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OPINION

To Build A Better World, Start In Your Own Community

EDITORIAL

Embrace
America
and its
diversity

Census data released last week shows that over the past five years the number of immigrants living in the nation's households grew 16 percent. And, in Colorado, the number of immigrants living in state households increased 28 percent.

The bulk of the increase, according to the New York Times, are newcomers from Mexico, which means two things: Colorado's ethnic makeup is changing, and we need to accept that fact.

This spring and summer, Colorado residents found themselves in an increasingly intense debate on illegal immigration. Unfortunately, conversations about whether to provide state services to illegal immigrants or punish business owners for employing illegal immigrants spilled over into conversation about legal immigration. And that, in turn, spilled over into discussions about immigrants specifically from Mexico. And that, whether we want to admit it or not, brought out racism in our communities.

Colorado and America need to wake up. Ugly, abusive, racist comments should stop.

This nation, the melting pot, is better than this. We must aspire to the promise of a great nation.

Views from the
Nation's Press

We should know ballot backers

No trip to shopping-cart country is complete without it: a petition-gatherer hunting for signatures for another ballot initiative. But who is backing the proposal, paying the bills and aiming to benefit from its passage?

A bill headed to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's desk answers that sensible question. The measure, SB1598, written by state Sen. Debra Bowen, a Redondo Beach Democrat, directs that the top-five contributors be listed in large type on all state and local initiatives making the rounds.

Following the money should help a voter decide whether to sign up to put a measure on the ballot. It might also inhibit special interests — such as labor, business or political groups — from making an end-run around the lawmaking process in Sacramento. More information is better than less.

Bowen, a candidate for secretary of state in November, pushed through a similar bill last year. It was vetoed by Schwarzenegger, who said he didn't want to hinder the initiative process. He's right to defend access to the ballot, but wrong to oppose an idea that gives puzzled voters a glimpse at the sugar daddies behind a ballot measure.

With this bill, California voters lose none of their historic power to put initiatives on the ballot. What they gain is a clearer look at the political forces at work. Sign SB1598, governor.

— San Francisco Chronicle

DAILY TIMES-CALL

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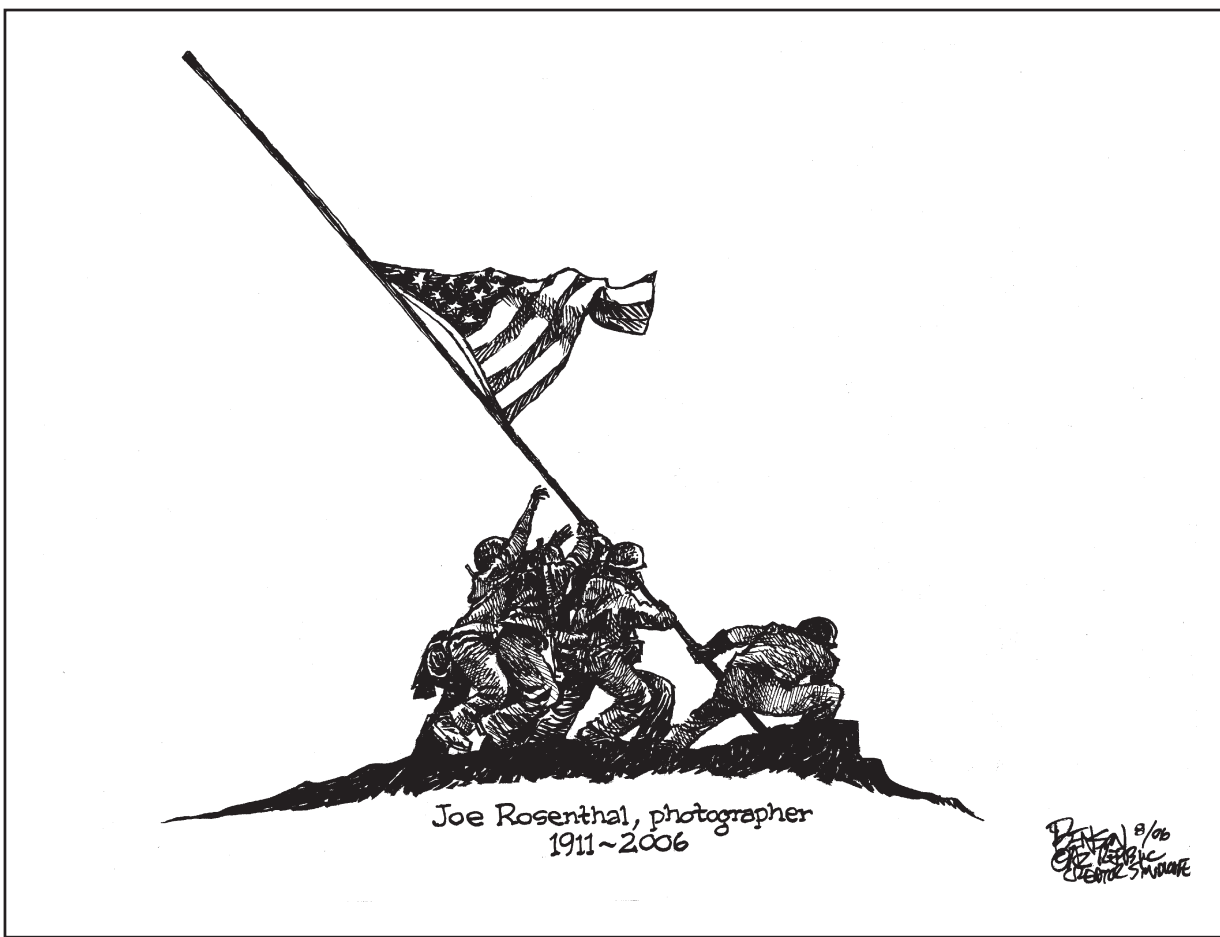
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Taser an important tool

