

# THE MEAGER REMAINS OF CALIFORNIA POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

By ED SALZMAN

Back in the early 1960s, Jesse Unruh employed a one-word slogan in his Assembly re-election campaign — "leadership." No one questioned whether the powerful and skillful speaker of the Assembly was entitled to remind his constituents that he was at that time preeminent among California political potentates. As state treasurer, the Unruh figure can still be located on the California political landscape, but hardly in the foreground.

Unruh is far from alone. Try to list those California politicians today who can be rated as genuine leaders — those who are willing and able to march ahead of the crowd and pull the reluctant in a given direction. There are so few that they could literally meet in a telephone booth. Jerry Brown is a follower of the mood of the masses, not a trailblazer like an Earl Warren. None of the other statewide constitutional officers is creating the kind of impact required to make the list. There is no strong leadership in the state Senate. Any Assembly Speaker — Leo McCarthy, Howard Berman or someone else — belongs on the list. A speaker must have political acumen, a willingness to take the lead in the establishment of long-range public policy and, on occasion, must employ the might of the office. A weak Assembly speaker — even one who commits a single major error — would be deposed in short order. None of the mayors of the major cities have become significant forces in statewide politics.

The congressional delegation produces the second leader: Senator Alan Cranston, who holds the office of Democratic whip and is generally considered the state's prime spokesman in the nation's capital. Cranston has long been a force in California politics. He founded the once-potent California Democratic Council and was considered a leader of the liberal wing of the Democratic party. He has built his present standing by moving to the center somewhat and by trying to serve all of the state's economic interests in Washington.

## The political game

California politics has undergone a dramatic change in the past 15 years. The political game is not nearly as rough in Sacramento today as it was before Unruh started making major reforms that produced a far more democratic Legislature. At the time Unruh was running the Assembly, the Senate had its share of leaders, among them George Miller, J. Eugene McAteer, Hugh Burns and Randolph Collier. Miller and McAteer, who didn't like each other, both died at the height of their careers. Burns was deposed as head of the Senate in 1969, and one-time transportation boss Collier didn't survive the democratization process. The current titular head of the Senate, James Mills, was elected president pro tempore only after he promised to be a peacemaker among rival factions in the Upper House. The result has been a rulerless Senate for about a decade. And there is no evidence that strong leadership will soon develop in the Senate.

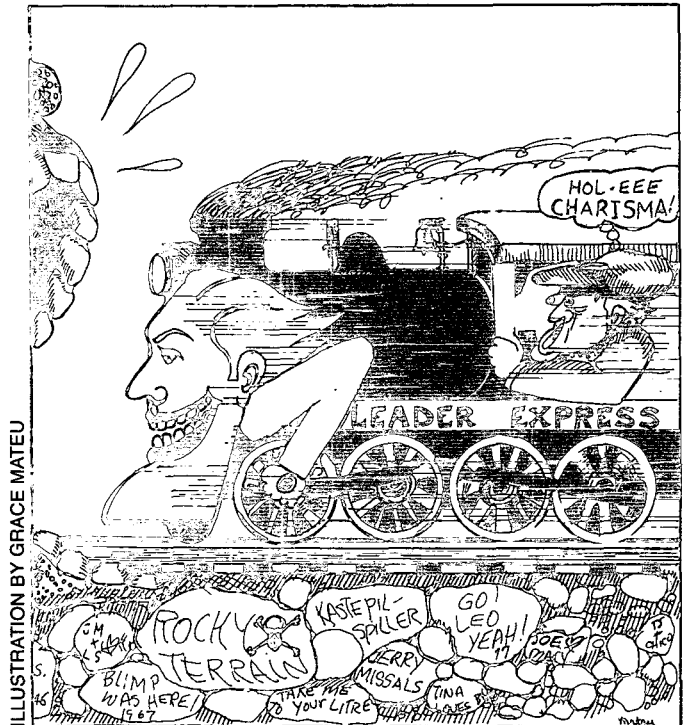


ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE MATEU

It appears that weak leadership may be the price of democracy, at least in the Legislature. As Senate Finance Committee chairman, the late George Miller Jr. (father of the present congressman) used to declare at public hearings: "Show me in the rule book where it says I got to be fair." No committee chairman with half a brain would utter that statement today. In the Miller era, committee votes were taken by voice and rarely recorded. Committees used to have secret meetings and decide how to dispose of bills. Decisions were often made by lawmakers and lobbyists in the Sacramento saloons.

