

# opinion/editorial

## Campaign interests may erode sound fiscal logic

The Legislature may be listed in the almanacs as the only non-partisan legislature in the United States, but the special session is likely to indicate otherwise.

Called by Gov. Charles Thone to rectify a shortage of some \$25 million in anticipated revenues, the senators are now haggling over what to do about the problem.

To cut or not to cut, that is the question. And hopefully some noble senators will fight off the desire to cut funds for agencies and programs just because it is politically popular.

Thone has taken the Stockmanesque approach by urging the cutting of state programs by 3 percent across the board as a way of avoiding a 1982 state tax increase.

It doesn't matter what hardships this may impose on the agencies to Thone. The money simply isn't there and hence the cuts are necessary.

But some people have other ideas that merit consideration. Former state senator Harold Simp-

son suggests that a slight tax rate increase might be the answer.

Simpson, who now serves on the Public Service Commission, testified Monday that a 1 percent increase in the individual income tax rate would only raise his withholding payment from \$3.60 to \$3.88 a month.

Simpson, who makes \$25,000 a year, said people who make more than that would pay more and people earning less would pay accordingly. Asking citizens to make \$25,000 a year to pay an additional 28 cents in taxes seems to be a small burden to bear.

Citizens could handle the increase. But chances are it may be an unbearable political burden for politicians to choose, especially those running for re-election in November.

And that is the biggest problem in getting the Legislature to formulate a sound plan to amend the state's fiscal predicament.

The elections last fall proved it is both politically popular and politically advisable to cut

taxes. It is a quick fix and the people love it. However, the ramifications of such actions are not fully known.

Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly has hinted that he may propose an alternative to Thone's proposed budget cuts, but is still letting the idea gain support.

Several groups testified Monday that further cuts from their budgets would make efficient operation difficult. It is natural for representatives to defend their groups from budget cuts, and no one should automatically assume that the cuts could be made without limiting groups' ability to operate.

The special session was called to deal with the issue of the state's finances. The state is in an unusual financial pinch and a small tax rate increase may be the best solution.

Let's hope the legislators don't try to balance the state budget and start their re-election campaigns at the same time.

## Political comrades avoid investigation

"60 Minutes," known for its hard-hitting exposes and interviews, last week offered a change of pace: a soft-hitting interview with I.F. Stone, the journalistic establishment's favorite radical. Ed Bradley practically fell to his knees as he asked the questions. When Izzy Stone recalled the McCarthy era, Bradley dutifully echoed that it was a "bad time for liberals."

Joseph Sobran

Two days later, Stone's niece was in the news. Kathy Boudin, 11 years a fugitive in the Weather Underground, was arrested following the bloody robbery of a Brink's truck in Rockland County, New York. Two policemen and a private guard died in the mayhem.

At 38, Miss Boudin had passed the age where such antics could be written off to youthful idealism. When last seen in 1970, she was naked, running from a Greenwich Village townhouse where she and her co-idealists had been making bombs. Instead of destroying our rotten society, they managed only to blow up the house. Three others died. Miss Boudin fled.

It now transpires that the Weather Underground has merged with the cop-killing Black Liberation Army. It further transpires that Miss Boudin's recent roommate has been an investigative reporter of some renown, Rita Jensen. Miss Jensen has written extensively on the Black Liberation Army. She also swears up and down that she hadn't the foggiest idea that her roommate, "Lynn Adams," was really Kathy Boudin.

