

IN THEIR OPINION

American practice of soaking taxpayers

By **TOM PURCELL**
CAGLE CARTOONS

I have a confession to make. I'm addicted to long, hot showers. It's hard for me not to be addicted. I own a condominium. It's one of 40 units in our condo association.

As it goes, each condo owner contributes toward a common fee that is used to maintain the grounds and buildings. The common fee also covers gas and water. The association absorbs the cost of my addiction.

The reason I'm addicted to long, hot showers traces back to my childhood. My father had to pay the water bill. Unfortunately for him, his five daughters came of age during the Farrah Fawcett era.

Their hair was long and full. It required special shampoos and conditioners. They spent hours in the shower waiting for the conditioner to penetrate. Our water bills were astronomical.

My mother, desperate to cut down water usage, learned how to work the master water valves in the basement. If we went over our allotted time, she'd shut off the water.

At least once a day, one of my sisters went over her time. She'd

stand in the shower shrieking, "Mom, I have conditioner in my hair! Mom!"

Every once in a while, I'd attempt to sneak a long, hot shower but mother always shut off the water. It was always a helpless, unpleasant experi-

units, I pay for only 1/40th of all water that is used. If I stood in the shower all day seven days a week, I'd have the luxury of splitting my wastefulness with 39 other suckers.

I got to thinking about this concept as I stood in a stea-

Here in the midst of a presidential campaign, our Democrat field is making giant promises: "Free" health care for all; a "free" \$5,000 investment fund for every newborn in America; special government dough to help people who took on mortgages they can't afford.

Excessive government spending is hardly the domain of Democrats. Republicans showed a tremendous capacity to waste dough before their spendthrift ways helped get them booted from office.

Our politicians don't like the word "spend" — they call it "investment" — but the dough they spend has to come from somewhere. It comes from you and me — it is taken from those who work and earn and is transferred to those who want stuff.

I prefer to call it what it really is: bribery. Our politicians use our own money to promise things to other people who sell their votes to whichever politician promises them the most.

In 1835, French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville warned of the concept in "Democracy in America."

"The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's money," he wrote.

Oh-oh.

Our politicians long ago began using the public till to bribe voters into voting for them. Long ago they engaged in the concept of promising long, hot showers to every American, content that other Americans would cover the expense — content that everybody who pays the taxes would get soaked.

And now, to fund hundreds of new bribes, taxes will have to go up. To fund the dozens of unsustainable programs we already have, taxes will have to go up more. Economic growth will suffer and, ultimately, everyone will suffer.

But nobody seems to care about that. Too many Americans are more interested in the bribes that politicians are promising than the fiscal train wreck that is heading our way.

The whole concept makes me so worried and depressed, I feel the need to take longer, hotter showers. Thank goodness 39 other suckers will be paying for them.

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ence, but our water bill sure did go down.

I don't have to worry about the water bill now.

Because my condo association gets one water bill for all 40

ming-hot shower this morning. I got to thinking how my selfishness — my willingness to let others fund my wants and addictions — mirrors what is going on in America.