By John Cooke

Special to the Daily Times-Call

Throughout history new tools have brought about major change or totally revolutionized certain industries. Specific examples come to mind, such as the farm tractor or the modern day firearm. Every year around the holidays, I watch as new tools are advertised to easily accomplish something which had been traditionally difficult. Law enforcement is no different.



Cooke

There are certain tools that have been on the belt of almost every police officer in the United States for years, many of which are still there today. These tools typically include a gun, baton, handcuffs and maybe even a chemical spray, such as mace or pepper spray. Throughout the years the courts have ruled that these tools should be used only when reasonability necessary to restore peace or make an arrest. Sometimes that reasonable force has resulted in serious injury or death. For example, if officers encounter a person holding a knife or other weapon coming toward them in a threatening manner and the person

refuses to drop the weapon, the typical response in most cases would be for the officer to use his/her firearm, which could end in lethal force.

Critics argue too many serious injuries or deaths occur at the hands of police because of the use of lethal force. The natural question that always seems to come up is: What new less lethal tools are available to law enforcement to help deal with these situations?

Tasers have been in use at the Weld County Sheriff's Office for several years. This is an electronic device capable of delivering a brief charge of 50,000 volts, temporarily disabling the person, so he or she can safely be restrained. Most law enforcement agencies have a defined "use of force continuum", as a matter of policy and procedure, which dictates when a particular use of force, including a Taser, can be used. Tasers are typically used to combat a resisting or physically combative suspect or as an alternative to deadly force, if consistent with the use of force continuum.

One example in Weld County is the use of the device to subdue a suicidal person who threatened deputies and refused to drop the machete he was holding. In another incident, a suspect who had an outstanding arrest warrant was told he was under arrest and attempted to flee from deputies. He was successfully subdued using a Taser.

In each of these examples, with-

out the use of the Taser, deputies would have been limited in the tools available to control the situation. For example, if a gun was used on the suicidal person or a foot pursuit began with the wanted person, injury to either the suspects and/or officers would have or could have resulted.

While the Taser is not routinely issued to correctional officers in the jail, it is available when approved by the jail administrator. This is possible in the jail because circumstances do not evolve as rapidly and generally affords more time to react. The Taser would be authorized for use in the jail when it is reasonably necessary for self defense or when other physical force options are not likely to result in safe inmate control. It cannot be used to punish or simply because control might be faster or more convenient for staff.

The Taser is not the ultimate less lethal force option but one important tool. There is no way to know how many people may be alive today because a less lethal alternative to deadly force was available. Physical force of any kind, not just use of the Taser, can have unintended consequences. For that reason alone, it is essential that options short of physical force be exhausted when circumstances reasonably allow. The Taser has its place as an essential physical force option.

John Cooke is the sheriff of Weld County.

Open Forum

The warming Earth

Re: "Plug and play," Aug. 21, Page A1

I want to thank the Daily Times-Call for publishing the article on Kay Evatz and her electric car.

I think the story showed how owning and using an electric car can be a reality, even if it's just around Longmont.

I admire Evatz in buying the car in the first place; many people talk about how they'd like to get better gas mileage and have a more environmentally friendly vehicle, but they just don't act on it.

After seeing the documentary "An Inconvenient Truth," I feel that alternative energy, including electrically powered cars, are going to become a necessity fast if we don't want every day of summer to be in the 100s and to have multiple hurricanes like Katrina each year.

This movie opened my eyes to the rapid rate of global warming, and honestly it is a scary thought. I encourage everyone to see this film.

Another educational documentary on this subject is "Who Killed the Electric Car?" I haven't seen it yet, but I hear it's not just a one-sided biased documentary.

