m5/9/2007yTCjfast

Jenn Ooton Editorial Page Editor 303-684-5295

## **EDITORIAL**

# Agreement promising for region

Then leaders from seven Western states met in 1922 to hammer out an agree-**V** ment regarding the Colorado River, the region was a far different place.

Las Vegas was a twinkle in the eyes of developers, and the big dams that would one day house Lake Mead and Lake Powell either were on the drawing board or had not been envisioned at all. Colorado's Front Range was bustling with farms, but the major water-diversion projects from the Western Slope had not been created, either.

It was in that context the leaders signed the Colorado River Compact, a document that portioned out the water in the river between the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico and Utah and the Lower Basin states of Arizona, California and Nevada.

As the region has grown, however, the stains of the compact and water law have meant that sometimes the best long-term policies have been forsaken because "use-it-or-lose-it" doctrine has taken precedence.

It is heartening then, that leaders of the seven states have come to agreement on policies that could ensure a better use of Colorado River water while also encouraging downstream users to develop their own supplies.

The agreement, signed April 23, would allow the Upper Basin states to reduce the amount of water they're required to deliver to Arizona and Nevada when storage in Lake Mead drops below certain set levels. That could reduce the risk of shortages in Colorado, according to a statement from Gov. Bill Ritter's office. The agreement also would allow for better cooperation between the operators of Hoover and Glen Canyon dams.

Even more importantly, the agreement shows a spirit of cooperation among the leaders of the states in which the Colorado River flows. If climate scientists are correct, the Southwest may be entering into a period of relative aridity. That means leaders throughout the region will have to put past arguments aside and have bold visions for the future.

This month's water agreement is a good first step.

#### Views from the Nation's Press

#### **Social insecurity numbers**

Late on Friday, the Transportation Security Administration announced that an external computer hard drive loaded with sensitive and private information on 100,000 current and former staffers was missing, possibly stolen, from a secure area in the human resources department. ... When it comes to safeguarding private information from the growing identity theft industry, Uncle Sam's track record is horrendous.

. Because this is the TSA — the agency that employs airport screeners and air marshals this is not your run-of-the-mill identity theft worry. ... This episode reminds us of last year's theft of the Department of Veterans Affairs laptop with information on 26.5 million people nestled in it. It was later returned with the information untouched. We can only hope for a similar outcome at the TSA.

— The Washington Post



Edward Lehman, Publisher Dean G. Lehman, Editor & President Ben Weir, General Manager John Vahlenkamp, Managing Editor

Maurice Elhart, Circulation Director Penny Dille, Advertising Director

Connie Coffield, Director of Promotion Community Service and Newspapers in Education

350 Terry St., Longmont Colo. 80501 Telephone 303-776-2244 Classified 303-776-7440

303-678-8615

Weekdays

Circulation Monday – Friday 5 a.m. – 5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday 5 a.m. - noon

#### Letters welcome

The Daily Times-Call encourages its readers to share their views. Letters must be 300 words or shorter. Short letters, about one typewritten, double-spaced page, on timely topics get preference. We will print as many letters as

Letters must be signed. We don't publish anonymous letters, poetry, letters signed with a pseudonym or letters addressed to a third party.

For verification, please include your address and daytime phone number. (We do not publish them.) Do not send e-

#### Send to:

Open Forum, P.O. Box 299, Longmont, CO 80502; e-mail: opinion@times-call.com.



## Energy vs. Western lands

By Ann J. Morgan Writers on the Range

Federal land managers have a difficult job, but it's made particularly tough when direction comes from Washington, D.C., to put oil and gas development ahead of all else. In the late 1990s, when I was Colorado director of the Bureau of Land Management, balancing conservation and development was

the main part of my work.

I learned firsthand that it is possible to have a vibrant oil and gas program and at the same time protect our wildlife, air and water and places to hunt, fish, recreate and enjoy wilderness. Back then, managers had the flexibility to avoid leasing in sensitive lands that were roadless or of wilderness quality. Today, it seems, those are the very places targeted.

Oil and gas development in itself is not the problem. The problem is that over the past six years, oil and gas development has become the predominant use wherever those resources might exist. The BLM by law is supposed to be a "multiple-use" agency, and while oil and gas may be an important natural resource, so are those now taking a back seat - from wildlife and fisheries to recreation and cultural

The BLM's rush-to-drill policy is predicated on the false notion that restrictions impede energy development. But according to the agency's own analysis, most BLM lands as well as the oil and gas resources in the five Rocky Mountain states containing most of those resources — are available for development, and they have been for a

The agency, prodded by energy developers, is in a hurry, and planning for mitigating the impacts of

### Bring back the balance on our BLM acreage

development gets put off. The agency's multimillion-dollar "Healthy Lands Initiative," for example, appears to be designed to restore lands harmed by oil and gas development long after the fact, instead of managing to avoid the impacts up front. The BLM is opening ever more sensitive areas to leasing, even though the agency has become unable to meet its commitments to monitor impacts to wildlife and air quality. Over the past few years, the BLM has even leased more than 200,000 acres in Colorado and Utah that have been the subject of congressional attempts to designate them as wilderness.

