

# Tell it to the Chieftain

## FOUNTAIN CREEK FLOODING

### We're done being nice

All of the negotiations and attendant angst over Pueblo's dealings with Colorado Springs concerning stormwater damages and Fountain Creek mitigation have been, up to now, based on a false premise. That false premise is that Colorado Springs cares. Colorado Springs doesn't care. Colorado Springs doesn't care about stormwater or damage to Fountain Creek. And Colorado Springs certainly doesn't care about Pueblo.

For longer than most people can remember, the prevalent attitude from the north has been, "Pueblo? So what? It's just Pueblo." That attitude is expressed by many citizens of Colorado Springs — and other northern cities — and it's cer-

tainly implied by the actions of municipal and county governments in their approaches to dealing with and accepting responsibility for their city and county duties.

Until that attitude is changed — and it may have to be done in an ugly, litigious way — then no progress is going to be made in making Colorado Springs face up to and deal with its duties and responsibilities to Pueblo and Southeastern Colorado.

It is well past time that our officials take off the velvet gloves and get down to brass tacks.  
*Bob Moore  
Pueblo*

“ Colorado Springs doesn't care. Colorado Springs doesn't care about stormwater or damage to Fountain Creek. And Colorado Springs certainly doesn't care about Pueblo.”

## MARIJUANA

### Compounded problem?

In a recent, front-page *Pueblo Chieftain* article, author and editor Peter Strescino pointed out a plethora of statistics about the ill effects of alcohol and why alcohol still should be considered the king of drugs (“Alcohol is still the king of drugs,” May 17).

Conversely, he gave only short shrift to the bad effects of marijuana, even while stating that “each side of the marijuana issue has mountains of anecdotal evidence supporting their cause.”

My question is, if alcohol is such a problem, why then should we not be concerned

about the addition of another intoxicating substance to the mix?

Only time will tell who is right on this legalization issue, but using the statistics that Mr. Strescino himself cites about alcohol and its use, I can't see a lot of good coming from the legalization of marijuana.

Unfortunately by the time the statistical evidence is gathered to prove a bad outcome, it probably will be too late to do anything about those who will have been adversely affected.

*George A. Rivera  
Pueblo*

## GRADUATION

### Another road to success

On May 19, I attended a high school graduation for students who may have dropped out of traditional high school, but who chose instead to finish at Pueblo Community College. The event was organized by PCC President Patty Erjavec and her staff, and was a great success and accomplishment for these future leaders.

What's really impressive is that in 2003, there were only six students who graduated as part of the alternative program. In 2015, there were more than 150 students from Pueblo City Schools (D60),

Pueblo County School District 70 and other areas where PCC has campuses.

The keynote speaker said it best: “Move forward and develop a plan of action.” This was a profound statement by state Sen. Leroy Garcia, D-Pueblo, himself a PCC graduate.

Kudos to Patty Erjavec and her vision of making Pueblo Community College one of the best small colleges in the

nation.  
*Larry Alvarado  
Pueblo*

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## RESPONSE: COLUMN

### Misplaced 'grace'

In her column of May 16, Leia Marie makes her case for pantheism, drawing attention to a people in the mountains of Peru, who “live in harmony with one another and with their surroundings,” because they believe that “we are fundamentally energy beings in a world of living energy, a vital force that flows through everything.” (“Spiritual systems offer grace.”)

She concludes, “Spiritual systems across time have offered us ways to move (in) harmony, to step forward in grace, and to regain our balance when we slip.”

It is obvious that “the spiritual system” she believes in is pantheism, the belief that everyone and everything is God — an animal, a rock, a

tree, the sky, the sun, the moon and you. Pantheism pervades Hinduism, Buddhism, the New Age movement and the worship of nature.

The Bible does not teach pantheism, but continually warns against the worship of idols — anything or anyone other than God that is given sacred value and power. That is what pantheism promotes.

The truth is that God, although omnipresent, is holy, transcendent, separate and apart from His creation, including us fallen humans who are in need of His grace. Pantheism is not a “step forward in grace,” but a step backward into idolatry and judgment.

*Claire Boltz  
Pueblo*

## WE WELCOME LETTERS

• By mail: Send to Letters to the Editor, *The 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.

## EILERS SUPERFUND

### Much more citizen support needed

Many people may know about the listing of the Colorado Smelter area as a Superfund site last December, but opportunities for activism are gaining momentum with the creation of two working groups — the Public Involvement Workgroup and Superfund Community Vitalization Project.

There are social-justice issues related to representation of residents in the area that can only be addressed with a greater volunteer base. If we will only look to areas that have used the Superfund process for renewal and rejuvenation, we will see this is a positive chance to receive funding and information.

Testing for toxic materials related to the old smelter site began last month. Ideally, all properties would be tested and the worst would be cleaned up.

Is it better to remain ignorant of risk? No, especially where the health of children is concerned.

We need more people who are residents in the testing area — especially those with children — to attend the Community Advisory Group meetings that are held monthly with the EPA and health department. Those most affected by this scientific and political process are not showing up to be educated about it.

