

EDITORIAL

Getting the biggest bang for your buck

As the bells, whistles and noisemakers rang in the new year, a new deficit reduction plan made its appearance.

The Clinton administration's attempt to cut the soaring deficit by raising taxes on the upper class is one major part of it. Are we really getting the most for our dollars by increasing taxes, and are taxpayers getting the biggest bang out of their buck by handing over more money to Uncle Sam rather than investing money directly in the economy around them?

Take the one-dollar bill for example, the one buried deep in your front pocket that is a direct benefit from a good hard day's work. Now, go to the store and spend your dollar bill knowing that you had to work for it. It is pretty certain that you will make that dollar stretch as far as possible and get the most for your money knowing that you worked for it.

Take that same dollar bill, but instead of spending it yourself, give it to your closest friend, who knows how hard you work for your money. Chances are that the dollar bill will be spent quite wisely, but still not as carefully as if you were spending it yourself.

Finally, take that dollar bill and instead of spending it yourself — or giving it to someone you know and completely trust — send it across the country to be combined with everyone's dollar bills — tax dollar bills, that is. Piles and piles of dollar bills. The people spending them have no real idea where they came from, or sometimes even where they are going. Now ask yourself, is that likely to get the biggest bang for your buck?

The original idea was to reduce the deficit by an estimated \$496 billion during the next five years. Of this, 90 percent of the new taxes will be paid by people with an annual income of more than \$100,000. These people will obviously have less money to spend and invest in local economies simply because more money will be spent on taxes.

Another component of the new tax bill is a reduction in the amount of money that can be deducted from an individual's total tax burden to pay for business meals and entertainment. The reduction drops it from 80 percent to 50 percent.

The National Restaurant Association estimates that there could be a \$3.7 billion loss suffered in the restaurant trade, with some 165,000 catering jobs being placed in jeopardy.

This reduction was such a good idea that there have so far been no less than five bills introduced in Congress seeking to restore the deductions to 80 percent, and some bills even want to increase it to 100 percent. A tax reduction for the lower and middle classes will only be helpful if members of those classes actually have a job.

The deficit must be reduced, but it must be reduced in a way that gets the most out of the money being spent. Historically, increasing taxes hasn't worked. With each dollar becoming harder and harder to earn, it seems we should be increasingly interested in getting the most out of each one.



LETTERS

In the black

As mayor of Springfield, I am extremely proud of our city manager, Mike Kelly, and his staff for staving off the deficit.

When I was elected to the City Council in 1987, Springfield faced a \$1 million deficit by 1989. Our council directed the staff to develop a series of three-year plans that would always forestall our "hitting the wall" until the third year. By keeping our "hands on the wheel" and making hard budget decisions, we have managed to keep our city operating in the black. We even managed to add three firefighter/paramedics this fiscal year by making necessary cuts in other areas.

Our current projected \$2.4 million deficit for 1997 will also disappear without raising taxes because, once again, our city's Management Team has given viable options for maintaining a high level of services by making innovative adjustments.

Springfield started this process before it was politically correct — before 1990's Ballot Measure 5. Our secret has been to stay well ahead of the curve and to develop an atmosphere of trust that government can be responsive to the need of taxpayers.

My advice to other taxing jurisdictions is to learn from a winning program like Springfield's.

Bill Morrisette
Springfield Mayor

ple to contact me and get to know the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance.

Once again, I apologize for the stress caused by this article.

Rachel M. Dueker
Co-Director
LGBA

W.P. Ball — it is nevertheless important for free speech that she have that right — provided it is determined the request poses no public danger.

Bert P. Tryba
Boulder, Colo.

"IM4GOD"

An article carried by the Associated Press Dec. 6 describes a case in which a motorist sought to compel the Utah motor vehicles division to issue personalized license plates, listing "THANXGOD" as her first choice and "IM4GOD" as second.

Her request was denied July 13 in a letter indicating that the plates might violate state law barring messages which "carry connotations offensive to good taste and decency" as claimed in the suit.

A reasonable argument can be made that plates bearing any "controversial message" be denied. We can imagine other drivers responding to these plates with a "thumbs up," "thumbs down" or any of the many other possible digital permutations, distracting people from the serious attention necessary for responsible driving.

The real intention of the plaintiff is to present her private religious beliefs publicly. Little did I realize that I, as a free-thinking atheist, would soon find myself supporting a theist's effort to promote religion publicly. The plaintiff's effort — compared to religiously organized efforts to impose religious speech on public school campuses while organizing efforts to suppress opposing atheist views — is an individual private expression. The plaintiff's view will elicit responses — pro or con — with which she will have to cope.

However ludicrous the ideas she advocates — I refer readers to *The Bible Handbook for Free-thinkers and Inquiring Christians* edited by G.W. Foote and

Grass for God

In my previous letters I have mentioned a new system waiting in the wings to replace our ill-conceived and doomed capitalist system. There's good news and bad news concerning its promise, for it's an elective system for those who want peace and females only voting by their dress, which will be a black tent, and is the bad news for all worshippers of the flesh.

But bad is really good in the sense that crime will end with zero-tolerance for unrighteousness in heaven on the basis that either one deserves to live or not. There won't be judges or jails because a person can't have one foot in hell and the other in heaven, for sinners must need to be put to sleep for reassignment to a lower life form for the years that satisfy their victims.

The good news is that marijuana use is approved for heaven. There are several reasons for this, one being that we need to return to rural life, away from the cesspools. But until we're relocated, the following rules will apply when a community accepts heaven: restrictions on smoking hand-rolled pot and tobacco are forbidden, save when there's danger from fire or explosion.

But good is really bad because one has to grow their own grass after a one-year grace period of using pot grown by others, to see if it's right for you to switch from booze. You may also want to grow your own food or bicycle to community farms when you switch to real food to regain your health. Youth seven to 14 can only eat pot, not smoke it.

John-Wayne Johnson
San Diego, Calif.

No confusion

"Biphobia" is not an issue of confusion in my mind. However, the Dec. 6 article in the *Emerald* clearly puts my feelings about bisexuality in a confusing and ignorant light. A misquote in the article quoted me as saying that bisexuals cannot choose between sexual preferences.

What the article was supposed to convey was that bisexuals have their own identities and should not have to feel that they need to choose. Sadly, though, most people do not understand that. I wish this had been conveyed correctly.

My character and contribution to the community speaks for itself, and those who know me realize that I do not believe in "bashing" anyone. I make the offer to anyone who has been confused or insulted by this arti-

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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