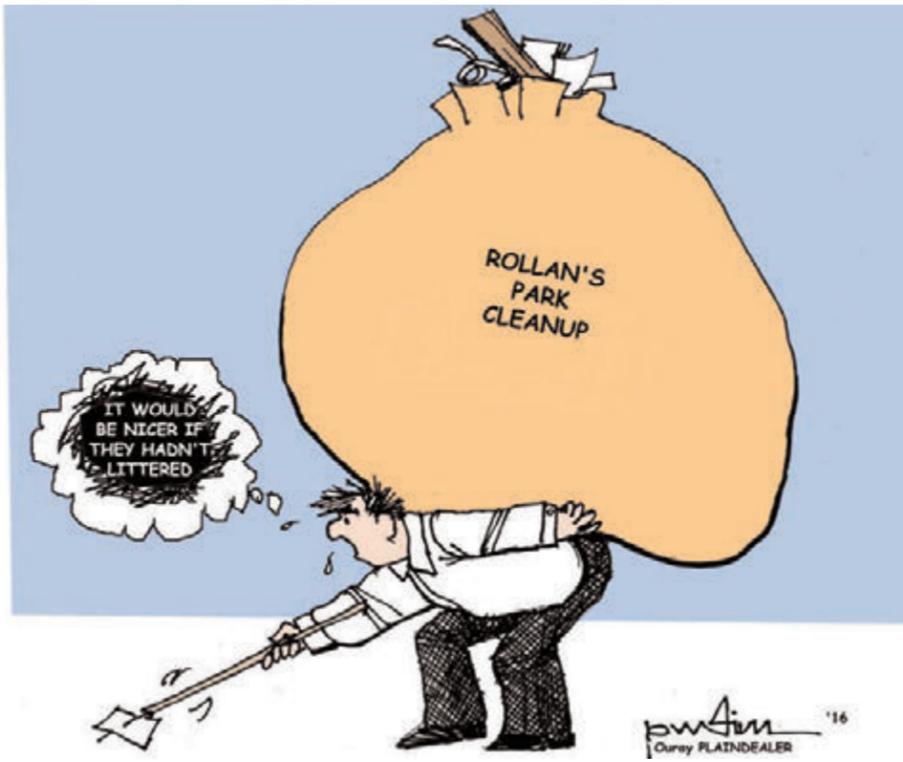


OURAY COUNTY Opinion

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MAY 19 - 25, 2016



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Imposing a new tax on me

Dear Editor,

First I want to point out that I totally believe in paying taxes for those government services I voluntarily consume. But it seems every time I turn around someone is trying to impose a tax on me for something I will not use. It's always more, more, more...

I live on CR22, so the 2 miles of CR1 to get to Colona that I use is already paved. This tax scheme intends to tax me about \$200 per year for a road I will rarely use.

How can it be moral or ethical for a group of people to join together in the voting booth to force me to help fund a road they will use, but I will not?

In the Q&A released by the PID (public improvement district) Committee, they ask:

"Why should residents of CR22 and roads on the south end of the Mesa be part of the PID, since they can avoid the gravel section to exit the Mesa?"

Their answer is, and I'm not making this up, that not including CR22 will result in an "unfair tax burden" on the taxpayers (that will actually use CR1). That is Orwellian Doublepeak... what about the "unfair tax burden" on those CR22 residents that will get no benefit from this new tax scheme?

I believe the committee made a calculated decision that those that want CR1 paved wouldn't be willing to pay the full cost, so they kept adding in more and more properties to get the cost down, but those added properties wouldn't be a large enough group to vote the measure

down. It's tax-rape by a carefully selected "majority."

Also in the Q&A, they state: "The 9-mill levy is an estimate. The actual mill levy would be determined based on project cost, interest rate, and projected income to pay a project bond."

This means they are asking you to vote yes for an unlimited and unbounded tax increase. Anyone who signs this petition has no idea what they are agreeing to. Can anyone even remember any government scheme that didn't involve cost overruns?

Property tax revenue is based on the state of the economy and our property values are still depressed after the last Great Recession here in Ouray County. What happens when property values increase and the PID tax revenue increases? This was never answered.

