

NATION & WORLD

As surplus grows, Clinton pushes drug deal

The surplus is now projected at \$1.87 trillion; the president wants to trade tax cuts for his drug plan.

By Alan Fram Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Clinton Monday projected an astronomical \$1.87 trillion budget surplus for the next decade and asked Republicans to use part of it to swap prescription-drugs benefits for a tax cut.

growth and the resulting piles of federal revenue let Clinton more than double that figure — all without counting Social Security's own huge surpluses.

It is the non-Social Security part of the surplus that politicians feel free to use for spending or tax cuts. Clinton proposed using the extra money to eliminate the publicly held national debt faster, to augment his proposal to add prescription-drug coverage to Medicare, and to create a \$500 billion kitty for bolstering peoples' retirement plans, new tax cuts or any other purpose.

Clinton said he telephoned congressional GOP leaders and asked them to agree to his new 10-year, \$253 billion prescription-drug

plan and consent to using Medicare's surpluses only for debt reduction. In exchange, he said he would accept a reduction in the so-called marriage penalty similar to the 10-year, \$248 billion version the Senate Finance Committee has approved.

"These are goals that both parties and all Americans agree on," Clinton said in Rose Garden remarks. "It would be wrong to let politics keep us from seizing the opportunity to achieve them."

Eliminating the marriage penalty, the extra taxes many two-income couples pay over what they would pay if they were single, has been a top GOP priority this year.

Even so, the popular appeal of

prescription drugs outweighs that of tax cuts. And many Republicans were reluctant to participate in negotiations that Clinton could define as pitting his desire for drug benefits against their drive for a tax cut.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., pointedly said lawmakers would use "the regular order" — the normal legislative process and not high-level talks — for marriage penalty and prescription-drug bills.

He said Clinton's new prescription proposal could be so costly "that it will ultimately bring down the entire Medicare system," adding that he hopes the president "resists the temptation to politicize this issue."

NATION BRIEFS

Cheese & crackers — Kraft parent gobbles up Nabisco

NEW YORK AP — A little over a year after getting out of the cigarette business, the nation's No. 1 cookie and cracker maker is back with Big Tobacco.

Philip Morris Companies Inc., the world's largest tobacco company and parent of Kraft Foods, said Sunday it has reached an agreement to purchase Nabisco Holdings Corp. for \$14.9 billion plus the assumption of \$4 billion in debt.

Philip Morris Chairman and Chief Executive Geoffrey C. Bible said in a statement that the purchase at \$55 a share will greatly expand the company's food offerings.

"The combination of Kraft and Nabisco will create the most dynamic company in the food industry, both in terms of absolute earnings levels and revenue and earnings growth rates."

Kraft and Nabisco together produced revenue of \$34.9 billion last year, Philip Morris said. The combined food company is expected to be second in the world only to Nestle of Switzerland, which has annual sales in excess of \$35 billion.

The purchase comes as Philip Morris' domestic tobacco business is facing potentially huge punitive damages in the tens of billions of dollars judgment in a class-action suit in Florida.

Smokers' attorney Stanley Rosenblatt said before court convened Monday that the purchase shows the tobacco companies are "loaded with money."

But Bible said in an interview that the parent company's purchase of Nabisco and the tobacco litigation against the tobacco unit are separate issues.

"I don't think it is at all relevant because the suit down there is with our domestic cigarette company, and that's what they (the Florida jurors) have to focus on in their deliberations," he said.

Elián's case reaches Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elián González's Miami relatives asked the Supreme Court Monday to block the little boy's return to Cuba. Unless the nation's highest court says otherwise, Elián and his father may leave the United States as early as Wednesday.

A federal appeals court unanimously rejected the Miami relatives' request for a rehearing Friday and said emphatically it would not take up the case again.

The appeals court said its earlier order requiring Elián's father, Juan Miguel González, to keep the 6-year-old boy in this country will dissolve at 4 p.m. Wednesday.

Lawyers for the Miami relatives filed a formal appeal with the full Supreme Court, and asked Justice Anthony M. Kennedy to keep Elián in the United States until that formal appeal is acted on.

Kennedy handles emergency matters from Florida for the high court. A few weeks' delay in the legal fight over the boy "is a minimal cost in a case with stakes of such magnitude," Kennedy was told.

The formal appeal filed Monday said the case's legal issues "boil down to a single straightforward question: Can the INS deprive an alien child of his statutory and constitutional right to apply for asylum without conducting any hearing of any kind — or even without interviewing the child himself?"

The appeal said the INS decision in Elián's case violated his due-process rights.

New surgery may help avoid hysterectomies

In tests, the new procedure solved women's problems safely without harming their fertility.

By Emma Ross Associated Press

BOLOGNA, Italy — A Dutch doctor has developed a new method of uterine surgery that early tests indicate is safer and simpler than the current one and could avoid thousands of hysterectomies.

The method commonly used to cut out non-cancerous growths, resectoscopy, carries the risk of dangerous side effects, including swelling of the brain and death. Concern over the complications

prompts many doctors to remove the whole uterus.

The new technique, which cuts tissue with a rotating blade encased in a wand, then sucks it up a tube, has been tested on 30 women and safely and easily solved their problems while leaving their fertility intact.

The method was presented Monday at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology.

Its developer, Dr. Mark Emanuel from Spaarne Hospital in Haarlem, the Netherlands, said the technique would help women whose growths — fibroids or polyps — are on the inside surface of the womb in a place that is accessible to an instrument

inserted through the cervix.

