

The Pueblo Chieftain

FRANK S. HOAG, General Manager, Publisher, President — 1904-1963

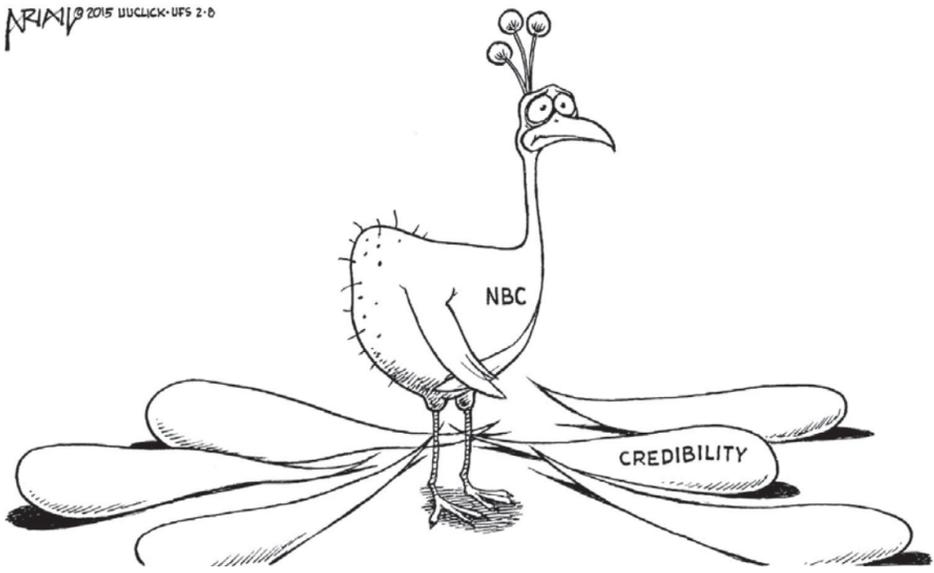
FRANK S. HOAG, JR., Chairman, Publisher, President — 1931-1989

ROBERT H. RAWLINGS, Publisher and Editor

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

ROBERT HOAG RAWLINGS, JANE RAWLINGS, TOM McAVOY, REGAN FOSTER

© 2015 BUCLICK-UPS 2-0



EDITORIALS

Logic flushed down the drain

A BILL that would have reversed the flow of a restrictive, metro-centric law regulating bathroom fixtures got flushed in committee last week.

And that's a bummer.

OK, enough of the bad puns. The point exists that State Rep. Tim Dore, R-Elizabeth, was watching out for his rural district when he introduced HB1093. The bill would have repealed a prohibition approved last year on certain, non-efficient bathroom fixtures that is slated to go into effect on Sept. 1, 2016.

Yep. As of late next year, you won't be able to purchase and install non-efficient faucets, shower heads, flushing urinals or tank-type toilets. Rep. Dore's bill, which died via a party-line Democratic vote in the House State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee, would have reversed the limitations.

And that raises two points.

One, this current prohibition on what fixtures you may install in your private home is just another example of government interference into our private lives. If the Legislature can dictate what sort of fixtures you may place in your powder room, where does it stop? How soon will every light, water fix-

ture and appliance in your home be regulated by overreaching legislative policies?

But more important is the second point, as raised by Rep. Dore himself.

"This is unfortunately another example of the Denver-centric view of many lawmakers at the Capitol," he said in a statement. "Last years' legislation overlooked the needs of our many rural communities throughout Colorado and it (placed) government in the bathrooms of Coloradans statewide."

As many Coloradans know from — shall we say — firsthand experience, many rural residences have septic tanks and private wells. Or, they may be served by rural water and sanitation districts that lack the water pressure to make these so-called "low-flow" fixtures even remotely feasible.

So Rep. Dore really did have his constituents' best interests at heart when he proposed reversing the prohibition.

It's a shame that lawmakers elsewhere in the state didn't share his concerns. Instead, this 7-4 vote patently shows their disinterest in and inability to understand the needs of areas outside of the narrow scope of their districts.

EPA's slow standard

THE ENVIRONMENTAL Protection Agency, after years of intimidation and scare tactics, has finally secured the Eilers neighborhood surrounding the long-demolished old Colorado Smelter and its associated slag pile as a Superfund site.

Which means it now begins the process of getting in, performing its requisite tests and doing the cleanup work it has promised to the burdened community. We can only hope the EPA meets that obligation with more grace and haste than it demonstrated at a similar site in Denver.

After all, it took more than a decade for the EPA to go through the entire process in the Vasquez neighborhood there.

That area was branded a Superfund in 1999 with 4,500 residences targeted for soil testing. The process finally wrapped up two years ago — 14 years after it began — with just 800, or less than 18 percent, of the tar-

geted homes receiving remediation.

The total bill cost \$20 million, none of which was passed along to the homeowners in the neighborhood.

Granted, the Superfund site here in Pueblo includes 2,600 homes as compared to Denver's 4,500. But a 14-year timeline for 800 homes doesn't exactly instill reassurances that our local project will be completed on anything resembling a reasonable timeline.

Nonetheless, we must not accommodate the continued stigmatization of our neighborhood and our community that follows unnecessarily protracted government meddling. If the EPA truly wants to help the Eilers neighborhood, the best thing it can do is come in, perform the necessary tests, clean that which requires remediation and get out. The sooner the better.

Trinidad State's new program

CLASSES BEGIN next week for Trinidad State Junior College students wishing to become National Rifle Association certified instructors.

The college announced in January that it teamed with the NRA to launch the first association-certified training center. The partnership, which won the blessing of both the Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission, will let students use federal financial aid, the GI Bill and Vocational Rehabilitation benefits to help pay for firearms-safety training.

