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OPINION

To Build A Better World, Start In Your Own Community

EDITORIAL

Improve
I-25 next

The best guess for the oft-delayed opening of the Berthoud Parkway is the middle of June. Less than two weeks ago, it was mid- to late May.

That's the way it's been for several years. It's reminiscent of the old Abbott and Costello routine of "Who's on First?" At times, it has been difficult to figure out who knew exactly what was going on with this last remaining four-lane link on U.S. Highway 287 between Longmont and Loveland.

But if it's now supposed to open for traffic in the middle of next month, we'll settle for it. Finally.

The completion of the U.S. 287 widening will be welcomed by commuters and businesses that operate between the cities along its northern length. The push for improvement began in earnest more than 20 years ago. Although the principal northern Front Range cities of Longmont, Loveland and Fort Collins were then linked by the interstate, the more direct route provided by U.S. 287 was not sufficient for the traffic that it bore.

It took some time, but persistent efforts by city and county officials and legislators paid off. The finished route, including the Berthoud Bypass when it opens, provides an alternative route to Denver and the northern suburbs. Sure, it might take longer than I-25, but, if you aren't in a hurry, it is a much more pleasant way to go. And safer.

Saturday saw people walking, skateboarding and riding bikes on part of the Berthoud Parkway. A month from now, there should be cars and trucks moving along that same route.

After that happens, the same effort that went into improving U.S. 287 ought to be directed toward advancing the construction schedule for I-25 improvements in northern Colorado.

Views from the
World's Press

On Italy's new government

The French policy for the Middle East has for months appeared to be closer to that of Washington: From Lebanon to Iran, Paris is now playing with the United States. ... Italy is left out of the restricted negotiation about Iran: but it is for the best that its future government be alerted to the turning point that has occurred in the heart of continental Europe that leaves behind the 2003 issue of Iraq.

If Russia and China will maintain their opposition to economic sanctions being enforced, the possible scenario is a new coalition of the willing: a side of "sanctioning" countries outside the U.N. Security Council, which will be led by the Americans and supported by the Big European Countries, with the addition of Japan and Australia.

It remains a very unpleasant scenario for Italy, which is both the biggest European trade partner with Iran and the only big European country that is not part of the negotiation process.

One can say with some certainty that the real test for the new government on international affairs will not be the already decided withdrawal from Iraq (the past), but what position to take toward Iran (the future).