Those living on the south side of Log Hill will get the greatest benefit of this CR1 tax scheme, they'll use the road the most and they get to force those living on the north side of Log Hill to help pay for their road?

Don't sign the petition people, it's a can of worms, it's a Pandora's Box, it's a Slippery Slope, it pits Resident against Resident, and sets a very bad precedent for future tax grab schemes.

I suggest that those who want CR1 upgraded to keep their hands out of my wallet and pay for their own road.

*George Kerber
Montrose, Ouray County*

"The plan is to just blow pork smoke across the pool."

Tyler Jones, owner of Rib City Grill in Montrose
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CONTRIBUTOR

Women in small town

America aren't living as long

Those of us who grew up in small rural communities in the 1950s and 60s, expected to have longer life spans than our parents.

The trends were in our favor. White women born in 1900 could expect to live, on average, just shy of 49 years; white men 46.6 years. Those were our grandparents and our neighbors.

By 1950, life expectancy had climbed to 72 years for white women born that year and 66.5 for white men. By 2000, life expectancy was still increasing, with female babies expected to live to nearly 80 and males to almost 75. America was on the rise, jobs were plentiful, antibiotics kept us from dying of strep throat, and polio vaccine kept us out of the iron lung. We thought things would only keep getting better.

So I was dismayed to read a story in the Washington Post in April that blew holes in those childhood expectations. The Post found "white women have been dying prematurely at higher rates since the turn of this century, passing away in their 30s, 40s, and 50s in a slow-motion crisis driven by decaying health in small town-America."

That "small town America" was where I grew up. I contrasted the Post's findings to the claims made by all those politicians who have told us we have the best healthcare in the world and who point to gobbs of money lavished on the National Institutes of Health to find new cures and to hospitals promoting their latest imaging machines. The Post found that since 2000, the health of all white women has

Trudy Lieberman



declined, but the trend is most pronounced in rural areas. In 2000, for every 100,000 women in their late 40s living in rural areas, 228 died. Today it's 296.

If the U.S. really has the best healthcare, why are women dying in their prime, reversing the gains we've made since I was a kid? After all, mortality rates are a key measure of the health of a nation's population.

Post reporters found, however, that those dismal stats probably have less to do with healthcare - which we like to define today as the latest and greatest technology and insurance coverage albeit with high deductibles - and more to do with what health experts call "the social determinants of health," such basics as food, housing, employment, air quality, and education.

Landmark studies examining the health of British civil servants who all had access to health insurance under Britain's National Health Service have found over the years that those at the lowest job levels had worse health outcomes. Some of those outcomes were related to things like work climate and social influences outside work like stress and job uncertainty.

In its analysis, the Post found that the benefits of health interventions that increase longevity, things like taking drugs to lower cholesterol and the risk of heart disease, are being overwhelmed by increased opioid use, heavy drinking,

LIVING P17

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Unintended consequences

Dear Editor,

With regard to the recent County Road 1 paving issue, I am concerned about "unintended consequences" of the proposal. While I admit at first blush it sounds like a good idea, the following concerns have kept me from signing the petition:

- 1.) If County Road 1 is paved there will be an exponential increase in traffic up and down "Luge Hill."
- 2.) Large trucks and 18 wheelers will be using County Road 1 as a Ridgway bypass, not to mention all the Montrose to Telluride workers and travelers.
- 3.) Speeding on County Road 1 is already a big issue and will increase exponentially once it's paved.
- 4.) The maintenance of the pavement will be greater than anticipated because of the high traffic load.
- 5.) The critters that live on Log Hill will be in even greater danger because of

speeding and increased traffic.

6.) It is grossly unfair for the residents of Log Hill and County Road 1 to be taxed for the paving when the general public will use the road for free.

7.) Once a PID (public improvement district) implements a tax on the few, there will be "more and bigger ideas" that will require more money and higher taxes in the future.

8.) I seriously doubt the Ouray County Sheriff's Dept. have the manpower to increase patrols on a paved County Road 1.

9.) Ridgway businesses will be hurt by the Ridgway Bypass.

And then, of course there are always "unintended consequences" that are yet unrealized. Respectfully,

*Gary Matney
Ridgway*

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