

Rockwall County Letters to the Editor

We encourage the submission of Letters to the Editor. The publishing of letters is at the sole discretion of the editor and may be edited for brevity, grammar and accuracy. Letters which are considered libelous or an attack of an individual's character will be rejected, as well as those promoting political candidates. Letters must be signed and include telephone number or address for verification.

"The Boys Next Door"

I would like to thank the board of Rockwall Community Playhouse for choosing the play, "The Boys Next Door" by Tom Griffin, as their current play in production.

As a special-needs mother I wholeheartedly approve of this decision. I was asked by the board to help produce this play. This is not your well-known main stage play you are used to seeing in community theatres, but one that addresses special needs and mental illness. It is a heartwarming play that makes you laugh and cry.

I applaud the board's decision on picking Aimee Thibodeaux and Ann Easterwood to direct this play. They knew based on these women's personal experiences that they would direct this play with the compassion and professionalism it deserved. What many people don't realize is that these ladies, along with an excellent cast and crew, put many volunteer hours to produce this excellent play.

Thank you, RCP, for producing a play that shows us "that disabilities are relative and that we all want only to love, laugh and find meaning and purpose in the brief time we are here."

Eileen Davis, Heath

Boys & Girls Club of Rockwall County changes

Nan Ross, the Chief Professional Officer, has submitted her letter of resignation to the Board of Directors and is no longer employed with the organization, effective immediately.

The remainder of the staff will remain and the Club will continue to be open and operate as it has in the past. Further, the children will continue to be cared for and will continue to engage in the myriad of programs designed to reinforce the skills they learn in the classroom.

The Board of Directors has selected an interim Chief Professional Officer, with prior experience operating a Boys and Girls Club, that will immediately assume all responsibilities while a search for a permanent Chief Professional Officer is conducted.

The Board of Directors would like to thank Nan for her many contributions to the Club and wishes her the very best.

Stephen A. Straughan, Board President

New speed limit set on SH 205

A new speed limit has been set on State Highway 205 from Ralph Hall Parkway north to the DGNO railroad bridge, just south of Sam Houston Street.

According to a City of Rockwall news release, the speed limit will be 40 mph once the Texas Department of Transportation installs new signage.

Mental Illness Support

Two NAMI free support groups — one for those with a mental illness (Room 121) and one for their families (Room 123 BBldg.) will meet from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 10 at the First United Methodist Church, 1200 E. Yellow Jacket Lane, Rockwall. Call Hal or Dee Whitfield at 972-412-6030 for more information.

RCISD earns energy stewardship award

The Royse City Independent School District will receive The Award for Energy Stewardship from Energy Education during the district's April 12 board meeting.

The award recognizes the district's efforts to "implement an innovative people-oriented energy conservation and management program," according to a news release issued by the school district. The program is administered through an alliance with Energy Education, a national company whose energy conservation programs have saved more than \$2 billion for educational and ministerial organizations since 1986.

According to the news release, the RCISD has, over the 21 months of the alliance, saved 22,078 MMBTU. That is the equivalent of more than 2 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions being prevented or 394,535 cars removed from the road.

"This energy program is an excellent vehicle to assist our district personnel in practicing good stewardship of our resources. The willing participation of virtually every staff person — teachers, administrators, food ser-

Rockwall P&Z plans pair of public hearings

The City of Rockwall's Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct a pair of public hearings this month.

The first hearing will begin at 6 p.m. April 13 in the City Hall Council Chambers, 385 S. Goliad. The second hearing, to be conducted at the same location, is set for 6 p.m. April 19.

Items to be considered at the hearings include:

- A request by Scott Jungels for approval of a permit allowing for the construction of a gazebo exceeding the maximum requirements within the Lake Ray Hubbard Takeline Overlay in the take area adjacent to his property at 1200 Crestcove;

- A request by Jonathan Hake of Cross Engineering Consultants for a permit to allow for minor automotive repair — Christian Brothers Automotive — within Planned Development No. 9 District at the southeast corner of FM 3097 and Rockwall Parkway.

For more information, contact the city's P&Z staff at 972-771-7745. Additional information also is available online at rockwall.com/planning/zoningchanges.asp.

Heritage tapped for second USCA award

Heritage Christian Academy has received the 2010 Best of Rockwall Award in the Private Elementary & Secondary Schools category of the U.S. Commerce Association's award program.

The USCA Best of Local Business Award Program is designed to recognize "outstanding local businesses throughout the country," according to a news release issued last week. Award winners are identified and recognized for having "achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category."

Fewer than 2 percent of last year's award winners qualified as award winners for 2010, according to the release.

