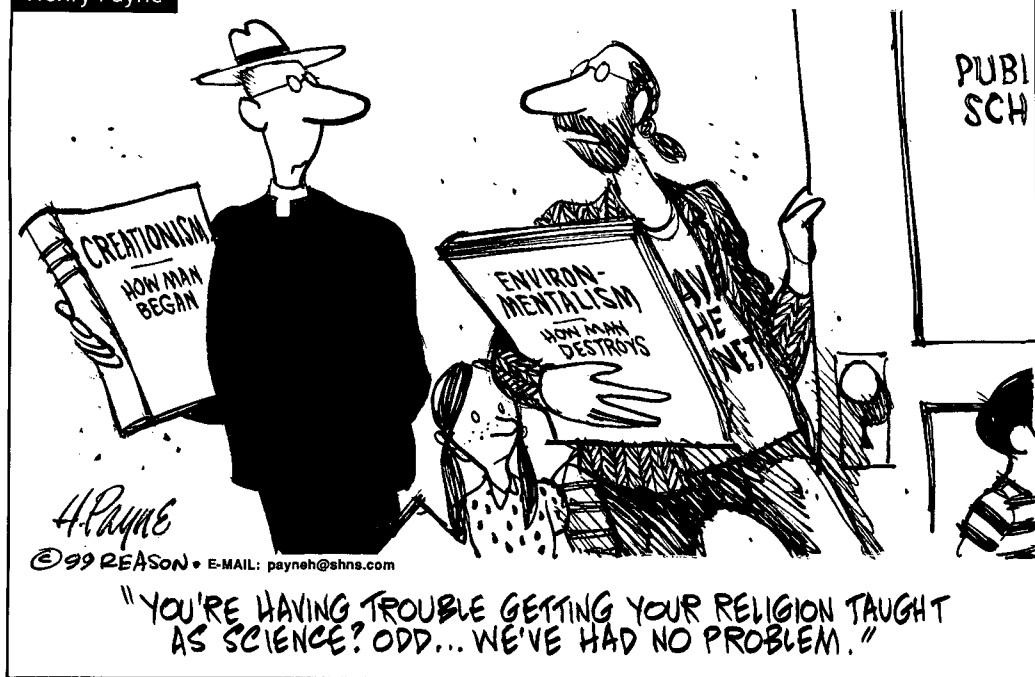


◆ After being pulled over while driving in Abington, Massachusetts, Michael Hyde landed in court—on charges of wiretapping. Hyde thought he was being harassed because he had long hair and drove a fancy Porsche. The officers told Hyde his license plate wasn't properly illuminated and that his exhaust was too loud. The stop led to no traffic charges, but Hyde says he taped the police officer harassing him, asking if Hyde had drugs. And that's where the wiretap charge comes in. The police claim Hyde illegally violated the officer's privacy by taping the traffic stop. "Police officers have the same rights as other citizens," said prosecutor Paul Dawley, adding that if the tables were turned and police were caught taping someone without permission, people would be outraged. That seems to ignore the fact that traffic stops are recorded all the time by videotapes mounted in police cruisers. The people stopped are rarely informed that they are being taped.

◆ Want a hunting or fishing license? Well, give us your Social Security number. That's what states are telling people, thanks to federal law. The feds hope to catch deadbeat parents when they come in for licenses. But critics say it's just one more way of keeping tabs on law-abiding citizens.

Henry Payne



for Business and Economic Research—have some reasonable-sounding explanations for their projections. It's possible, they suggest, that a suburb that's expanding relatively quickly now will reach a plateau well before 2020.

But that's only one interpretation of the data, Hamilton County Executive Claude Ramsey told the *Chattanooga Times and Free Press* that the numbers "don't make much sense." Another critic, Collegedale Town Manager Bill Magoon, used a blunter word to describe the projections: "crazy."

One important factor in how the area develops, of course, will be the growth plan itself: County planners may not know what will happen over the next 20 years, but the deci-

sions they make now will surely have an effect. If they declare that growth will be concentrated in Chattanooga, they'll put more infrastructure in the city and less outside of it. They'll also let the city annex more land.

That would suit the Chattanooga municipal government, which has an obvious interest in steering development toward the city. (The same city has spent the last year trying to take over its local water company, another useful tool if you want to direct growth.) It would also suit whichever developers are closest to the local government: With planners making

decisions that will render some land very valuable and other land essentially undevelopable, it

helps to be on the inside track.

