



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, 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

Among 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."

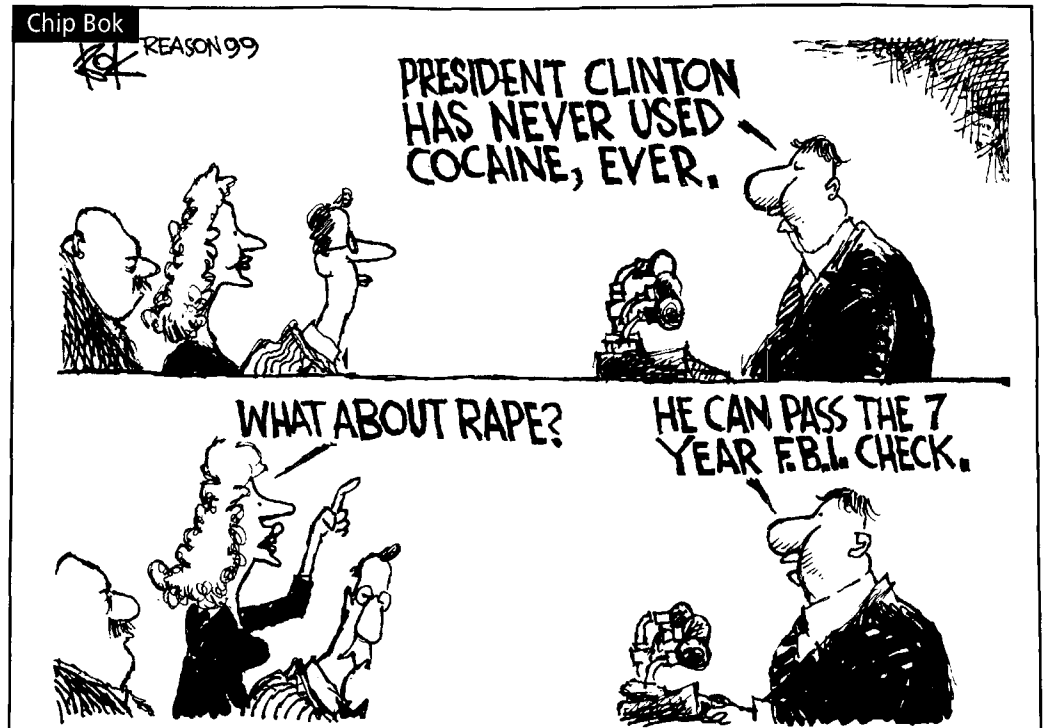
Even the 59,765 number is ►



**STRICTLY
ENFORCED**

♦ Gun owners in Massachusetts have challenged a new law banning practice shooting at targets with human images. The practice outrages lawyers for the state. "By shooting at [human-shaped targets], they're practicing shooting at people," said Assistant Attorney General Edward DeAngelo. Leaving aside the question of why that is necessarily a bad thing, gun owners say the ban violates their free speech rights. For instance, many shooters aim at targets with a photo of Adolf Hitler. "People express disapproval by shooting," said Stephen Halbrook, an attorney for gun owners.

♦ It began with Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady*. It has grown to include William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Craig and Cheryl Morgan objected when they found their daughter was exposed to the plays in an elective class at Campus High School in Haysville, Kansas. The parents are being backed by the conservative group Project Educate. It isn't about censorship, says Cindy Duckett, a spokesperson for the group. "It has more to do with what's appropriate and what's quality. And this isn't quality. There are so many other better materials."



an overstatement. The report noted numerous irregularities in COPS estimates.

For instance, officials included 7,722 positions in their total even though local police departments had turned down the funding for them. And 2,526 additional positions were counted even though the grantees have not yet received formal notification.

The audit further revealed that COPS couldn't verify that the new officers were assigned to patrol duties or ensure that local police departments would retain them beyond an initial three-year grant period, the two major concerns of the program's critics. In fact, 75 percent of cities sampled by the audit could not demonstrate that they had pulled officers off desk duty and redeployed

them to the street, another goal of the program.

What's more, most cities have never drafted plans for paying their COPS hires once federal funding expires.

Worse still, the report revealed that 60 municipalities, including Atlanta, used the grants to pay for current staff instead of new hires.

Writer Registration

By Brian Doherty

A federal judge has freed a class of writers from having to register with the government before they can have their say.

Until recently, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, an independent federal agency that oversees the commodities market, en-

forced registration requirements on anyone giving advice about futures trading, whether through traditional print publications or the Internet. (Mainstream publications such as *Money*, *Fortune*, and *The Wall Street Journal* were exempt, since the regs applied only to those publications for which giving such advice was a primary profit-making purpose.) Would-be commodity pundits had to register, provide fingerprints, pay a fee, go through a background check, and file reports—and subscriber lists, on occasion—with the CFTC.

Three such writers and five of their customers filed suit challenging the subscriber list requirement, claiming it was an unconstitutional restriction on their freedom to write about whatever they pleased. The D.C.-based Institute for Justice represented them. The writers did not execute trades for their readers or control any reader's money; they merely wrote their opinions about