Dear Mr. Spencer,

It has come to my attention lately that Fort Morgan has smog. Yes! Our pleasant little town is finally growing up. All the big cities in the U.S. have smog in one form or another so that apparently comes with growth. Right? Sure can't stop progress. Growth is progress and that means smog. It is obvious to any casual observer. Isn't it marvelous?

I say, emphatically, "No!" to this idea. What say you?

The smog to which I refer is the recent contribution of our good friend and neighbor, the Great Western Sugar Factory. With its conversion from gas to coal this year we all shall become aware (I hope) of what this means in our lives. I do not refer to the cooking odor — I rather like that. I mean the emissions from the impressive smoke stacks. Have you noticed the smoke yet? Genuine soot and ash, I mean, not steam. Some days it is really black. Do you wonder why it varies from day to day? That sort of thing catches my attention. I think it is downright disgusting.

And I have noticed that my car definitely gets dirtier; the windshield streaks something fierce on these frosty mornings. Our streets will be a bit dirtier this winter. Likewise our homes...and wash hung out to dry...and of course our lungs. Yes, we too can have dirty snow. Not white, clean and pure (FACT: nowhere in the world is snow all these anymore). Yes there is dirt in melted snow water. Here and everywhere else in varying degrees. But now I suspect there will be more sediment in the bottom of a bucket of melted snow.

The conversion was done in the name of energy conservation. I contend coal is just as finite a natural resource as oil or gas. Right now it so happens to be less expensive. Energy conservation is definitely commendable. Our planet has only so much we can dig out of it. When it is gone, that's it, period.

Thanks to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state regulations, G.W. has complied with the law by installing wet venturi scrubbers in the stacks. We should appreciate all the additional expense G.W. suffered to stay within the law. I trust they will use the scrubbers continuously to protect us as much as possible from the harmful effects of coal combustion.

I am curious how many people have noticed these things of which I speak? It is safe to say that we all are affected (if we breathe, of course). But we may not all be conscious of it, yet. (FACT: Denver's pollution has been traced as far north as Cheyenne, Wyo., as far south as Pueblo. That's roughly 100 miles each way. Interesting, isn't it?)

Three thoughts in closing. Use your imagination for a minute, please. If G.W. burns, say three carloads of coal a day, I'd be willing to bet a certain 500 megawatt PSC plant could put away that much in an hour easily. Of course PSC will have to obey the law as GW did. But I still see smoke at G.W. It'll really be something to see the smoke pour out of the Pawnee monstrosity, won't it? Scrubbers only attempt to make the smoke and gasses from combustion less harmful and offensive to man and beast. There is no way to purify it.

Next idea: To Don Queen, Bill Work, and Mel Akers. Do you really have to run again? Bill? When do you leave Colorado, Mel? How in the world could all three of you county commissioners say, "yes, welcome to Morgan County," to PSC? The vote was unanimously in favor of the petition! Do we have three county commissioners who were elected only by one special interest group? Horrors! I thought they were supposed to reflect the interests of all residents of Morgan County.

Where does the majority of the money come from in this county if not from ranchers and farmers? Aren't we basically an agricultural county? Hasn't any one of you gentlemen listened to the people who seek to keep our air as clean as it is now, our soil as productive as it is and therefore the livestock as healthy and marketable as they are? Besides all this, it is unmistakably spot zoning. Can't you see that? How many times do you have to hear this from Information Please before it will get your attention?

The Times article stated that Information Please is a "group of farmers and ranchers opposed to the construction of the plant". That is incorrect! I know for a fact that it should have said Information Please is a group of farmers, ranchers and concerned citizens of Morgan County! I hope you will improve on your choice of words the next time you have the opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Spencer, for printing this lengthy letter. And thanks to anyone who stayed with me through the whole thing and is now reading these words.

Sincerely,
Millie McBride