According to the BLM's statistics, more than 36 million acres of the on-shore federal mineral estate are now under lease. Only 12 million acres, however, produce any oil and gas. Yet the agency estimates that more than a million more acres will be graded, drilled, built upon or disturbed by planned new oil and gas development.

This raises the question we should all be asking: Why does this administration have such a hunger to rush into new leases on some of our most sensitive Western lands?

While in Washington recently, I posed that question while testifying before the House Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee. I presented several recommendations that also have been endorsed by a host of local and national organizations. Many of the recom-

more wells; and requiring the BLM to require adherence to "best management practices" designed to minimize damage from oil and gas activities.

I also asked that Congress consider limiting the BLM's ability to issue leases in areas that have wilderness characteristics or that are included in Forest Service roadless areas. I stressed that, givwasn't it common sense to ask the BLM to reassess its approach to oil lands?

The BLM has a proud mission, available to the American people, while at the same time protecting the last remaining wild places in the West. Managing the region's birthright of public lands has always been a balancing act. What we've been forgetting in this rush to please energy developers is wildlife that live on our publicly owned lands, the quality of the erty rights of ranchers and farm-

Ann J. Morgan is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News in Paonia, Colo. (hcn.org). She lives in Evergreen. where she directs The Wilderness Society's public lands campaign.

#### mendations involve reforms to the Energy Policy Act of 2005, such as requiring reclamation bonds to fully cover the cost of restoring damage to public lands and resources; ensuring that inspectors focus on inspection and enforcement activities and not on merely permitting

been proposed for protection, that have been identified as having en the amount of leases already in place and the damage to our public lands that already has occurred, and gas development on our public

and I know firsthand that the agency is capable of making oil and gas what makes our region unique: the West's air and water, and the prop-

## Sex, drugs and prosecution

#### By Colbert I. King

The Washington Post

 ${\it WASHINGTON-This\ week's}$ commemoration of Law Day provides a moment to observe the application of justice in the nation's capital, particularly the enforcement of laws governing illegal drug activity and the practice of "the world's oldest profession": prostitution. Attention should be given to the demand side of the equation — i.e., the people who buy drugs and the men who buy women's bodies for sex.

Let's say it up front: The U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, who is responsible for prosecuting all federal crimes and all serious local crimes, is no slacker when it comes to illegal drugs. In 2000 alone, more than 5.700 people were arrested in the District of Columbia for drug pos-

A few drug-possession prosecutions really stand out.

For example, there's the case of the 27-year-old quadriplegic who used a chin-operated wheelchair and who, in 2004, as a first-time offender, was sentenced to 10 days in jail for marijuana possession. He died on the fifth day of his incarceration because of a lack of appropriate medical treatment.

There's the D.C. government agency director who was charged in 1994 with misdemeanor crack cocaine possession. The official pleaded guilty to attempted posession in a deal with prosecutors.

The police didn't stumble on him by accident. They heard he was using another person to buy cocaine for him. Police turned the buyer into an informant and gave him three rocks of crack to give to the official the next time he wanted to buy drugs.

And everyone recalls the former mayor who was never suspected of manufacturing, selling or dis-

### Will the Palfrey patrons be arrested?

tributing illegal drugs. The government, however, believed he was a user and set out to prove its point by concocting an elaborate sting operation. The authorities arranged for a former girlfriend to lure the target into a D.C. hotel room, where he was captured on a surveillance camera smoking government-supplied crack cocaine. FBI and D.C. cops arrested him on the spot in a scene played over and over around the world.

Message: D.C. drug users be-

But what about those men in our midst who regard women as a commodity to be bought and exploited?

That question is brought to mind by the case of Deborah Jeane Palfrey, a.k.a. Jeane Palfrey, a.k.a. Julia, a.k.a. Pamela Martin, who was indicted in March on federal racketeering charges in connection with a prostitution service she allegedly ran that catered to men in hotels and homes in the Washington area.

Palfrey maintains that the company she ran was "a high-end adult fantasy firm which offered legal sexual and erotic services across the spectrum of adult sexual be-

The government's first amended complaint, filed against Palfrey before her indictment, states that it learned "through the review of financial documents and other sources, including from interviews of some of Palfrev's male customers, and interviews of some of the females who had worked for Palfrey as prostitutes that Palfrey

operated a prostitution business." The complaint also detailed her alleged methods of operation.

At issue is whether the government is going to pursue the unnamed men who buy sex acts as vigorously as it works to round up consumers of illegal drugs

For the record, the U.S. attorney's office does prosecute prostitutes' customers arrested by the D.C. police — approximately 550 in the past 16 months, according to one government source.