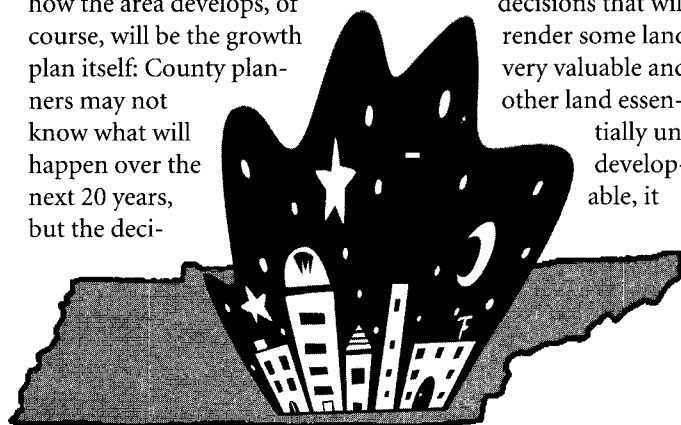
In other words, planners can be swayed by local interests, and planners' data aren't always clear. Here's hoping some wise Tennesseans will bury the city's plan in a time capsule, retrieve it 20 years later, and compare it to what actually transpired over the two decades just passed. If anyone's still talking about "smart growth" in 2020, the contrast just might smarten them up.

## OK to Drive?

By Jacob Sullum

If you don't know when to say when, a cop will be happy to tell you. In most states, it's illegal to drive with a blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.10 percent or more, the level the average 170-pound man reaches after drinking a six-pack of beer in two hours.

The Clinton administration wants to take away one of those beers. It supports legislation, a version of which





## Parallax Views

The image at left looks like a typical example of New Deal photography. It could be a classic still by Dorothea Lange or George W. Ackerman, or a frame from one of Pare Lorenz's federal propaganda films, such as *The Plow that Broke the Plains*. In fact, it's from a parallel school of photography: the Socialist Realist school that dominated imagery in Stalinist Russia at the very time that the New Deal school was flourishing.

This particular shot, *Commune Dawn, Karelia Region*, was snapped by Arkady Shaikhet in the 1930s; it's one of 200 photos in a remarkable exhibit, "Propaganda and Dreams: Photographing the USSR and the US," curated by Leah

Bendavid-Val and most recently displayed in Washington, D.C. Bendavid-Val was struck by how much such photographs had in common, given the vastly different systems that generated them. Her exhibit pairs many similar images—the portrayal of rural continuity, a fascination with hydroelectric projects, the narrative of a communal struggle against poverty—in deliberate provocation.

The systems that created these photos may have been different, but, as Bendavid-Val has noted, the ideas behind the images were similar: The state was the enemy of poverty; heavy industry was its tool in bringing change to the land and hope to its people. Turns out that the modernist state, East and West, had an Ur-tale; this exhibit reveals it.

—Charles Paul Freund

was approved last year by the Senate, that would withhold highway money from states that do not adopt a BAC cut-off of 0.08 percent, which is the standard in 16 states. "If all states lower their BAC to .08," President Clinton has said, "it will result in 600 fewer alcohol-related deaths each year."

But according to a recent report from the General Accounting Office, it's not clear that making this switch would save any lives, let alone 600. "Overall," the GAO says, "the evidence does not conclusively establish that .08 BAC laws, by themselves, result in reductions in the number and severity of alcohol-related crashes." The report calls the figure cited

by Clinton "unfounded" and emphasizes that, as the authors of one study put it, "it is important to interpret estimates of lives saved due to any single law with considerable caution."

The major difficulty in trying to assess the impact of a 0.08 BAC standard is the need to control for other factors, such as increased enforcement, public awareness campaigns, and license revocation laws, that tend to coincide with the shift to a lower limit. The GAO notes various other methodological weaknesses in the seven studies that have been conducted

so far, including the choice of comparison states and the indexes used to measure alcohol-related accidents.

The report, available at [www.gao.gov/new.items/rc99179.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/rc99179.pdf), concludes that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has exaggerated the strength of the evidence. In December 1997, when only four studies had been published, the agency declared that "recent research...has been quite conclusive in showing the impaired driving reductions already attributable to .08." Three studies later, according to the GAO, we still have not reached that point.

### Police Math

By RiShawn Biddle

**A**mong Bill Clinton's campaign promises in 1992 was to put 100,000 new

cops on America's streets by the end of the decade. Seven years later, this plan, like many administration initiatives, rests in tatters even as the president declares it a success.

A Department of Justice audit of the Community Oriented Policing Service program (COPS) reveals that far fewer new police officers will be hired than expected. According to the report, only 59,765 officers funded by COPS will actually be on patrol by next year. Amazingly, program officials don't even pretend that they will meet their target: They only plan on *processing applications* for 100,000 new cops by next year. Concluded the DOJ's auditor, "This is significantly different from having 100,000 new officers...actually deployed to the streets."

Even the 59,765 number is ►



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