The classes that start on Feb. 19 will help to train the next generation of trainers. College officials expected to receive applications from all over the country.

Trinidad State has a strong history as a leader in firearms safety and vocational programming. It already has a renowned gunsmithing school and offers a nine-week slate of gun-related summer classes, and it operates the highly regarded Prator Gun Range southeast of downtown Trinidad.

Firearms played a storied role in the history of our Western state. And today, hunting and recreational shooting are important economic drivers for Colorado.

So it's imperative that those who embrace the sport-shooting lifestyle do so with an unimpeachable foundation of both safety and education. Trinidad State's new programming will provide that wisdom for years to come.

PRAYER BREAKFAST

Walking a fine line



MICHAEL GERSON
Opinion

WASHINGTON — Days after the video appeared of a Jordanian pilot horribly burned to death by an Islamic State death squad, President Barack Obama told the National Prayer Breakfast that all faiths can be "twisted and misused in the name of evil" and that terrorists who profess "to stand up for Islam" are, in fact, "betraying it."

Critics found Obama's timing offensive and his message about Islam naive: He should avoid moral equivalence, stop playing the theologian and recognize that Islam has a unique problem with violence and extremism.

Days after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, George W. Bush took off his shoes, entered a Muslim prayer room at the Islamic Center of Washington, spoke with Muslim leaders and made a short statement.

"These acts of violence against innocents," he said, "violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. ... The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam."

On Sept. 20, 2001, speaking to a joint session of Congress, Bush called the teachings of Islam "good and peaceful." And later in his presidency, when the charge came that America was fighting a war against Islam, Bush answered that, "I believe that Islam is a great religion that preaches peace."

Those who long for greater clarity in describing the peculiarly Islamic nature of terrorism are proposing a fundamental shift in the rhetorical strategy of the war against terrorism. In the Bush/Obama

approach, terrorism is an aberration that must be isolated.

Critics believe it emanates from Islam and must be expiated. And some urge the president to declare that one of the Abrahamic faiths belongs in a special category of menace.

There are, of course, consequential historical differences among faiths. It is harder to separate divine law from positive law in a faith where the founder was also a political and military leader.

But those who wish the president to publicly explore these matters are the ones urging him to act as a theologian. Presidential rhetoric on this issue should not be theological but phenomenological.

The vast majority of the world's Muslims — and an almost unanimous majority of American Muslims — believe their faith to be inalterably opposed to putting people in a cage and setting them on fire, or employing the mentally disabled as suicide bombers, or burying children alive. This is the actual division that matters most, and the rhetorical division that best serves American interests: peaceful people versus the terrorists.

Most of those urging Obama to assert that Islam is somehow especially flawed among the great faiths have never been closer to power than a fuse box. There is no possible circumstance in which a president could say such a thing. It would cause a global firestorm, immediately alienating Muslim allies and proxies on whom we depend to help fight the Islamic State and other enemies.

Obama's speech at the prayer breakfast was cliché-ridden and historically shallow. But its basic framework — pitting true faith against nihilistic violence — will be adopted by every future president.

© Washington Post Writers Group

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

The Colorado Springs Gazette on tougher penalties for repeat drunken drivers:

A new bill approved last week by the Colorado House Judiciary Committee is long overdue.

We've all heard the commercials about how tough Colorado is on drunken drivers. The threats of financial penalties that can amount to \$10,000 and more are well known.

What many may not know is that Colorado lags most of the nation in penalties for repeat drunken driving. And you can expect little serious punishment for repeatedly driving drunk.

A DUI in Colorado is still only a misdemeanor, no matter how many an offender amasses. The new bill would make it a felony to have more than four DUIs; only three if the consecutive convictions rack up within seven years.

Forty-five other states have similar laws. Oklahoma, for example, mandates a felony

charge for anyone arrested on a drunken driving complaint within 10 years of the end of their sentence for a previous DUI conviction. Those convicted of the felony face punishment of up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$2,500.

Colorado's lack of a felony DUI charge means we possibly have many repeat offenders who don't fear a DUI conviction as they would if it carried a felony conviction. The loss of rights after a felony conviction is a serious, life-altering development. Felons in many states lose the right to vote, serve on juries, own firearms or hold a variety of jobs. Coloradans need the extra protection a felony DUI category could provide.

Repeat drunken drivers repeatedly threaten the lives and safety of those who get near them on the roads. If they refuse to learn and correct their behavior, they belong behind bars — where drinking and driving cannot occur.

TELL IT TO THE CHIEFTAIN

STARS SPECTRUM

Help spreads the word

STARS once again would like to tell some wonderful community members thank you for their support. Nick Donovan and the Sinners Car Club (Patrick Aguero) stepped up to the plate and believed in STARS enough to invite us to their Kool Kustom Kar Show.

The Gebbinks, Santiagos, Lois Lugert, and Avis and Danae Tucker volunteered to talk to people about STARS at our table, and The Gourmet

Cupboard, Cindy's Seasonings, Sandy's Bears, Horseshoe Stable Art Studio, Shear Odyssey, South Hills Design and Karla Santiago donated items to create wonderful baskets as giveaways.

Thank you so much for helping us get closer to creating our dream.

Marva Tucker
STARS Spectrum
Pueblo

WE WELCOME LETTERS

• **By mail:** Send to Letters to the Editor, Pueblo Chieftain, P.O. Box 36, Pueblo, CO 81002.

• **By e-mail:** tellit@chieftain.com

All letters must not exceed 300 words and must include the author's full name, address and telephone number for authentication. No anonymous letters will be published. The Pueblo Chieftain reserves the right to edit letters to length, taste and clarity.

MALLARD FILLMORE

By **BRUCE TINSLEY**