The government should have a special interest in knowing who Palfrey's alleged clients are, if, as The Post reported, they include government officials and military officers. If these men are law breakers, shouldn't they be brought to justice, too? One expert has said that men "who buy sex acts don't respect women, nor do they want to respect women.

There's reason to believe that many of them would benefit from being arrested and diverted to the U.S. attorney's "John School" — a one-day, eight-hour education and awareness program for the purchasers of prostitution.

Of the 550 johns arrested, all signed up for "John School"; only one did not successfully complete the program, and only two have been rearrested.

At any rate, you can bet there are a lot of District of Columbia residents waiting to see if the government will hunt down and expose the men who patronized the accused D.C. madam the same way it has pursued those who patronize drug dealers.

A federal prosecutor speaking at the time of the former mayor's drug arrest said his office "fairly enforces the criminal laws without regard to the position or status of the offender." Given that we are a city of laws and that we just celebrated Law Day, let's see how the D.C. madam's johns fare.

## **Ethics** do matter

**By Tom Fitton** 

How often do you run across a public policy issue in which 93 percent of the voting public is in agreement?

According to a poll sponsored by Judicial Watch and conducted in partnership with Zogby International, 93 percent of likely voters agree with this statement: "Corruption is a significant problem in Washington." (Of that total, 69 percent "strongly agree" with the statement.)

In other words, on the issue of ethics, politicians in Washington — especially in Congress — have little credibility.

And is there any wonder why? The Republicans gave us Tom DeLay and a culture of corruption. Former Republican Reps. Duke Cunningham and Bob Ney are sitting in prison for their corrupt behavior, while Mark Foley resigned in disgrace. Democrats did their fair share to contribute to the culture of corruption, too. Democratic Rep. William Jefferson was caught on tape during an FBI sting operation accepting a \$100,000 bribe. The FBI later found the money stuffed in his freezer, giving new meaning to the term "cold hard cash." And other Democrats including Rep. John Conyers and Sens. Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and Harry Reid — have their own ethics problems. (Two more Republican congressmen were the subject of FBI raids in the past few weeks.)

The American people are tired of corrupt politicians and their enablers. Just ask the Republicans who were thrown out of power on Capitol Hill for allowing ethics scandals to flourish on their watch. Is Congress prepared to do anything to now fix the problem?

Recently, I was invited to testify before a congressional hearing held by the bipartisan Special Task Force on Ethics Enforcement. The specific issue on the table is whether the House of Representatives should create an independent ethics-enforcement entity to help clean up corruption on Capitol

As I told members of the task force during my testimony, an independent entity is a sound idea, but only if it adheres to the fundamental principles of accountability, integrity and trans-

The full text of my testimony is available on Judicial Watch's Internet site, www.judicialwatch.org. But here's the "Reader's Digest" version:

"The House ethics process is broken and in need of reform. ... Suffice to say, from what we know publicly, apparent wrongdoing by members repeatedly goes uninvestigated. And when violations of House rules are uncovered as a esun of Ethics Committee investiga tions, any resulting punishments generally have been weak and ineffectual.

"A strong Ethics Committee that supports independent investigations of ethical violations — while ensuring the rights of members are protected — is essential.

"The leadership of both parties must repudiate the ethics truce (between both parties to not file ethics complaints against each other's members) and make it clear that ethics enforcement is a top priority and no member or outside entity will be retaliated against for filing or pursuing nonfrivolous ethics charges.

"The (ethics) process must be open. Not only should citizens and groups be able to file ethics complaints, but there must be mandatory reporting on the disposition of any complaints.

It is difficult to say whether the Ethics Task Force will recommend changes that truly address the problem of corruption in Washington. Only time will tell. The Task Force will report its findings back to the House of Representatives, and we'll see where it goes from there. Forgive me, however, if I remain skeptical.

In 1994, Republicans swept into power following a series of scandals involving Democrats. (Remember the check-kiting scandal?) Republicans failed to learn the lesson, and 10 years later, they were thrown out because of corruption. Now, just six months after the elections, Democrats continue to turn a blind eye to corrupt behavior by members of their own party.

For example, why have Democratic leaders failed to force Congressman Jefferson to resign from his important committee post considering the strong evidence he was involved in a bribery scheme? Where is the outrage on the part of Democrats over Obama's shady connections to an indicted political fundraiser? Why no strong ethics reform by Hill Democrats generally?

Corruption matters to the majority of the voting public, and it matters quite a bit. I just wonder when it will start to truly matter to our leaders on Capitol Hill.

It is good to hold hearings and take testimony. The key is follow up with sound ethics policies and, more importantly, to actually enforce them.

Tom Fitton is president of Judicial Watch, a nonpartisan educational foundation that fights government corruption. Visit www.judicialwatch.org for more information.