I feel that it is extremely important for the public to become aware of the global warming crisis. Only then can we start making changes, whether the changes are made by individuals, governments or both. Articles like the one Felicia Russell wrote will help bring this subject in to the public's eye.

There's one more thing I'd like to add. Global warming is not meant to be another issue that political parties can take sides on and bicker over. As Al Gore said in his documentary, it is a moral issue. There are facts and there are solutions to this problem.

SHOSHANA BLANK
Longmont

Tired of RMCC

Re: "Churches, congregants lose billions to fraud," Aug. 14, Page A1

The Associated Press article on church fraud is a story that churches and pastors all over need to be aware of. They are easy targets. Why? My thought is perhaps the sin of greed even hits those in the church.

The almighty dollar drives a pastor to do things he would never have considered early in his ministry.

We may be seeing that kind of greed working at Rocky Mountain Christian Church in Niwot. They have been fighting with the country for years now over expansion and now want to build another church in Weld County.

All of those plans, lawsuits, public auctions have been done without ever asking the congregation if that is what they wanted. Ask almost anyone in Niwot who the pastor of that town's largest church is! Not many can name Alan Ahlgrim as that person. He has never been involved with the community and does not even live in Niwot, but lives in an expensive home in one of Longmont's newer subdivisions.

You can count on him each February to speak for 4 to 6 weeks on why you should tithe as much as you can afford to the church.

The people are the church! They should make the important decisions on expanding God's Kingdom, not a pastor who is out of touch with his congregation and community. People have tired of how RMCC conducts itself.

Perhaps the pastor and church leaders should listen to what God is trying to say. Greed is not pretty within a church and to a lot of us... it looks like fraud.

GARY BLAKE
Niwot

Country should unite

I'm tired of hearing all the com-

Following
terrorism's
money trail

By Tom Fitton

Judicial Watch

On Aug. 10, authorities in London were able to thwart a potentially devastating terrorist attack against the United States.

Islamic terrorists, once again, planned to blow up as many as 10 air-planes on transatlantic flights, causing death and destruction on a massive scale.

President Bush said at the time of the near-catastrophe, that it represented, "A stark reminder that this nation is at war with Islamic fascists who will use any means to destroy those of us who love freedom, to hurt our nation."

True enough. But some in the Bush administration seems to be fighting a schizophrenic war against terrorism, showing resolve in the war abroad, while leaving open too many loopholes here at home for supporters of terrorism to exploit.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Judicial Watch called upon the Bush administration to investigate and, if necessary, shut down fourteen radical Islamic organizations in the United States reported to be funneling money to terrorists. While important law enforcement steps were taken against a few of these so-called charities, many are still in operation today. For example:

The Council on American Islamic Relations presents itself as an advocate for Muslim civil rights. However, according to Steven Pomerantz, the FBI's former chief of counterterrorism, "CAIR, its leaders and its activities effectively give aid to international terrorist groups."

Since the 9/11 attacks, three CAIR figures have been arrested by federal authorities on terrorist-related charges, yet CAIR remains the most influential and active Islamic special interest group in the United States.

Just last week, the organization distributed a fundraising appeal seeking money to continue their campaign to "empower American Muslims." Contributions to CAIR are tax-deductible.

The Islamic Society of North America operates mosques throughout the United States and abroad.

Muzammil H. Siddiqui, President of the ISNA, suggested the U.S. invited the 9/11 terrorist attacks by supporting Israel. "America must learn. If you remain on the side of injustice, the wrath of God will come. Please all Americans, do remember that, Allah is watching everyone." The ISNA now controls Islamic worship centers in federal prisons, which operate as effective recruiting centers for al-Qaida.

The Islamic Circle of North America has been investigated by the FBI for its ties to terrorism, and has reportedly published material supporting suicide bombings against Israel.

While masquerading as a moderate Muslim organization, the ICNA is known for inviting radical speakers to its conferences.

At an ICNA conference in 1998, for example, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf told attendees, "I became Muslim in part because I did not believe in the false gods of this society, whether we call them Jesus or democracy or the Bill of Rights or any other element of this society that is held sacrosanct by the ill-informed peoples that make up this charade of a society."

The radical Islamic movement employs a classic two-pronged strategy. The "mainstream" wing raises the funds, while the covert wing carries out the violence.

If the Bush administration is serious about winning the war on terrorism, the financial networks that make terror possible must be destroyed.

Tom Fitton is president of Judicial Watch, a 501(c)(3) educational foundation dedicated to fighting government corruption and judicial abuse. For more information, visit, www.judicialwatch.org.

The radical Islamic movement employs a classic two-pronged strategy. The 'mainstream' wing raises the funds, while the covert wing carries out the violence.

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