

Tell it to the Chieftain

HONOR FLIGHT GALA

Successful support

The Honor Flight Gala was a huge success. All of our auction items sold with the two live-auction items generating a very energetic bidding competition.

The entertainment was also so much more than we could have ever expected.

The Reveille Girls wowed the packed audience with Andrew Sister songs from the WWII era. They brought back fond memories for our WWII veterans in attendance.

Pueblo's own Jeff Valdez brought a brand of comedy that had us all in stitches, and the Sarah Shaw dancers delighted us with their dancing to the sounds of the 1940s big bands.

We would like to give a great big thank you to everyone for having faith in our ability to make the Gala a success. We'll see you next year.

*Butch Chavez
American Legion Post 203
Pueblo*

ARTS AND CONFERENCE CENTER

'A jewel in Pueblo'

Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center is a jewel in Pueblo.

Recently, two of my paintings were selected to be included in the 13th annual "Representing the West" exhibition at the arts center's White Gallery (it closes today).

I decided to make the trip to Pueblo from my home in Portland, Ore., for the exhibition's opening. I'm glad I did. What I found upon my arrival was much more than a very cool art show. I discovered a world class arts complex.

As an artist-educator for more than 40 years, I was struck by the educational mission of the arts center and the wide variety of classes it offers. Education includes the visual arts, dance, theater, photography, music, creative writing and more. And its focus on classes, events and exhibitions for kids is particularly impressive.

In an age when technology and digital everything increasingly dominate our too-busy lives, it's crucial to have access to humanizing alternatives, whether we are 8 years old or 80.

The arts fit the bill. They invite us to refresh our senses, pay closer attention, go deeper, ask meaningful questions and answer them in unique and personal ways. Most importantly, they provide us with the opportunity to create something we can be proud of.

How wonderful, then, that Pueblo and Southern Colorado can claim the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center as its own.

I was fortunate to be here as part of a temporary exhibition. But the local residents are lucky to have access to the arts center's many offerings year-round.

*Roger Kukes
Artist-Educator
Portland, Ore.*

“ The arts ... invite us to refresh our senses, pay closer attention, go deeper, ask meaningful questions and answer them in unique and personal ways. **”**

POLICE BODY CAMERAS

Equal exposure for all

The police command seem to feel that only street officers should be required to be visually accountable to the public.

All police personnel come in public contact; therefore, if some must be exposed to the limelight of body cameras, so should all.

Every police officer — including commanding officers — should have to wear a camera and be accountable to the citizenry. They actually have a greater responsibility to the people they serve and the

people who work for them.

Having been a police officer and supervisor, I feel good about these cameras serving an important purpose. The cameras record how police officers and citizens, alike, react to stress.

Therefore, they should equally show the community the command staff's capability to react to the public they serve and the personnel they work with.

*Charles J. Bonomelli
Pueblo*

CITY STREETS

Misused funds?

Recently, *The Pueblo Chieftain* reported that for the second year in a row, Puebloans responded to a local survey by sighting the condition of streets as a top complaint. We've also heard ongoing complaints by City Council about budget problems.

In light of these two points, I was shocked to read in the Feb. 24 Chieftain, that of the \$3.6 million Pueblo receives from the Highway Users Tax Fund, only \$600,000 is actually used for repairs and "the bulk goes to personnel costs" ("Coucli

OKs home pot grows; Panel to discuss street improvement fee at annual retreat Saturday.")

I'm curious as to how the department of Public Works can justify a cost of \$3 million for an end result of \$600,000 in improvements to our streets?

Did this fact prompt anyone on City Council to ask why?

How many of us have wondered why there are so many employees just standing around while street repairs are being done?

*Merilee Thompson
Pueblo*

WINTER ROADS

Step up snow removal

I am a new resident of Pueblo, and I am very happy in this city.

But one thing I don't like is how badly they plow here. Snow and ice are dangerous, and the government does a terrible job of clearing the roads.

I realize that it costs money to have the roads cleared,

but other expenses should be cut back. There needs to be a focus on residents' safety.

With *The Pueblo Chieftain's* help, we can get this to our city officials and try to make some change.

*Tina Prinkey
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.

SUPERFUND

Demand the details from EPA

To the City of Pueblo: Congratulations for not allowing the Environmental Protection Agency unlimited access to sample parks and alleyways.

Why? The EPA has not informed the city how they will sample, what decisions they will make, the acceptable uncertainty of those decisions, the area (or decision unit) of the decisions or the decision criteria (lead concentration) that is unacceptable in these areas.

The EPA must do a park- and alleyway-specific preliminary risk assessment to establish cleanup level for these areas (that's the normal approach). It will not be the 400 ppm default residential soil level the EPA uses for yards. The level will be significantly higher because children spend less time in these areas compared to their yards, and less exposure time means less soil-lead intake.

The EPA will say we can't

do a risk assessment until we have data. Wrong. The EPA can calculate risk-based cleanup levels that are based on site-specific exposure parameters.

Has the EPA asked you how much time your child spends in alleyways and/or parks? Children's exposure to park or alley soil will not be as many hours each day as yard soil or house dust. Because there is less exposure (time), the acceptable level of soil lead that results in an unacceptable lead intake is higher than 400 ppm.

Have you heard the EPA say "we need more data?" Yes.