— Corriere della Sera, Milan

DAILY TIMES-CALL

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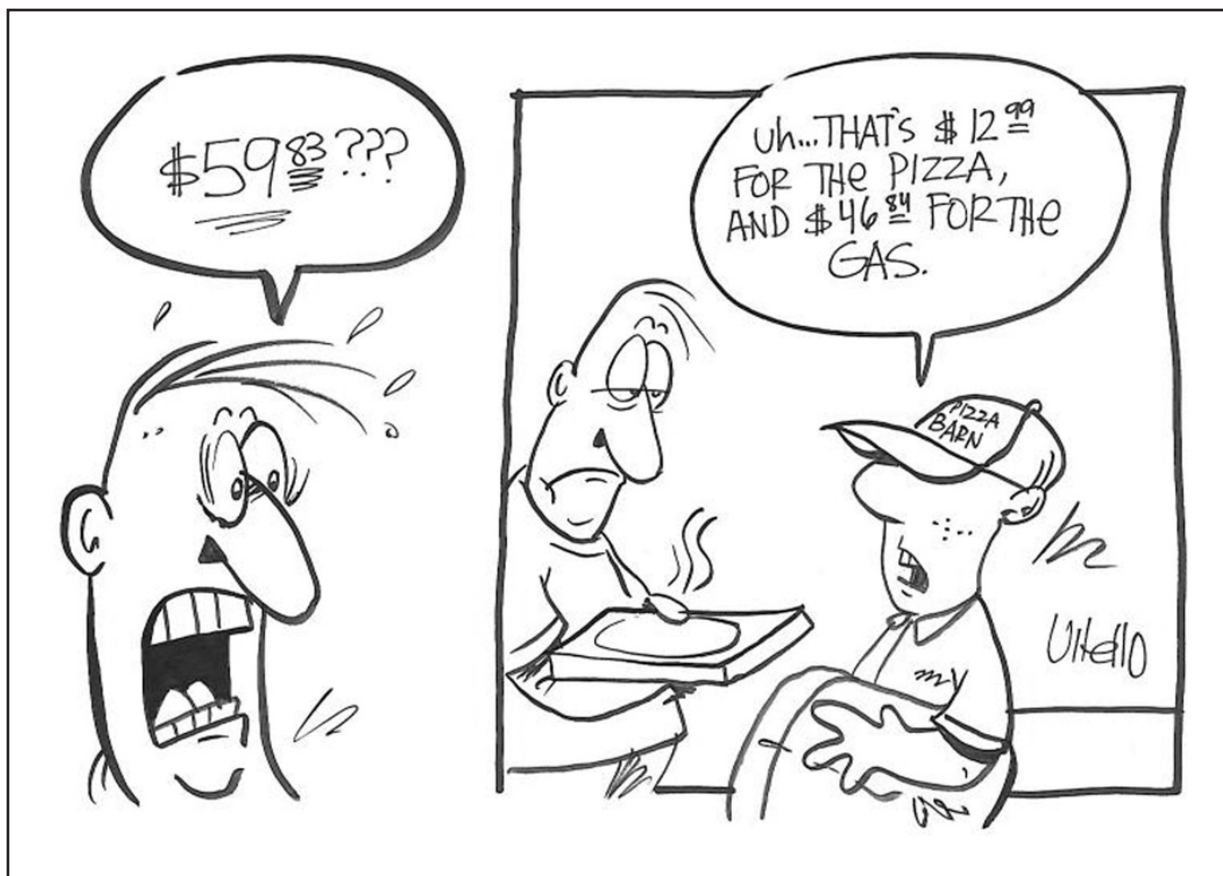
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Airing out the skeletons

By Tom Fitton

Special to the Daily Times-Call

On Jan. 20, more than 80 million pages of documents and 20 million e-mails from the Clinton administration were "made available" to the public for the first time. These documents, housed at the Clinton Presidential Library, likely contain a treasure trove of information related to the Clinton scandals. Why, six years removed from the Clintons' tenure in the White House, do these records matter?

Hillary Clinton is the odds-on favorite to win the Democratic nomination for president of the United States in 2008. Former President Bill Clinton continues to throw his weight around the world stage through his self-titled "Clinton Global Initiative." Today, the Clintons are as relevant as ever and as powerful as ever.

I've learned from experience that when predicting the future behavior of corrupt politicians, past is prologue. It is, therefore, very important for the public to know as much as possible about the rampant corruption and abuse of power that characterized the Clinton presidency. Here is a little bit about what we know already:

The Clintons concocted a scheme that effectively sold our national security to the Communist Chinese in

New Clinton
documents
could tell much

exchange for campaign contributions, brokering one deal that enabled the Chinese military to more accurately target the United States with long-range missiles. They presided over the theft of the FBI files of Reagan and Bush staffers and used the information to destroy their reputations. They ordered Clinton administration officials to smear the reputations of women who were sexually and otherwise abused by President Clinton, and fired travel office employees in order to install their friends in positions of power.

Clinton's presidential files would most certainly shed light on these and other scandals. The Clinton Presidential Library recently admitted to having 902,594 pages of records on the FBI file scandal alone. Imagine how useful these documents could be in rooting out the truth in the matter and finally holding the Clintons accountable.

Unfortunately, obtaining these documents will not be easy. Public access to presidential records continues to be obstructed by an execu-

tive order signed by President Bush in November 2001 that virtually gutted the Presidential Records Act.

That act, passed by Congress in 1978 in the wake of Watergate, mandated that all presidential papers are the property of the U.S. government and must be released (with some exceptions for national security) within 12 years of the end of a presidential term.

Under Executive Order 13223 signed by Bush, however, U.S. presidents, sitting and former, can veto the release of these presidential papers. This new interpretation of the Presidential Records Act allows the incumbent president or a former president — even the family of a deceased president — carte blanche authority to withhold documents that might be incriminating or embarrassing. This "family veto" provision cannot be appealed.

