my wallet was missing.

Greatly concerned, I returned to the store immediately, since my wallet contained my drivers license, credit card and a small amount of cash. I was scheduled to fly home the next day, and without any identification getting on an airplane would be difficult, if not impossible.

When I went to the checkout counter where I had made my purchase, the clerk recognized me and sent me to the floor manager's station a few yards away. The floor manager immediately took me to the office and returned my wallet. I am sorry that I did not get the name of the clerk or floor manager who had kept my wallet safe until I could reclaim it. Both deserve a special reward for their honesty and for demonstrating the fine character of employees who serve customers at King Soopers.

Beyond the good name they gave the store, these two employees have left a very favorable and lasting impression of Longmont as a wonderful community to visit and place to live.

HAROLD GUTHIER
Urbana, Ill.

Vote for Paccione

With the November elections in mind, U.S. Representative Marilyn Musgrave and many of her fellow Republicans are taking steps to shore up their support with conservative Republicans while ignoring moderate Republicans and Democrats. Their efforts to pass anti-flag burning and anti-gay marriage amendments and their support of the House immigration bill, which ignores the illegal immigrants who are already here, are prime examples of their divisive politics. Meanwhile, issues like the minimum wage, constructive solutions to the immigration problem and the Iraq war are not being addressed in Congress.

Democrat Angie Paccione is running against Marilyn Musgrave in the 4th Congressional District. Paccione is well educated, has benefited from Title IX, eventually playing with the WNBA, has taught at Colorado State University, and most recently has served with distinction in the Colorado House of Representatives. In her second election, she won with 59 percent of the vote in a Republican-dominated district, and she has earned the respect of her colleagues in the House. She has supported and passed constructive immigration laws. In the U.S. House of Representatives, Paccione plans to deal with issues that concern most Americans — balancing the budget, the minimum wage, agriculture, immigration, education and the war in Iraq. I believe Paccione will represent all the citizens of Colorado with distinction and will work with others in Congress to find common ground on the important issues.

MICHAEL HOLDAWAY
Longmont

Guns in danger?

That could be the case if Hillary wins in 2008

By Tom Fitton
Judicial Watch

Bill Clinton remains relevant. Not only because the former president continues to strut around the world stage, but also because another Clinton presidency is lying in wait.

His unfinished presidential plans are Hillary Clinton's to take up should she ever be elected president of the United States.

With a record of corruption and suspect policies, the full accounting of his presidency can give us warnings about the future.

For this reason, Judicial Watch recently undertook an investigation of the newly released Clinton presidential records with a great sense of urgency.

With the Clintons, past is prologue. So what do the American people have to look forward to in the next Clinton presidency?

Our investigators uncovered new documents that shed light on the Clinton administration's plan to attack and destroy the gun industry, a la "big tobacco." Here are just a few highlights from our research:

A memorandum from former Clinton adviser Sidney Blumenthal to Bruce Reed, director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, dated Nov. 9, 1998, which reads: "I've enclosed an article and a press release about the new effort to file class action suits against gun manufacturers. I think this is a very promising idea. Let's talk about it soon." The press release, from the Office of the Mayor of New Orleans, was in draft form, suggesting the mayor coordinated the strategy with the White House.

The "promising idea" identified by Blumenthal involved filing massive product liability and negligence lawsuits against major handgun makers, "the opening salvo in a campaign against the gun industry by an alliance of anti-tobacco attorneys and local governments," wrote the Los Angeles Times.

According to one of the lawyers involved in the lawsuits: "We are going to do to (the gun industry) what we did to tobacco. It's going to be a very large war."

Our investigators also uncovered a March 6, 2000, letter from New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer with a handwritten note at the top from Bill Clinton to then-White House Deputy Counsel Bruce Lindsey, which reads: "Bruce, See me re: this ... has some good ideas for future." Among the "good ideas" — denying gun manufacturers the right to sell guns to the military and law enforcement unless they sign an anti-gun "code of conduct" that would cripple the industry.

In March 2000, concurrent with the Spitzer letter, this anti-gun strategy was used to strong-arm gun manufacturer Smith and Wesson to install gun locks, introduce so-called "smart gun" strategy, and to ban the sale of its weapons at trade shows.

Smith and Wesson broke ranks with other gun manufacturers and agreed to execute this strategy if an expensive lawsuit against the company would be dropped. The company would likely have been just the first of many victims to fall if President Bush had not put a stop to federal abuse of the gun industry when he assumed office in 2001.

In politics, however, such re-prives are always temporary. A question for Hillary Clinton: "If you win the presidency, can we expect radical anti-gun policies, government coercion and abusive lawsuits to once again rule the day?"

Tom Fitton is president of Judicial Watch, a non-partisan educational foundation that fights government corruption. Visit www.judicialwatch.org for more information.