**Semi-Retired
Electrician
Small Jobs
Preferred
Very
Reasonable
214-924-0969**

Community Is Our Business
Housewarmers.
Housewarmers of Rockwall County
Carol and Jay Edwards
972-489-9767
cedwards@housewarmerusa.com
www.housewarmerusa.com/rockwall
Opening new doors for your business!

Rockwall High School Spring Craft Fair

now accepting vendors for the May 1, 2010 show.
Please call Liz Tarter for more information

972-772-1846

Dwyer Law Firm
Compassionate Legal Counsel

- Divorce
- Child Custody
- Pre and Post Nuptial Agreements
- Child Support Modifications
- Child Support Enforcements
- Property Divisions
- Adult Name Changes

Unless otherwise noted: Not Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization

www.dwyerlawfirm.com
500 Turtle Cove Blvd Suite 215
Rockwall, TX 75087

Rex W. Dwyer
Board Certified
Personal Injury • Civil Trial Law
972-771-0108
Call Today For Your FREE Consultation

Opinions

Census: A little too personal

by Ron Paul

Congress voted earlier this month to encourage participation in the 2010 census. I voted "No" on this resolution for the simple, obvious reason that the census — like so many government programs — has grown far beyond what the framers of our Constitution intended.

The invasive nature of the current census raises serious questions about how and why government will use the collected information. It also demonstrates how the federal bureaucracy consistently encourages citizens to think of themselves in terms of groups, rather than as individual Americans. The not so subtle implication is that each group, whether ethnic, religious, social, or geographic, should speak up and demand its "fair share" of federal largesse.

Article I, section 2 of the Constitution calls for an enumeration of citizens every ten years, for the purpose of apportioning congressional seats among the various states. In other words, the census should be nothing more than a headcount. It was never intended to serve as a vehicle for gathering personal information on citizens.

But our voracious federal government thrives on collecting information. In

fact, to prepare for the 2010 census state employees recorded GPS coordinates for every front door in the United States so they could locate individuals with greater accuracy! Once duly located, individuals are asked detailed questions concerning their name, address, race, home ownership, and whether they periodically spend time in prison or a nursing home — just to name a few examples.

From a constitutional perspective, of course, the answer to each of these questions is: "None of your business." But why is the government so intent on compiling this information in the first place?

The Census Bureau claims that collected information is not shared with any federal agency; but rather is kept under lock and key for 72 years. It also claims that no information provided to census takers can be used against you by the government.

However, these promises can and have been abused in the past. Census data has been used to locate men who had not registered for the draft. Census data also was used to find Japanese-Americans for internment camps during World War II. Furthermore, the IRS has applied census information to detect alleged

tax evaders. Some local governments even have used census data to check for compliance with zoning regulations.

It is not hard to imagine that information compiled by the census could be used against people in the future, despite claims to the contrary and the best intentions of those currently in charge of the Census Bureau. The government can and does change its mind about these things, and people have a right to be skeptical about government promises.

Yet there are consequences for not submitting to the census and its intrusive questions. If the form is not mailed back in time, households will experience the "pleasure" of a visit by a government worker asking the questions in person. If the government still does not get the information it wants, it can issue a fine of up to \$5000.

If the federal government really wants to increase compliance with the census, it should abide by the Constitution and limit its inquiry to one simple question: How many people live here?

Soviet unionization of health care

by David R. Henderson and Charles Hooper

Few of us relish paying for health care, but when we do, amazing things happen: Strangers listen to us and try to give us what we want. There's a simple economic rule that what we pay for, we control. Insurers, hospitals, doctors, nurses, and drug companies listen to us when their livelihood depends on it. The more you take the individual customer/patient out of the equation, the more power we individuals lose.

The "health-care reform" currently touted by Beltway Democrats would take a system that insulates patients from the true cost of their health care — and insulate them more. It's a scheme for spending even more of OPM (other people's money). The Soviet Union ran the granddaddy of such schemes, even putting the cradle-to-grave "right to health" in its constitution. If we are smart, we will learn from the Soviets' failed seventy-year experiment, which succeeded in putting people into early graves.

Take the individual out completely, as the defunct Soviet system did with all industries, and the individual becomes irrelevant. The Soviet government was the only purchaser that mattered and, consequently, the government, not consumers, told producers what to make. When the state tried setting quantity quotas for nails, factories produced lots of little, pin-like nails. When the state set quotas by weight, factories responded predictably and produced big, heavy nails.

Recently, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force caused a firestorm by reversing its previous position and recommending against giving mammograms to certain classes of women. Their logic? Screening younger and older women is less "efficient," meaning that more mammograms will be needed to prevent each additional death in those groups compared to the "better" patients in the middle group. In other words, more women will die of breast cancer, but we can take solace in the knowledge that their deaths allowed us to uphold some arbitrary standard of efficiency.