Was President Bush trying to protect his predecessor? I don't know the answer. What I do know, however, is that no matter what it takes to obtain these documents, it is well worth the effort. The Clintons are here to stay, and the public deserves to know the full truth about their corrupt history.

Tom Fitton is president of Washington, D.C.-based Judicial Watch, a 501(c)(3) educational foundation dedicated to fighting government corruption. For more information, visit www.judicialwatch.org.

Open Forum

Keep Internet open

Until now, the Internet has been a free space where anyone can make their own voice heard regardless of how rich they are. AT&T and other telecom providers are currently lobbying to change that.

Currently, the Internet works on a concept of "network neutrality." It's basically the Internet's version of the First Amendment.

That means that any small business owner, sports enthusiast or political observer can put up a Web site and have an equal chance of being listed and found by interested Internet users. Without Network Neutrality, Internet service providers like AT&T can decide whose voice gets heard and can require people to pay money to get their Web site "priority." Unless you pay for this "priority," your Web site will not be visible to anyone using AT&T's Internet service.

The U.S. House of Representatives will be debating on AT&T's attempted power grab this week. Please call your congressperson and urge them to oppose any attempts to harm network neutrality. Currently, House Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass, and Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, have proposed bills upholding network neutrality and our freedom of speech.

Urge your representatives to act now, before AT&T turns the Internet into just another version of television — a place where only the obscenely wealthy can make their voices heard.

SETH ROGERS
Longmont

Keep Hayden out

The overreaching of this administration continues to amaze and appall me. This country was conceived in an effort to escape religious, political and personal tyranny and to guard the civil liberties of those who lived here. We have been a country of laws for 200 years — that is, until the current administration usurped the Constitution and started placing caveats on each and every law it determines needs a loophole.

Gen. Hayden is the architect of

the domestic spying program and is far from interested in the public's welfare. He should NOT be rubber stamped into the CIA director's position. He is party to the illegal invasion of citizens' rights — and should be held accountable, not rewarded!

DR. ILENE GOTTESFELD
Longmont

Backing Hart unwise

Re: "Ballots must favor disabled voters," May 14, editorial
Your editorial support of Hart electronic voting is disappointing and illogical.

First, primary opposition to electronic voting is that voters — both able and disabled — cannot determine if a machine has accurately (electronically) recorded and counted their digital votes. There is little democratic value in voting, either unassisted or assisted, if vote accuracy, transparency and verifiability are suspect.

Second, the Hart voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) is spooled on ATM-like paper, which means the spooled paper ballot, with tiny print, does not look anything like the electronic screen ballot. It is thus confusing for voters to accurately proof.

Also, elections officials will do anything short of suicide to avoid the obvious nightmare of hand counting thousands of impractically tiny, thin, curling paper ballots that first have to be separated (by what, scissors?). The paper back-up system is a charade.

Third, since the blind can't independently confirm that what the machine audibly reports to them is actually recorded on the VVPAT (much less what is digitally recorded), a primary justification for electronic voting is rendered moot.

Finally, and most extraordinary, sequential, spooled VVPATs do threaten the secrecy of the ballot (as your editorial acknowledges), as do Hart's sequentially numbered paper ballots used in its non-electronic voting equipment. So, you support Hart voting equipment because it advertises allowing disabled voters to vote privately and unassisted like able voters, but

which same equipment you acknowledge actually compromises voting privacy for those same disabled voters! There are voter-marking machines that allow most disabled to vote unassisted, just like Hart, but with none of Hart's electronically related disadvantages. Let's use them.

KELL CAREY
Boulder

LUH disappoints

I gave birth to both of my children at Longmont United Hospital under the excellent care of the midwives who practiced at St. Vrain ObGyn Associates. We chose this practice, even though it was not close or convenient for us, because we felt it was our best option in the area for a safe and satisfying labor and delivery.

Recently, the midwifery practice at St. Vrain closed. While this was a voluntary choice, there is more to the story. In a letter to their current and past patients explaining the closure, the midwives report that the environment at LUH had become "unbearably hostile," that they were denied due process by the hospital's quality-review committee and that the midwifery model of care was undermined by many nurses.