Legislators today are unwilling to delegate power to a few leaders in either house. It is more difficult for a lawmaker to grab power either by being a bully or through wheeler-dealer operations. The rising stars in the Assembly, Howard Berman and Art Torres, for example, have displayed ability to march ahead of the crowd when dealing with politically delicate issues. (Berman was viewed as McCarthy's probable successor even before his recent move, and Torres is a likely statewide candidate in 1982 for an office yet to be selected.)

But the democratization of the Legislature doesn't explain the overall demise of political leadership in California (and in the nation as well). Several other major forces have been at work in the past 15 years. Among them:

- **The rise in the importance of charisma.** Nowadays,

the ability of a candidate to provide leadership is not nearly as important as his or her mediagenic qualities. In sizing up a candidate, the image makers don't ask whether the politician has a grasp of issues or can persuade colleagues. The key questions today are whether a candidate looks good on television, can raise enough money for a strong media campaign and has sufficient name identification.

• **The low public rating of government and politicians.** Even before Watergate, politicians were not held in particularly high esteem by the masses. It is doubtful that a politician these days would consider it an asset to be called a powerful leader, à la Unruh in the early 1960s. Voters today seem to want followers rather than leaders. At least that's the perception of Jerry Brown, who has engaged in rhetorical sleight of hand to describe his view of political leadership. "To be a leader," Brown has said, "you have to be at one with the people you lead." In other words, Brown would rate as a leader the politician who jumps into the center of the clamoring throng.

Brown has been heavily criticized in California for his failure to produce long-range programs for the state. He has also been under attack for his fast footwork in changing positions on issues, notably the tax revolt epitomized by the Jarvis-Gann initiative. Ironically, some of Brown's Eastern critics have praised him for having a vision of the future, something they find lacking in other candidates for the presidency. Not many years ago, a politician was not punished for desiring to seek higher office. Now, political aspiration is often viewed as opportunism, as is apparently the case with Brown. Every time the governor starts running for president, his stock in the California polls drops significantly.

Leadership, almost by definition, requires the taking of political risks. Today, that can be extremely dangerous, and politicians exercise great caution in protecting their backsides. The prevailing view is that a politician can only survive by following the public, not leading it.

• **The growing importance of the polls.** This is the era of instant public opinion. Only a few days after an issue enters the spotlight, the pollsters are out with their statistics on how various elements of the public feel on that issue. Politicians watch polls very closely and most often act in accord with the majority.

• **The politicians' fear of single-issue constituencies.** In some areas, officeholders and candidates fear reprisals from powerful special interests. Some legislators in Sacramento, for example, shunt aside their personal feelings and the polls on an issue like handgun control because the pro-gun forces are so well organized.

• **Politicians must produce today, not tomorrow.** The media don't give politicians time to orchestrate long-term campaigns to bring about changes in public policies and institutions. This is the era of the "now generation" and the media demand instant victories (and defeats). This runs directly counter to two prime qualities of leadership: tenacity and endurance.

• **Politicians of today are clinicians, not philosophers.** As speaker of the Assembly, Jesse Unruh tried both to solve the pressing problems of the day and to develop long-range programs for the state. Now, there are few politicians on the scene with the time or the inclination to build something for future generations. They must deal with the demands of the current crop of voters, and for most officeholders that seems like more than enough work.