That would amount to about 25 percent of women with fibroids, the more common type of growth. Polyps are classed together with other menstrual problems, so the population of women that could be helped was not immediately available.

Fibroids are formed from cells in the uterine muscle, while polyps are made of cells from the lining. They can cause debilitating symptoms, including heavy bleeding and painful cramps, miscarriage and other fertility problems.

Approximately 670,000 hysterectomies are performed each year in the United States, about a third for fibroids.

"Many of my colleagues fear the

resectoscopy. They think it's too difficult," Emanuel said of the technique, which uses a wire loop electrode to cut out the growths.

At least two other alternatives have been developed, but they are either too slow or vaporize the growths, leaving no tissue to examine. And they both use electric currents, which could go through the wall of the uterus and damage organs such as the bladder, said Elizabeth Stewart, the clinical director of the Center for Uterine Fibroids at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

"This sounds like a new option. We'd like to get faster and easier treatment with these (growths)," said Stewart, who was not connected with the Dutch work.

expressed on the pages of The Daily Iowan. The DI welcomes guest opinions; submissions should be typed and signed, and should not exceed 600 words in length. A brief biography should accompany all submissions. The Daily Iowan reserves the right to edit for length, style and clarity.



At the pump

Above all, take a minute to evaluate your own habits. Remind yourself that these solutions are things we were supposed to be thinking about in the first place and try to implement them on a long-term basis. Gas conservation is important every day, not just when prices are high. We need to change our habits permanently to use gasoline efficiently, not turn to temporary solutions like suspending the gas tax to deal with this "crisis."

Ellen Schwarzkopf is a DI columnist.

LETTERS to the editor must be signed and must include the writer's address and phone number for verification. Letters should not exceed 300 words. The Daily Iowan reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. The Daily Iowan will publish only one letter per author per month, and letters will be chosen for publication by the editors according to space considerations. Letters can be sent to The Daily Iowan at 201N Communications Center or via e-mail to daily-iowan@uiowa.edu.

Strikes again

likes to boast that he flunked criminal law in law school.

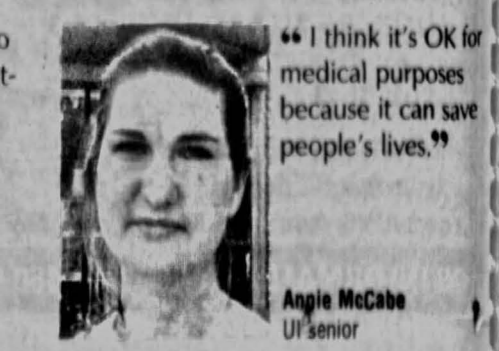
His Shrubness likes to say that he's 100 percent sure that no innocent man has been executed by Texas. In the case of the recently deceased Graham, that certainty would seem to be misplaced, to put the most polite spin on it.

The Shrub's Texas constituents don't seem to share their governor's belief. In a recent poll, 57 percent said they thought Texas had probably executed an innocent man at some point. That didn't deter their enthusiasm for the death penalty, however — 77 percent approve of it.

There are roughly 19 weeks until the November elections, and there are 14 more Texas inmates scheduled to die between now and then. So we'll have plenty of opportunities to see the wonderful Texas criminal justice system in action.

It should be an interesting summer and fall. Interesting and deadly.

Beau Elliot is a DI columnist.



"I think it's OK for medical purposes because it can save people's lives."

Angie McCabe UI senior

RISE and SHINE The Daily Break

Table with TV listings for Tuesday Prime Time, including channels like Home Antenna, Cable Channels, and Premium Channels with program names and times.

For complete TV listings and program guides, check out Arts and Entertainment at www.dailyiowan.com.

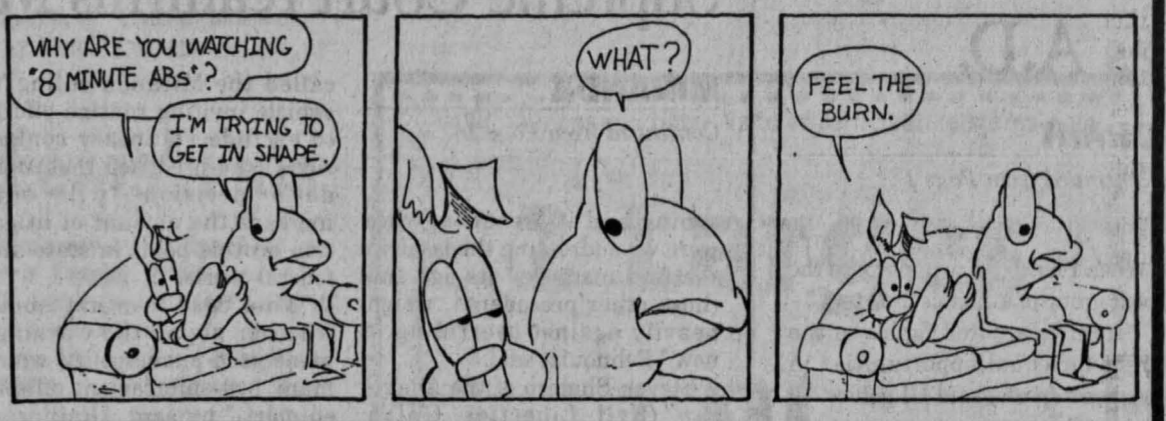
Doonesbury Flashbacks

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



DILBERT

by Scott Adams



Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 0519

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE section with a grid and corresponding words.

The Daily Iowan

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