Has the EPA told you the decisions they will make, or what the increased confidence in those decisions will be with the additional data? No.

Perhaps residents who have been asked for permission to sample their yards — simply because the EPA is protect-

“ Have you heard the EPA say 'we need more data' Yes. **”**

Has the EPA told you the decisions they will make, or what the increased confidence in those decisions will be with the additional data? No.

ing human health — should follow the city's lead and question the EPA's need for more data or specific data until the EPA identifies and explains the actual decisions that "require more data."

Don't give the EPA a blank check for sampling.
*Merril Coomes PhD.
Pueblo*

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Highway 50 study a logical step

On behalf of the Colorado Motor Carriers Association of Colorado, with over 600 companies throughout Colorado, I write in support of SB179. The study by CDOT on Highway 50 for economic opportunities makes sense, as our transportation system long has been considered a driving force in economic development.

By marrying the list of potential projects on Highway 50 from Kansas to Highway 285 and the related economic benefits of such projects both

short and long term, we can then leverage this effort to create economic development opportunities in South-eastern Colorado and Pueblo.

The transportation industry long has recognized that highway development and improvements lead to greater utilization of the highway or corridor being improved.

CMCA supports the effort to bring a vital part of Colorado to the forefront and to encourage investment in a key transportation route in Colorado.

Colorado businesses and consumers will benefit from such investments, and we will see economic gains along the highway as well.

Thanks to Sen. Leroy Garcia, D-Pueblo, and Rep. Daneya Esgar, D-Pueblo, for bringing this bill to the Colorado General Assembly. Thanks, as well, to the many local officials who also support this measure.
*Richard "R.J." Hicks
Colorado Motor Carriers
Association Lobbyist
Brighton*

RESPONSE: 'IDENTIFYING VOTERS' EDITORIAL

Reality check on voter IDs

Photo ID laws don't solve voter fraud.

Last November, 95 percent of Colorado voters either mailed their ballots or dropped them off at elections offices. The remaining 5 percent voted in person, and — if they were registering for the first time — were required to provide their Colorado driver's license if they have one.

The reality is that the vast majority of Colorado voters already produce a photo ID when they register to vote. When they cast their vote, they can produce any one of a dozen types of ID, and every voter signs a document affirming their identification every time they vote.

Does voter fraud exist? Yes, but it's rarer than an ocean breeze in Colorado. And voter fraud by impersonation is almost unheard of.

Loyola University studied almost a billion votes last year and concluded that

out of those billion votes, a maximum of 31 would have been impacted by a photo ID requirement. On the other hand, Loyola concluded a photo ID requirement would have disenfranchised tens of thousands of people who were legal, eligible voters.

That's just not an even trade-off.

Recently, Sen. Rand Paul called photo ID laws "dumb" and said that it injures the Republican brand. He told "Meet the Press" that it is an issue that his party needs to drop because minorities believe the GOP does not want them to vote.

Judge Richard Posner, a highly-respected conservative appointed to the federal bench by Ronald Reagan, recently wrote, "There is only one motivation for imposing burdens on voting that are ostensibly designed to discourage voter-impersonation fraud, and that is to discourage voting by persons

“ Does voter fraud exist? Yes, but it's rarer than an ocean breeze in Colorado. And voter fraud by impersonation is almost unheard of. **”**

likely to vote against the party responsible for imposing the burdens."

The people who are less likely to have a photo ID are seniors, disabled, minorities and young people. These groups also tend to be the voters who show up to vote in person in Colorado.

Rather than creating barriers to cast ballots, democracy should make sure every eligible voter has a voice in elections.

*Gilbert Ortiz
Pueblo County Clerk
and Recorder
Pueblo*

RESPONSE: IDEAS ...

In defense of critical 'rhetoric'

Wow, Mr. Dana Milbank sure got all upset about people expressing an opinion ("Rhetoric of Cowardice," Feb. 22). He must be a little touchy about the president's loyalty.

Personally, I don't think Mr. Barack Obama loves America, and I believe that everything he has done since

he has been in office points to that. He has done everything possible to downgrade the U.S., criticizes and apologizes for us in foreign, unfriendly places and talks about "transforming" the country into what he thinks it should be.

Well, the United States of America has been the best country in the world from

its beginning, and I resent a community organizer trying to say he knows what is best for us. All we can do is hope that he does a minimum amount of damage in the time he has left.

*Lowell Thompson
Colorado City*

The one omnipotent love

In her Feb. 21 column ("Love is ultimate kindness"), Leia Marie expounds on the subject of love: "Love. We are told that God is love. It seems to me that kindness is the simplest and sweetest way to pass on that love."

She writes of her adverse childhood experience in a Catholic school and then of the kindness of a teacher. However, she continues, "This love moves on now in this belated Valentine's

card to you. Though we may not have met in this world, I greet you as the sparkling stardust you are. Fueled by the breath of the infinite, you are Its expression in the world."

Well, excuse me, but I have no desire to be greeted as an ethereal, magical piece of "sparkling stardust." I am not "fueled by the breath of the infinite," and definitely not "an expression of the world" of an "Its," an abstraction

having no being whatsoever. Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth."

God is a spiritual person, and he will never breathe into us infinite attributes — his sovereignty, omniscience and omnipotence, to name a few.

Yes, "we are told that God is love," by God himself, through his beloved apostle.
*Claire Boltz
Pueblo*