#### The outsiders' handicap

There is also some evidence that Californians prefer to obtain their political leaders from outside the realm of government. In fact, Ronald Reagan based his first gubernatorial campaign on the theme that he was a non-politician. Over the past 20 years, in fact, there have been quite a few successful

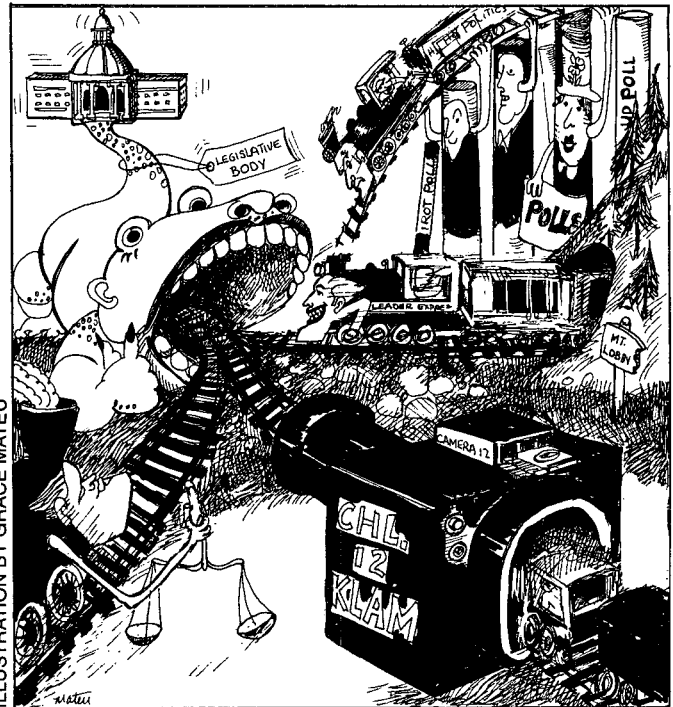


ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE MATEU

Republicans who have come into politics from outside, among them Mike Curb, S. I. Hayakawa and George Murphy. The public's heroes these days are anti-politicians like Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann. It is quite difficult for a non-politician to become a successful leader because there is built-in resentment against the outsider from the bulk of politicians. Jerry Brown has run into trouble with the Legislature in part because he jumped over a generation of Democratic politicians and in part because he cast himself in the role of anti-politician unwilling to play by the regular rules of the game. This attitude has hurt him in his effort to gain organizational support across the country for his presidential candidacy.

At the national level, it appears that the voters want a strong leader in the White House. That is one reason why Senator Edward Kennedy did so well in the early opinion polls. The Kennedy name implies leadership ability, although that image was developed primarily through the mediagenic qualities of the Kennedy family. In California, there appears to be no such search for strong leadership. The political parties have been especially weak in the state and the main emphasis in recent years has been on television-acting ability and computer-mailing techniques.

Whether Californians want them or not, leaders are bound to develop. Some jobs, like governor and speaker, carry so much power that the offices can virtually create a leader. Yet, it is almost impossible to predict who will emerge as the state's new leaders in the 1980s. McCarthy was a relatively obscure assemblyman when he won an upset election to become speaker. Cranston was also in political obscurity a dozen years ago, having been defeated in a run for re-election as state controller in 1966. But he rebounded to win a Senate seat and then displayed remarkable legislative skill to become one of the top Democrats in Washington. Nevertheless, there are some politicians who are within reasonable reach of leadership status. In fact, a couple of them might be considered leaders already, depending upon definition.

• **Statewide officials.** Unruh, State Controller Ken Cory and Secretary of State March Fong Eu are all being mentioned as possible Democratic candidates for governor. Cory or Unruh could be strong leaders. Among Republicans, both Lieutenant Governor Mike Curb and Attorney General George Deukmejian must be considered potential gubernato-

rial candidates. Deukmejian would probably be the stronger leader, primarily because he knows a great deal more than Curb about state government.

• **Judiciary.** California has had some extremely influential chief justices, including Phil Gibson and Roger Traynor. The current chief justice, Rose Elizabeth Bird, has been so controversial that she has been unable to lead. As a Brown Administration agency secretary, she was a powerhouse leader who ran her departments with an iron hand. She has not done nearly as well in a collegial environment. But Bird is tenacious and holds strong beliefs. In time, with a reduction in conflict and controversy, she could bring about major changes in the California judiciary.


