



Rollin' On



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CHRISTMAS WINNERS AND LOSERS, & A LITTLE MORE

As the year winds down, let's take a look at who is winning and losing during this holiday season.

Christmas Comes Early

The big winner of course is George W. He emerges as the winner in the silver spoon election and will soon stroll into the White House without winning the popular vote. And he probably didn't win Florida either, which means there's this little problem about not winning the electoral college vote. Florida has a sunshine law that makes the ballots available to the public, and the news organizations are already taking steps to count those ballots.

Still, Gore has only himself and his advisors to blame. His tactic of wanting a recount in only a few counties did not smell right. Also, he couldn't even win his own state. It was a poor campaign, and should never have come down to Florida's messy voting situation in the first place.

Who the real winner was, in the longer term, is not known. But when viewed in neutral terms, there was a substantial likelihood, before George W. was declared the winner, that whoever won the White House would lose the mid-term elections in two years, meaning that both houses would go to the losing side. That's why a lot of die-hard Demos wanted Gore to concede earlier. For his part, Gore had a conflict of interest, since this could be his best shot at the big prize, as many Demos don't want him around for the next election.

Kaiser Aluminum is also cashing in bigtime before, during and after the holidays. In 1995 Kaiser struck a deal with BPA to acquire its electricity at

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\$22.40 per megawatt hour. Now Kaiser is closing its plant for 10 months, and is selling this juice back to BPA, first at \$500 per hour, now at about \$280 per hour, for a net gain of over \$50 million smackers. The irony

**WISHING YOU A
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR,
AND MAY YOUR
TRANSPORTATION
TRAUMAS BE TRIVIAL.**
**Larry Davidson, Author,
Editor and Publisher of
Rollin' On,
Distributed to the
Transportation Community
Since Jan. 1995
(deregulation by Congress
of the states and
by me of myself)**

is that the cheap rate was to encourage employment. True, Kaiser is still paying some substantial benefits to its employees, but from a taxpayer's point of view, none of this makes any sense.

We also have losers. For taxpayers, see the Kaiser story above.

Also, Wall Street investors. Before the election fuss was settled, the idea was that a Republican victory would push the market up. Well, the good news is that the market, which has dropped all week, did not drop as much as it would have otherwise (so

the theory goes). There will be more carnage before it's over.

Probably the biggest loser is the U.S. Supreme Court, as Justice Stevens said in his dissent. The court, which has been a states' rights type of court, went out of its way this time to shut down the state of Florida, even stopping a substantially completed vote count on a weekend. These guys and galls always sit for months before taking action. They take off summers, and their normal day is not exactly at a frenetic pace. Yet, 5 out of 9 saw fit to freeze the counting. To be sure, there is some logic to the freeze, for had the count gone to Gore, they would be in an awkward position. So Bush became the pres. on a combined 8 to 8 (hand count vote (4-3 Fla and 5-4 US)).

A huge irony is that Justice Clarence Thomas, of Paul Hill fame, was in the group of five. His vote disenfranchised many of the black voters in Florida. It will be hard for him to live down his moniker Clarence "Uncle Tom" Thomas, not that he cares.

I personally had a good year, including a major win in a case of nationwide importance (it made the Wall Street Journal and an industry nationwide newspaper, but not The Oregonian), involving the impact of a federal transportation law on local governments.

Loss of Loved Ones

So it's that time of year to gather with family and friends and to reflect on the year. My wife lost both of her wonderful parents within a two month span this summer, which means our daughter has lost three grandparents in about a year's time. It's a time to grow closer to those you love and to remember those you've lost, knowing that they will always be with you.

Short Bio

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