Further, nursing administration regularly supported their staff who ignored midwives' orders and, worse, patients' wishes. It became difficult, and sometimes impossible, for the midwives to support their patients' choices during their labors and births.

After more than 20 years providing midwifery care in Longmont, the midwives have made the agonizing decision to give up their practice. This is a tremendous loss to Longmont and surrounding communities. It is disappointing that the hospital failed to support — and actually hindered — the safest form of pregnancy, labor, delivery and postpartum care available.

I don't know what is driving the hospital's actions, but the best interest of its patients isn't it.

BECKY O'BRIEN
LafayetteClimbing at
Delicate Arch
an ego boost

By Jim Stiles

Writers on the Range

In mid-May, the print and electronic media in Salt Lake City reported the first ascent of Delicate Arch in Arches National Park. Delicate Arch is one of the most revered and recognized features in Utah, and if any natural feature deserves to be called an icon, it's Delicate Arch.

But on a recent Sunday morning, a rock climber hiked the 1½-mile trail from Wolfe Ranch and began the first of several ascents. He brought a high-definition video camera to capture the moment and even carried the camera with him up the arch. He established photo points and staged his climb over and over, just to be sure he got all the camera angles he needed.

Salt Lake media received news of the climb from the Patagonia outdoor clothing store in Salt Lake City and were advised that high-definition video of the dramatic first ascent was available. The store representative also provided the climber's contact information for interview, and the media — always looking for good "visuals" — came running. The climb was featured on Salt Lake television stations and made the Salt Lake Tribune.

The climb should also have been illegal. It had been illegal for decades, but when the National Park Service took the teeth out of its climbing regulations in 1988, this kind of stunt was bound to occur. Four years ago, the agency's then-group superintendent, Jerry Banta, called the Arches National Park policy the weakest he had ever seen. The climber may have read the regulations as well: The wording said only that named arches "may be closed" by the superintendent. They were not, and so a bureaucratic misstep allowed the climb to occur.

Arches superintendent Laura Joss was not impressed and told the Tribune, "I'm very sorry to see someone do this to Utah's most visible icon." She strengthened Arches' climbing policy the next day by banning climbing on all named arches. The climber was interviewed by FOX13, and there he talked about "cherishing the moment" and being "close to nature."

He said he viewed the arch with "great reverence." His name is Dean Potter, known among his peers as a world-class climber. I Googled Potter and found his footprints all over the Web. He is best known for the speed with which he scales rock walls. His speed climb up a particularly difficult route on El Capitan in Yosemite is chronicled in an Outside magazine story. He did it in 3 hours and 24 minutes. Not much time for spiritual connections and cherishing the moments on that ascent, eh, Dean?

Potter also is a paid "climbing ambassador" for the outdoor clothing company Patagonia, which, we now know, leaked its representative's feat in the first place. However, as his climb draws unwanted publicity, Patagonia is fast distancing itself from Potter's dubious accomplishment. Whether the company knew in advance of Potter's plans is unknown, since its public relations department in California refuses to answer questions.

I have to wonder: Is there anything off-limits to a climber like Dean Potter? To paraphrase the great David Brower, who also was a world-class climber, would Potter feel the need to scale the Sistine Chapel to pay tribute to the ceiling? When they finally build the Freedom Tower in New York, will he feel compelled to scale its 1,776 feet in order to honor the nearly 3,000 who died Sept. 11, 2001? Should he climb the Washington Monument to pay homage to the father of our country? Is there anything so tasteless and inappropriate that it might give a stunt climber second thoughts?

Increasingly, this is what a wilderness experience has become. It's not about solitude or quiet and peace. Solitude is actually a legal component of wilderness as it was written into law by Congress in 1964. The problem with solitude is that it's not an easily marketed commodity. Potter's stunt is not an isolated incident and reflects a growing recreational culture that lives for speed, not serenity. In 2006, these kinds of experiences have little or nothing to do with the beauty of the land or any spiritual connection with it. This was just another adrenaline ride in an outdoor jungle gym, taped in high definition, perhaps to sell some more outdoor gear, and for self-glorification at a later date, just to make sure the ego ride never ends.

Jim Stiles is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News in Paonia (hcn.org). He is the editor of the Canyon Country Zephyr in Moab, Utah.