Who controls your next mammogram?

If the government gets to decide our health-care future, then it will decide who gets a mammogram and, as happened in the Soviet Union, health care providers will pay attention to the government, not to us. The recent Task Force decision was simply a shot across our bow. And, of course, the process for deciding who gets a mammogram and who doesn't will ultimately be just as political as military-base closures and the government's involvement in General Motors. Just look at how the Task Force quickly backtracked under political pressure.

If the government sets up health care so that other people pay for your care and you pay for theirs, that doesn't mean that you'll get great care for free. All it means is that you'll pay a zero price — and high taxes — for whatever the government decides to give you. That's a big difference, and that's where rationing comes in. Rationing is entirely consistent with and, in fact, required by government-provided health care because basic economics teaches us that the amount of health care people demand increases when prices to the consumer drop to zero. As government health-care budgets inevitably balloon, suppliers will be squeezed to "share in the pain" and "give something back." This will complete the tragedy and double the rationing efforts, as the amount supplied will decline in response to reduced payments. Economic theory will be confirmed and our society will have taken a great leap backward.

Soviet "right to health" failure

We shouldn't forget the dire results of the Soviets' 70-year "constitutional right to health" experiment.

With unsanitary conditions, drunken personnel, bed sheets stained from past patients' blood, a lack of medical supplies, and workers just pretending to work, Soviet hospitals were a hundred years behind their U.S. counterparts. Russian economist Yuri Maltsev points out that according to official government records, 78 percent of all AIDS victims acquired the virus through dirty needles and HIV-tainted blood in state-run hospitals.

Will you pay bribes for treatment?

Patients had to pay bribes to garner even minimal attention from medical personnel. Hospital bureaucrats withheld anesthesia from patients as a further means of collecting bribes. Some in the Russian Parliament estimated the infant mortality rate to be seven times that of the U.S. rate. Shockingly, fifty-seven percent of all Russian hospitals did not even have running hot water. Not surprisingly, the Soviets had a two-tier system: one for the common citizens and a much better one for the Nomenklatura — the bureaucrats and party leaders.

It's true that these extreme examples are from the poor and backwards Soviet Union. It's not likely to get that bad here. But the principle is the same whether in the Soviet Union, Britain, or Canada: When the government pays, the government is the customer and the patient suffers. Take, for example, the waiting lists for medical care in Canada. Canada's Fraser Institute, which publishes an annual report on waiting times, estimates that the median waiting time between referral by a general practitioner and an appointment with a specialist was 8.2 weeks in 2009. The median time between the appointment with a specialist and

an actual medical procedure was 8 weeks. The total wait: over 16 weeks or almost four months.

How long will you wait for treatment?

Consider admissions to the E.R. In American emergency rooms, the average wait before a patient sees a doctor is 30 minutes, according to Reason science correspondent Ronald Bailey. A year ago, the British government set a maximum target of "only" four hours for the National Health Service. The Guardian reports that U.K. emergency rooms are meeting the four-hour goal through "patient stacking." Even seriously ill patients have been forced to wait outside in ambulances before they can be admitted, thus delaying the start of the four-hour timer — and tying up ambulances.

Moreover, European health-care systems, with the accompanying high tax rates, are one reason that Europeans' standard of living is 30 percent lower than ours. While this might seem unrelated, it is both germane and essential.

How much will you pay?

A private firm says its customers: If you want this service or product, you'll have to pay for it. Under the Senate and House health-care bills, the government heavily subsidizes the insurance premiums of low-income people. As their income rises, the government reduces its subsidy. That means that people's implicit marginal tax rates — the amount of each additional dollar the government takes — rise. Harvard economist Greg Mankiw estimates that the reduction in subsidies adds an additional 23 to 32 percentage points to marginal tax rates for middle-income families. This amounts to a doubling of marginal tax rates to around 60 percent or so. Some smart taxpayers, looking at keeping only about 40 cents of an additional reported dollar of income, will respond by shifting their time to untaxable pursuits such as retirement, recreation, or the off-the-books economy. After all, why work for something you will receive anyway? Economists have a vivid term for these distorting effects of high marginal tax rates: deadweight loss.

In the frenzied sprint to further insulate Americans from their health-care costs and to spend OPM, most Americans will be the big losers. Genuine reform should move us as far away from the Soviet disaster as possible. ObamaCare is, at best, a distraction and, at worst, multiple hops down a dreary path that history admonishes us to avoid.

David R. Henderson, a research fellow with the Hoover Institution and an economics professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, was the senior economist for health policy with President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers. Charles L. Hooper is a visiting fellow with the Hoover Institution and president of Objective Insights, a company that consults for pharmaceutical and biotech companies.