• **Congressional delegation.** Democrat Phil Burton has been grasping for a top leadership post in the House of Representatives for years. He is expected to try again when the speakership becomes vacant. Burton is a humorless workaholic who is determined to become a king among the political animals. Others in the House delegation who have shown leadership inclinations or a desire to seek statewide office include Democrats Norman Mineta, Leon Panetta and Henry Waxman, and Republicans Pete McCloskey, Robert Dornan, Barry Goldwater Jr. and John Rousselot. Over the years, however, the delegation has not been potent in Washington and there is no reason to believe that the nation's largest delegation will change its stripes in the 1980s.

• **Senate.** Republican leader Bill Campbell is talking about running for governor in 1982, and GOP caucus chairman Ken Macdy also plans to run for statewide office (possibly United States senator in 1982). Ultra-conservative Republi-

can Bill Richardson has built his own organization of gun owners but does not have a large following in the Senate. President pro Tempore Mills has talked about running for statewide office, but he is more likely to take a federal transportation post.

• **Assembly.** It is especially difficult to forecast which of the 80 members of the lower house will rise to prominence. A year ago, who would have picked Carol Hallett and Charles Imbrecht to become the Republican top guns? Crowns are so shaky in the Assembly that there is no guarantee that either of them would be a party leader should the GOP capture control of the Assembly and thus the speakership. Who would have guessed that Berman would have made an attempt to topple McCarthy in 1980 — two years before McCarthy planned to step down for a run at governor or United States senator? (An argument could be made that Berman had achieved full leadership status even before he announced that he was seeking election as speaker.) Other Democrats who are awaiting opportunities to move ahead of the pack include Mel Levine, Torres, Willie Brown and Dennis Mangers.

• **Mayors.** At least two mayors of major cities could become major factors in the gubernatorial election of 1982 — Republican Pete Wilson of San Diego and Democrat Tom Bradley of Los Angeles.

More than ever, the successful politicians of the 1980s will have to know how to develop name identification, raise funds, and sell themselves on the television screens. If they happen to have the qualities of leadership, that will be strictly coincidental. 

## News-makers

### The Berman challenge

On December 11th, Assembly Speaker **Leo McCarthy** was dealt a severe blow by one of his top lieutenants, majority leader **Howard Berman**. At a news conference, Berman announced that he would challenge McCarthy for the speakership when the Legislature convenes on January 7th. Berman said McCarthy had angered many Assembly Democrats by concentrating on the collection of funds for a 1982 statewide race, instead of helping lower house members win reelection.

That same day, voters of San Francisco elected **Dianne Feinstein** to a four-year term as mayor over Supervisor **Quentin Kopp**. The vote was 102,233 to 87,226. Feinstein was one of the city's few incumbents to come out on top. The voters threw out of office District Attorney **Joseph Freitas**, Sheriff **Eugene Brown** and four supervisors.

Former United States appeals judge **Shirley M. Hufstедler** of Los Angeles was sworn into office as the first federal secretary of education. She is considered a hot prospect for future appointment to the U. S. Su-

preme Court . . . Three high-ranking officials of the Reagan-for-president organization have resigned, primarily because of differences with campaign chief **John Sears**. Gone are **Lyn Nofziger**, **Michael Deaver** and **Martin Anderson** . . . Several Republican financial angels tried to lure tax-revolt leader **Paul Gann** into the GOP primary for the Senate seat held by Democrat Alan Cranston.

Former Assemblyman **Tom Suitt** has agreed to pay a \$2,500 penalty for failing to disclose use of a legislative employee in his 1976 re-election campaign . . . Former Lieutenant Governor **Mervyn Dymally** may run in the Democratic primary next June against Congressman **Charles Wilson**. Former Congressman **Mark Hannaford** had previously indicated he would challenge Wilson . . . Former Assemblyman **Mike Antonovich** announced he would run against Supervisor **Baxter Ward** of Los Angeles.