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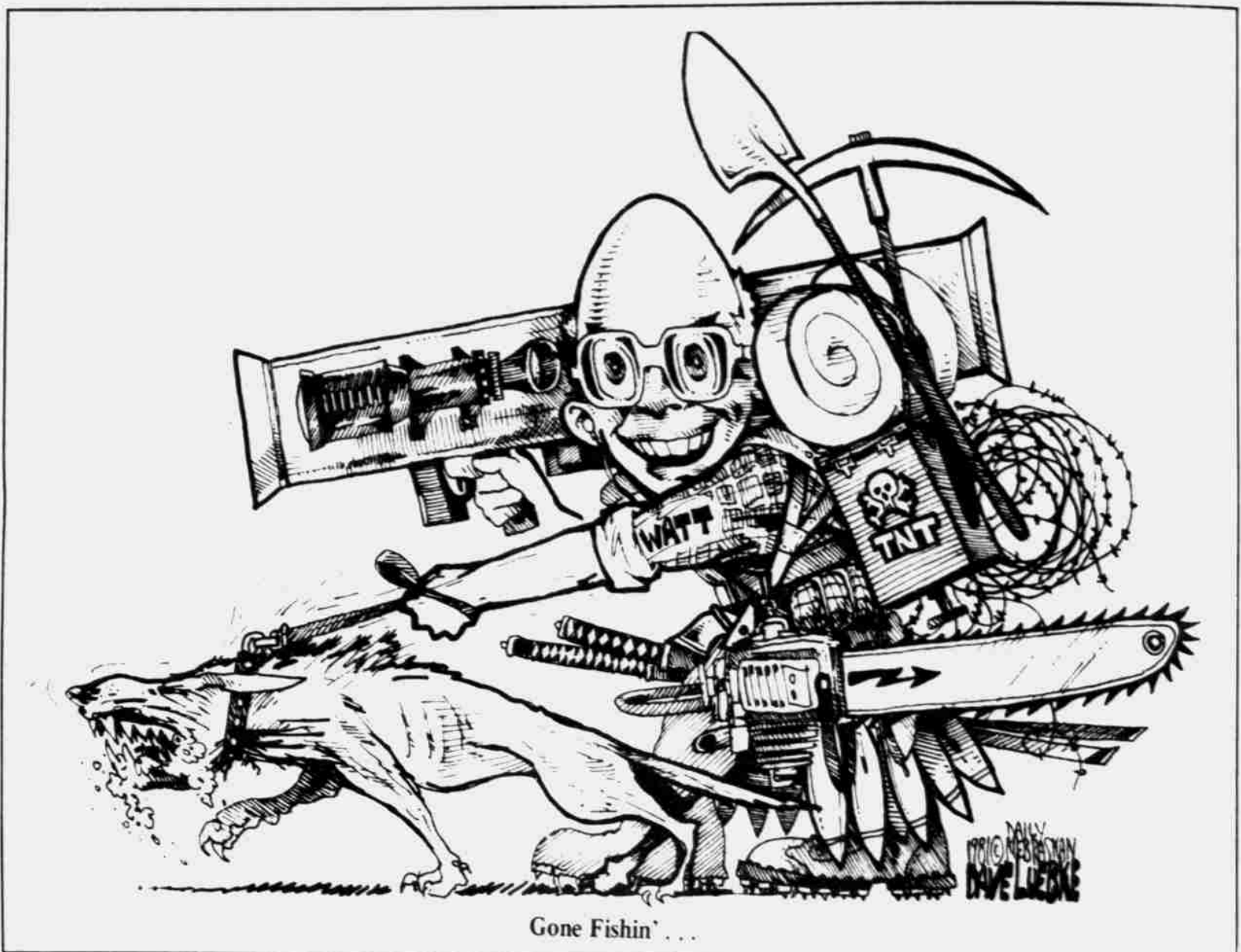
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Gone Fishin' . . .

## Supply-side theory hits Santa's shop

(The scene: Santa's workshop. It is the day after Halloween, and Santa has called the troops in for a little meeting.)

After a roll call and short review of the minutes of the last meeting, Santa takes the stand. "As you know," he says, "the Christmas Rush begins today. For most people, that means decorating trees, stumbling around shopping malls with hands full of slowly ripping bags, and digging out the Perry Como albums. But for us, it means work and sweat, beginning with the difficult determination of who has been good and who has been bad, and carrying right through to delivery in December."

pat clark

There wasn't much consternation among the elves. They'd heard this little pep talk before. But this time, Santa cleared his throat a little and continued.

"Due to recent budgetary restraints, we will be undergoing a few changes this year," Santa says. "We call it supply-side Christmas shopping. The first thing we do is determine who needs Christmas presents the most."

"Then we give them what they need and we're done, right?" asks the foreman of one of the elvin crews, a chunky, cigar-chomping individual named Frank.

"Nope," Santa says. "We decide who needs it the most, and eliminate them from the list."

"Who do we give presents to then?" says Frank. "Anybody who doesn't need it," says Santa. "I know, you are confused by this system, and frankly I am too,

but we have to mandate to do things this way this year. It's out of my hands."

"Okay, so what are we going to give these people who don't need anything?" asks Frank. "We've got a backlog of toys and stuff like that already, but I suppose they won't be interested in anything like that."

"They want weapons," says Santa. "Nuclear submarines, AWACS planes, MX missiles . . ."

"What are they going to do with them?" says Frank. "What's it to us?" says Santa. "We just give it away, we don't tell them what to do with it."

"But isn't construction of weapons contrary to our image?" says Frank. "I mean, I've seen *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* every year on television, and I don't think we can sing happy-go-lucky songs about MX missiles."

"You don't understand," says Santa. "These missiles and planes are to preserve world peace."

"How are they going to do that?" says Frank.

"It's obvious," says Santa. "See, we make AWACS planes for Saudi Arabia. Then, to keep things balanced, we make weapons for Israel. And since Israel is a bigger threat now in the absence of Anwar Sadat, the rest of the Middle East will need arms, too. Then the United States will feel as though the Soviets have a dominating position in the Middle East, we then will base missiles in Europe, so we make those."

"Then we make weapons for Cuba to give to nations in Central America, to counterbalance the growing American tactical weapon presence in Europe. So anyway, we build all of these weapons, and everybody gets some. I haven't got the vaguest idea how that is going to make the world more peaceful, but that's what everybody tells me is going to happen. If I understood it, I wouldn't have set up shop on the North Pole."