

The change presents the intriguing possibility that the 1996 election won't be fought over deficits at all, but over the environment. Here's how it could work out: Clinton drops out of the race because of Whitewater. Gore is named the Democratic candidate. The country suffers an extraordinary heat wave next summer followed by the greatest number of hurricanes ever to hit the US coast. Sales of Gore's book surge past those of Colin Powell, and -- aided by a heavy dose of bragging about cutting out government waste -- Gore ends up in the White House.

Drug Busts

To give you an idea of how futile the drugs wars are, consider the drug testing experience of Steelcase. In 1989, the firm subjected nearly 800 job applicants to both urine and hair tests. While the urine test showed only 3% positive results, the hair tests showed 18%. That means that nearly one in five applicants were criminals by state and federal definition.

The Lee County FL school board is considering whether to impose random drug tests on its entire upper school body. Lee County already conduct warrantless searches of student lockers with few results.

Meanwhile, San Francisco new prosecutor says he will not charge nonviolent crimes, such as drug offenses, under the state's three strikes law. AP reports that 63% of current three strikes cases in SF involve drugs.

In another sign of military intrusion into civilian affairs, Army reservists worked with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in anti-pot forays. Said one Army official: "We want the public to become more aware of what we're doing. This is an ongoing war on our soil. We want people to see the Army involved in a war right here -- a war against drugs . . . We're fighting a war in our own hometowns -- a war we'll fight every day until, finally, we win."

The Flat Tax Society

It would be nice if someone in the major media would point out that the flatness of a tax has little to do with its simplicity. Arguing that simplicity and flatness are inexorably linked is the basic lie of current tax proposals and proponents are not being called on it. Neither is anyone asking them to explain why capital gains have to be eliminated in order to simplify taxation. As we have pointed ever since Jerry Brown raised the

issue four years ago, the goal should be a thin tax and not a flat tax. Tax simplification -- but not a flat tax -- makes a lot of sense.

On the other hand, some media have given attention to the consequences of a flat tax for the various candidates. For example, Dole would save about \$63,000 on his taxes, Gramm, \$15,000 and Lamar Alexander, \$261,000 (all based on 1994 returns). God knows what Forbes would save -- he won't release his returns. But the Center for Public Integrity estimates that Steve Forbes -- a big promoter of the flat tax -- would save at least \$128,000 a year in taxes if such a policy were instituted.

Field notes

- *The Political Truth: A Voter's Guide to the 1996 Presidential Candidates & Elections.* Information on the various Republican candidates for president (and Bill Clinton, too) along with organizational voting scores and other data. \$14.95 + \$4 P&H from Publication Services, 8870 Business Park Drive, Austin TX 78759.

- *The Greens & the Politics of Transformation* by John Rensenbrink, which was quoted in the last issue of the *Review*, is available in paperback for \$17 postpaid from Miles & Miles, Box 6730, Eureka CA 95503.

- *Whole Life Economics: Revaluing Daily Life:* Talks about what's left out of the GDP and the Consumer Price Index and takes the reader inside the invisible economy of the country. [\$14.95 + \$3 P&H from New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 14.95]

- *The Buying of the President:* by Charles Lewis and the Center for Public Integrity. An investigation of the money behind the major 1996 presidential candidates. Ten top career patrons of the various candidates plus other important financial information. [Center for Public Integrity, 202-783-3900]

- *White House E-Mail: The Top Secret Computer Messages the Reagan/Bush White House Tried to Destroy:* This is a modern version of what the historians call primary sources. The e-mail messages reveal all sorts of goodies including top Reagan officials (Gen. Powell among them) presiding over covert intelligence support to Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War and plans to clean up Manuel Noriega's image. Says Poindexter at one point: "I have nothing against him other than his illegal activities." [New Press, NY. Includes 1.44 mg computer disk.]



Roadsigns

- Amount Milwaukee County WI spent in 1988 to fight the effects of poverty: \$1 billion. Income to a three-member low-income family if this money had been converted into a direct payment: \$33,379 [*The Neighborhood Works*]
- Annual cost of UN and its peacekeeping for each US citizen: less than \$4. [*Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*]
- Number of Iraqi children who have died as a result of international sanctions: 500,000 [*Lancet*]
- Amount the government spends per death on three diseases, each killing 40,000-46,000 people a year. Breast cancer: \$11,500. Prostate cancer: \$2,000. AIDS: \$40,000. [*Penthouse*]
- Number of aircraft the military has given police departments since 1992: 183. Number of helicopters it plans to give police departments over the next few years: 2,000. [*AP*]
- Estimated annual cost in lost productivity of highway congestion according to the GAO: \$100 billion. [*The Trainrider*]

- Increase in the Drug Enforcement Agency's budget for LSD cases since 1989: 200%. Last time DEA busted a major LSD lab: 1981 [*Pacific News Service*]
- Number of blacks elected to Congress since 1870: 95. [*Rainbow Coalition*]
- Number of persons indicted in 1994 by the Justice Department and US Attorneys : 51,253. Number of these indicted on drug charges: 19,533. Number indicted for crimes involving the environment, occupational safety or health: 250. Percent of corporate general counsels who told the *National Law Journal* that they believed their company had violated federal or state environmental laws in the previous year: 66%. [David Burnham, *Above the Law*]
- Percent of all cases referred to the Justice Department in 1994 in which it acted: 50%. Percent of all immigration cases it prosecuted: 85%. Percent of all drug cases: 63%. Percent of corruption cases: 35%. Percent of all white-collar crime cases: 30%. Percent of civil rights cases: less than 5%. [Burnham]
- Percent of all AIDS cases that occur in the developing world: 85%. Percent of all money for AIDS prevention that is spent in the developing world: 15%. [*Nation*]

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