



by Manly Balzac

On Wednesday, May 9, 2012, a somewhat innocuous looking ordinance was brought forward by the Elbert County BOCC. Nobody really knows why this ordinance was proposed and that it is because our BOCC does not answer questions. They only allow brief comments from the peanut gallery in a thinly guised attempt to placate the locals. So we are left to guess the intent of the County Bosses.

Irony abounds in Kiowa, Colorado. I am confused by such an edict when recently I have been witness to an all out assault on the only place where residents used to be able to take junk and rubbish. Many do not feel the BOCC has been forthcoming with the pertinent details on that train wreck. Of course many have asked for an explanation, but the official motto of the Elbert County BOCC is, "We Don't Do Answers!" To say the least, this is a red flag in my book.

Despite the BOCC and any of their sycophant's beliefs that if you inquire as to why the County does what it does then you are nuisance; I am curious about the need for such an ordinance without much county input. Whenever a county starts setting up a hefty fine schedule it should raise a red flag. Whenever a financially decimated county such as Elbert starts setting up a hefty fine schedule, you should see red flags and signal flares. You should hear fog horns, sirens and screams generally reserved for zombie invasions. To be honest, I suggest that we all hide until the current BOCC is voted out of office in a general election or by recall.

Now some of you may be aware that the BOCC is currently locking horns with the fine folks living out at the Meadowlark Cooperative by the town of Agate. To say our commissioners are disenchanted with the alternate

Ordinance No. 12-01 An Ordinance Regarding the Accumulation and Removal of Junk and Rubbish in Elbert County or Why You Should Be Vewy, Vewy Afraid

lifestyle presented in the Meadowlark community would be an understatement. Even with the County's dwindling resources, the BOCC seems intent on spending precious financial resources on the expensive legal battle they are choosing to wage on people with whom they personally do not understand. This ordinance probably stems from this personal matter of choice, but the ramifications of this BOCC decision are much more ominous.

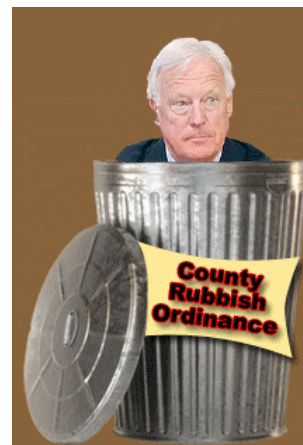
In Elbert County, there is an ugly pattern developing. If you disagree with the BOCC, be prepared to become a target. Fill in one too many open records requests and you are labeled a domestic terrorist and dragged into court. That does not cost a sitting commissioner a dime, but when you are an ordinary citizen, hiring a lawyer to defend your public reputation is prohibitively expensive. That is an abuse of power in my opinion.

Along the same lines, if you do your job as a reporter who is following the actions of the BOCC and the reporting is deemed negative, you might lose your job. The BOCC intimidates the newspaper, offers to drop the newspapers contract for legal notices and the next thing you know, there is no more pesky truth in the news because the reporter loses her job. Abusive? I think we all know the answer to that.

So now, we have an ordinance that turns our county employees and deputy sheriffs into watchers for the BOCC. They are being asked to determine whether there is an unsightly pile of lumber, manure pile or abandoned vehicle along our rural roadways. The BOCC will tell you that they are prepared to levy fines to make Elbert County a beautiful place to live. I will tell you that we are in trouble on many levels.

Every county has rural areas where old equipment accumulates along fence rows. It has not been a real topic of conversation until Meadowlark showed up and made the BOCC uncomfortable. Are we really prepared to go to an old agricultural community and tell them that they had better spruce up their places or the County will start fining the Bejeezus out of them? What is a collectable car? What is yard art? Could this be a misguided act of cannibalism where we start trying to generate revenue off of people who are already hurting?

Is a junked car any more of an eyesore than one of the stunningly beautiful oil derricks for which the BOCC seems to pine? Remember, because of our BOCC we no longer have a place to dispose of our rubbish and all of this within a county that is as large as a small New England state.



I believe the question must be asked about personal agendas of our sitting commissioners. If you ask the wrong question, favor a candidate of an opposing party or stand up at a public meeting and challenge the BOCC, can you expect a review of your home's appearance? Will you end up being fined for a stack of tires, a pile of building scraps or a parked truck you only use once a year in your ag business that is unregistered because it does not ever leave the property? These so called transgressions might be happening on roads that have fewer than ten cars drive down them every day. The BOCC has already demonstrated that they will bully those that stand in their way. Are you on the good list or the bad list? Do these commissioners need more opportunities to push the citizens around? Think about it.