How can this problem be remedied? Breaking the negative stigma about what is happening with the EPA is key. Other neighboring communities besides Eilers also are being impacted, including Bessemer, Eilers Heights/Old Bojon Town and the Grove.

We, a group of concerned citizens who volunteer our time to participate in the CAG, hope to see more involvement by people who care about making Pueblo a better place. With careful planning and an inclusive-yet-strategic approach, the voices of community members can drive this change.

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We all want to see a place where people can thrive socially, economically and environmentally — and our goal is to experience this paradigm shift within the next five years.

*Kelly Gehlhoff  
Pueblo*

## RESPONSE: LETTER

### Minimum for start, not survival

On May 17, there was another compassionate plea to raise the minimum wage (“Low standard furthers the divide.”) This letter was complete with the “straw man” argument that says you can't raise a family on the current minimum wage.

Well duh, who said you could?

When I was a teenager, the minimum wage was \$1.50 per hour. I knew it was not a “living wage.” But it enabled my first boss to hire a kid out of high school with no demonstrated job skills. He could afford to take a chance on me.

He wasn't a “greedy opportunist,” just a guy who owned a gas station and who needed

help to stay in business. I knew I wasn't going to work for him forever, nor was I going to raise a family on this pay.

I eventually worked my way through college and started climbing the ladder to higher- and higher-paying jobs. Even if I hadn't gone to college, I would have gone to work (at minimum wage if need be) where I could have learned a trade.

Making yourself valuable in the workplace is the key to success. When your current employer can't meet your pay requirements, look for a better job.

Don't get the government involved mandating your employer to pay you more. That will just get you laid off

because your skills will be overpriced. Especially when mechanization can do your job more cheaply, or the shipping costs from China aren't so bad after all.

To raise the minimum wage is to deny those starting out in the job market a chance to succeed.

Progressive mandates have eliminated the bottom rungs of the employment ladder. How are the young, the students, the recently released prisoners and the elderly trying to supplement their meager retirement income going to get their foot on the ladder?

*Al Pearson  
Pueblo*

## CLEAN POWER PLAN

### Preserve, protect for tomorrow

I was pleased to see that *The Pueblo Chieftain* took the time to highlight the economic impacts of the Great Sand Dunes National Park on the local economy. The great outdoors provide a significant boost to the wallets of all of Colorado and, as *The Chieftain* points out, that impact is only growing.

With the tourism dollars that places like the Great Sand Dunes provide for many communities in the state on the rise, the need to protect and preserve the many wild places in our state is thrown into sharp relief.

The most immediate and potent threat to these plac-

es is global warming. With a threat of this magnitude, quick action is absolutely key.

In just a few weeks, our country will have a chance to take the biggest step toward reducing its impact on global warming in the form of the Clean Power Plan. This plan directs the EPA to set guidelines for the states to reduce their reliance on power generated from coal, cutting it by 30 percent by the year 2030.

This plan has faced serious opposition since it was proposed. The voices of those who want to continue to reap huge profits at the expense of Colorado's natural beauty are only growing louder as

we get closer to taking this historic step.

As a champion of the plan, our state's senior senator, Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet, is bearing the brunt of this pressure.

I encourage you to take action by calling Sen. Bennet at (719) 542-7550 and letting him know that the people of Colorado care more about our wallets and our lands than we do about the profits of big mining and utility companies.

*Patrick “P.J.” Higgins  
Global Warming Organizer  
Environment Colorado  
Pueblo*

## POLICING

### Their service deserves our respect

May 15 was an annual recognition of the commitments and sacrifices made by our women and men in public safety. The Fraternal Order of Police, a nationwide police organization, hosts the annual Police Memorial Service in the District of Columbia.

Many former presidents and attorneys general have taken the time to speak at this event, to honor and respect those who have given their lives in the line of duty.

These officers of the law, these guardians of internal peace and security, were moms, dads and someone's son or daughter.

They chose to enforce the law to protect the many.

Why? Better to ask where would we be as a society without these dedicated officers? In anarchy and chaos.

Yes, while some “may” exceed their authority or appear knavish, they are definitely the minority.

Do not criticize the majority for the acts of the few. I prefer, based on experience and career, to avouch to the more realistic position. To do anything less is an insult to a fallen officer.

Much turmoil and danger is lurking in our midst. We are in dangerous times in America. How you prepare yourself is important, but with the women and men in public safety, we can rest a

little easier in our homes or workplaces.

Whether a uniformed officer, communications officer, detention or corrections officer, why not say “thank you for your service” to our community when you come across a peace officer? Let them know you value their duty. Tell them you do not take their duty for granted.

It may just be a relative, neighbor, acquaintance or friend who you will be thanking, and I believe it will go a long way in a positive display of community spirit.

*Russell Hickmon  
President, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 34  
Canon City*

## MARIJUANA TAXES

### Use surplus to fix pot's problems

Pueblo politicians wanting to keep the extra pot tax money are waiving the carrot of giving some extra treats to the masses.

Instead, I suggest we put

the extra into savings to help pay for the tsunami of problems rolling our way due to pot.

Our county commissioners need to get real. Pueblo

needs extra police, medical care and social services due to the pot floodgates opened by tax-hungry politicians.

*Robert E. West  
Pueblo*