

OURAY COUNTY

Opinion

"I'm asking you
bring us together

Ouray County resident
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Life lessons in science

Dear Editor,

The average teenager on summer break typically is defined by avoiding anything and everything that has the slightest reek of school. One would probably never picture six high schoolers bent over notebooks in the Telluride library writing in the middle of July. But it's true. These six adolescents (including myself) have chosen to participate in the Experience Mountain Science Program provided by the Mountain Studies Institute from Durango. For two weeks, we have willingly exchanged the free time for which we could be doing nothing to immerse ourselves in the environmental science of this region.

What does this entail? Restoring fens on Ophir Pass, pulling copious amounts of oxeye daisy and identifying macroinvertebrates on the Telluride Valley Floor. If you ask me, that sounds like a good way to spend the summer. As I write this, I am finding it hard to concentrate after wading into the cool San Miguel River, looking for bugs. I felt like a child again. A quite enjoyable time, but catching bugs wasn't the real reason I was there.

Originally, I entered the program just for the opportunity to see what careers in science have to offer. What I found was that the practice of science is more similar to a lifestyle than a career. It is a search for truth that follows a particular method of experimentation. This process is often already natural in teenagers. Most youths will reach an age where they stop accept-

ing what they're told; a time when everything becomes a question in search of an answer.

Finding that answer is the hard part. It requires a system of trial and error that is reflective of the scientific process. In science, you are only temporarily not wrong, meaning eventually someone will come along with new data and the former conclusion is disproved. But this does not mean failure, rather the beginning of a new path.

The same is true in life. It can be daunting, growing up. Lots of people put extreme pressure on the time you leave high school. As if the first decision you make after you graduate will either make or break the rest of your life. I don't know, maybe it will, but after this week, what I do know is this: there will always be failure, but that doesn't mean you never try. The best you can do is choose a track, any track. Take it as far as you can until you hit a dead end. Ask the right questions and start again. That is life. The life that the six of us face as we set out for our next major "track change." So maybe it's not that crazy to find a teenager spending their summer studying science. Because at least for me, I'm taking away much more than facts about our environment. I'm leaving with a platform for my next steps, no matter where they may take me.

Rosalee Walsh
Ridgway

courthouse Saturday evening, I couldn't help but think what an important contributor the courthouse has been for county residents and the tourist economy for nearly 130 years. While restoring a house across the street from the courthouse, I witnessed hundreds of tourists and a fair number of locals taking photos of, and even painting pictures of, this beautiful old building and remarking on the beauty of Ouray's historic district.

We now have been tasked with the responsibility of restoring our sturdy but run-down courthouse to help it to serve the county for another century. While the restoration costs will be high, much of the cost will be covered by grants for preserving old buildings and by tourists via a temporary sales tax (yes, even tourists have to pay their fair share of maintaining this beautiful county). Also, we think that the current restoration estimates can be lowered by utilizing the county's amazing volunteers and by hiring local tradesmen. Many of these folks are playing a big part in restoring the Wright Opera House, maintaining the trails, etc. A restored courthouse should cost county residents no more than building a new one, and it should continue helping to draw tourists to our beautiful mountain town.

On the flip side, as reported in the

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Pitch in on are

Dear Editor,

In the July 20 edition of the Plaindealer, a letter commended the Ouray Trail Group and their leader, Hale Houts, for the remarkable work they do maintain-