The state Fair Political Practices Commission issued complaints against **Dugald Gillies** and **Jack Shelby**, lobbyists for the California

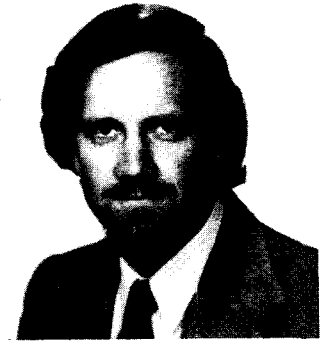
Association of Realtors, for failing to file monthly spending reports on time . . . The Orange County Board of Supervisors hired **Bob St. Clair**, former professional football player, as the county's advocate in Sacramento . . . Federal prosecutor **Herman Sillas** announced that he has concluded an investigation of former state Senator **Alfred Song** and that no charges will be filed . . . Republican Assemblyman **Richard Hayden** of Sunnyvale announced he would not seek reelection or any other office this year.

The Senate Rules Committee selected Democrat **Bob Wilson** of San Diego as the new chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee . . . **Gerald Hayward**, former consultant to the Senate Education Committee, was named chancellor of the California Community Colleges . . . Superior Court Judge **Thomas Kongsgaard** of Napa has been elected acting chairman of the state Commission on Judicial Performance . . . President Carter nominated **Stephen E. Reinhardt**, of Los Angeles, a prominent Democratic Party figure, to a seat on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.



## STRICTLY OPINION

With this column, the **Journal** provides a forum for those wishing to express opinions on California political issues. Inquiries about future columns are encouraged.



# The Duke Strikes Again

By **JIM TUCKER**

The Office of the Attorney General announced that a successful raid personally spearheaded by Attorney General George "Duke" Deukmejian had been staged at sunset today, netting the infamous Capitol "Cat Lady." The "Cat Lady" is alleged to have, for a number of years, been feeding stray cats on a daily basis in Capitol Park in violation of a park ordinance.

The "Duke" personally sat at the controls of the lead helicopter which purportedly swooped down on the unsuspecting "Cat Lady" as she was in the act of feeding a number of allegedly stray cats. Deukmejian was wearing a catnip-scented flack jacket and carried cans of sardines so as not to scare off the cats who were taken into custody as material witnesses.

Accompanying the attorney general were two armored support helicopters as well as sharpshooters stationed on the tops of nearby state buildings. Helicopters from all the major television networks also whirled above the action on the ground. They were present to record this momentous event at the personal invitation of Deukmejian.

The raid had additional support from seven plainclothes investigators from the attorney general's staff who were disguised as various types of trees. Investigator Robert Sikowski, chief of the up-to-now secret "Tree Unit," told reporters after the raid, "This was a particularly tough assignment and called for highly specialized work on the part of our technical staff. As you know, the Capitol Park is known for its great variety of trees. This meant that

in order to avoid suspicion we could not all disguise ourselves as redwoods. Some were maples, some eucalyptus and the toughest was the giant cactus." When asked what was the most difficult part of this six-month surveillance, Sikowski quickly replied, "The dogs."

The "Tree Unit" is thought to be the first of its kind in the nation and was the result of an \$850,000 grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA).

The only incident in the raid occurred when two cats lunged at the "Duke," apparently attempting to get some sardines. They were arrested for assaulting a state official.

At a wide-ranging news conference held at the scene of the arrest, Deukmejian indicated that this was the beginning of a program to insure "Peace in Our Parks" and that similar surveillance by the ultra-modern "Tree Unit" would be conducted throughout the state. "This should stand as a clear message to those who want to abuse our parks that they can no longer act with impunity," Deukmejian said. Attacking the permissiveness of state government, the attorney general noted that officials had permitted this kind of activity to go on literally in the shadow of the state Capitol: "You can't have 10 cats being fed daily in the park without someone knowing it." When asked if he was referring to the governor, who is known to jog by the area of the arrest, Deukmejian responded, "I'll let you draw your own conclusions."

With the setting sun blazing a bright red in the background, the "Duke" hinted that the "Cat Lady" raid may be more than just a drive to clean up the parks. "Our new organized crime unit has turned up evidence of a significant influx of Mafia money into the California cat food industry. Recent raids of several lawyers' offices, including a

well-known entertainment law firm that represents Morris the Cat, have provided evidence that the Mafia may be using unsuspecting cats as drug 'couriers.' We think it's highly suspect that a person would feed a stray cat without some other motive." Asked what he meant by "other motive," Deukmejian stated that because of ongoing investigations he couldn't comment further.

However, he was willing to comment on another familiar theme: "We would have cracked this case much earlier if the Legislature had not tied our hands by failing to pass our tree-bugging bill. For years I have attempted, both as a senator and as the attorney general, to obtain passage of a tree-bugging bill which would have permitted the placing of small, unobtrusive listening devices in state-owned trees. However, bleeding heart liberals in the Assembly Criminal Justice Committee have chosen to side with the criminals rather than the honest, law-abiding people who wouldn't be caught dead in a park anyway, and the committee has consistently killed my bills. With this legislation we could have avoided the expense, and of course the dog problem, of a Tree Unit," the general added.

Deukmejian further assailed the Legislature for failing to pass his much-publicized "use a tuna, go to jail" bill which would have provided a mandatory sentence for anyone convicted of feeding an animal not his or her own. This kind of "tough legislation" is needed, he said, to "break the Mafia-cat food connection in California."

Paraphrasing President John Kennedy, Deukmejian stated, "We will pay any price to stop crime." When asked if he was advocating an abrogation of the Constitution, the "Duke" replied, "I'm sure the founding fathers never intended that the Bill of Rights should apply to common criminals."

*Jim Tucker, a legislative advocate for the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, found his inspiration in press reports of Attorney General Deukmejian's recent raids on marijuana fields in Northern California.*



Ten-year report from the publisher . . .

# *The tale of the founding. fall and rise of the Journal*

By THOMAS R. HOEBER

**T**he premature heat of June 1971 in Sacramento was no: conducive to clear thinking. Nor was the fact that we were \$65,000 in debt and had run out of ways to persuade the printer to publish yet another issue of the *California Journal* on credit. It was easier to think back to the euphoria of the first few months.

In the fall of 1969, I decided to leave the legislative staff where I worked for more than four years. Among several alternatives I considered starting a magazine which would be to California what *Congressional Quarterly* was to Washington — an authoritative, nonpartisan journal of record of actions in the political, legislative and administrative arenas of government. Judson Clark, who had left the legislative staff a year before to start a consulting business, was — unbeknownst to me — thinking along similar lines. A mutual friend, Victor H. Fazio, brought us together, and by Thanksgiving 1969 we three decided to start the *California Journal*. (Fazio had the good sense to leave after one year and now serves in Congress.)

We were well qualified to start a publication: Jud's father was a reporter, Vic had run a political campaign or two and I had once been a copyboy and bookstore clerk. Obviously we possessed the journalistic, promotion and business experience necessary for the undertaking. Actually, our best qualification was our ignorance; if we had known then what we knew 18 months later, we would never have started the *Journal*.

December 1969 was a frenzy of budget-writing, discussions with printers, office-hunting and magazine design. A few of those design elements survive to this day, such as our Century typeface, the blue color and the 20-pica column measure, though our overall design, especially of covers, has changed dramatically.

## Covering costs

To be conservative in budget planning, we defined potential markets for the magazine and then projected the most modest circulation figures we could imagine. At the last moment we cut even these figures in half to be extra-safe. Our circulation projection? Ten thousand at the end of the first year. We achieved it, finally, at the end of six years.

The *Journal* was to be capitalized with \$5,000 from each of the founders. Printing costs would be covered by subscription revenue and at least 70 percent of staff salaries would be covered by income from the consulting business called California Research Consultants (since shortened to California Research). When circulation didn't grow as fast

