

Fields of (long) Green. If you're going to be a member of the California Assembly, you need to start acting like one. So, apparently, believes Audie Bock, the Legislature's lone Green Party member. The lawmaker who made a show of riding the train to Sacramento had her Capitol office phones turned off last month for a spell — not to save money, but to allow for the rolling out of new carpeting. Forest green carpeting ordered by the state. Now, it seems the freshman lawmaker is looking to see green someplace other than her floors. This month, Bock scheduled her first Sacramento fund raiser — “A Midsummer Night's Green” — and it was definitely not one of your “pay what you can, bring a can of food for the homeless” kinds of affairs. Slated for the outdoor garden at Sacramento's tony Virga's Restaurant, participants were offered the opportunity to munch on sushi, in tribute to Bock's fluency in Japanese and former life as translator to legendary Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa. The price tag for this little outdoor soiree is strictly high-end — \$1,000 per person.

Wallowing in Paulagate. Whenever a party faces what it perceives as a difficult legislative contest, it is always tempting to go out and find a “name” and, if it's a celebrity name, so much the better. But there's little doubt the GOP establishment 'round Pasadena's way was keeping one would-be celebrity candidate well past arm's length. For the newest member of the field of contenders for the 44th Assembly District is none other than Susan Carpenter-McMillan. Name not ring a bell? Well then, you didn't watch much

CNN during the late 1990s. McMillan was the public spokeswoman for Paula Jones, the Arkansas state employee whose sexual harassment lawsuit against President Bill Clinton made her name (and eventually her nose) a household word. No doubt McMillan will find dealing with such banalities as class size and the width of the 710 a comedown after the national media rush she enjoyed in the Jones case. But the person who is really sweating this latest development is a fellow running for another office in the same general area. U.S. Representative James Rogan (R-Glen-dale) figures to spend a whole lot of time and energy next year trying to make people forget about his central role in the presidential impeachment saga. The last thing he needs is someone out there picking the scabs of the Clinton scandals.

Bucking the trend. You'd think the last thing someone like U.S. Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-Santa Ana) would want to do is put herself crosswise with the leadership of her party. Sanchez, after all, sits in a swing district and will always be in GOP crosshairs after her controversial win over then-U.S. Representative Bob (“B-1 Crazy Dude”) Dornan in 1996. Yet, Sanchez decided last week to nibble the hand that feeds her by endorsing the primary challenger to a 10-term incumbent Democrat. Sanchez told the *Orange County Register* she plans to endorse and give assistance to Senator Hilda Solis (D-El Monte) in her bid to unseat veteran incumbent Representative Marty Martinez (D-Monterey Park). Sanchez says her decision to back Solis is personal, citing their friendship and Solis' consistent support. But

Animal farm.

When people head for the water, be it a beach or a lake or a babbling brook, they're usually looking for a little peace. But talk about water at the Capitol and the only peace you find is the volatile Chula Vista Democrat, state Senator Steve Peace. At a committee hearing last month to discuss the current state of water sales in California, Peace took the opportunity on several occasions to throw a few jabs at his favorite political punching bag — the massive Metropolitan Water District. In criticizing the giant water wholesaler's behavior during San Diego's effort to buy water from the Imperial Valley — and thus reduce the city's reliance on MWD — Peace repeated the oft-uttered euphemism attached to many veteran public water



officials: water buffaloes. At one point Peace lauded San Diego's move several years ago to revamp its water leadership and throw out its old guard of buffaloes. But all this buffalo bashing eventually prompted one senior member of the herd — Kern County Water District's Tom Clark — to speak up on the water establishment's behalf. Displaying political grace and humor Clark, a 30-year veteran of the water wars and self-avowed “member of the Friends of the Water Buffalo”, said he took offense to the senator's attacks on “white middle-aged men” like himself and all their hard work. To which the volcanic Peace smiled and replied, “From now on, I will refer to them as water gazelles.” 🏠

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nothing gets under leadership's skin quite like having a member of the club stick a finger in the eye of another member of the club, even if that club member (Martinez) is an, ummm.... underachiever. Sanchez insists she won't face re-criminations because of her stand, and that may be true, given that she has her independent constituencies among women and Latinos. But she may have to do a little bowing and scraping down the road if she expects full support for what promises to be a tough 2000 campaign against anti-bilingual activist Gloria Matta Tuchman.

In the chips. In the category Nautical Terminology, the Jeopardy answer is: "Shakedown Cruise." The correct question: "What do you call a Gray Davis road trip?" According to the governor's latest campaign finance reports, Davis raised an astonishing \$6.1 million during the first six months of 1999 which, last time we checked, was an off-year. A fair portion of this cache of cash was collected at fund raisers conveniently scheduled to coincide with Davis' official gubernatorial functions. The list of contributors reads like a special interest "Who's Who," with only gun manufacturers and tobacco companies conspicuously absent. Many contributors, such as those from the agricultural and insurance communities, wouldn't have given Davis the time of day before. Now that he's governor, however, they're giving him not only the time, but the timepieces. The old standbys haven't deserted him either. The largest single contributor during the period was A. Jerrold Perenchio, owner of the Spanish-language Univision and a contributor to the 1998 Davis campaign (as well as that of GOP rival Dan Lungren). The new campaign reports offer a little insight as to why it's been so difficult to writing any kind of consistent vision out of the new governor. Who's got time for vision when there's all that money to be raised?

Meltdown. When politicians meet with newspaper editorial boards, the custom and practice is to try to make a good impression. These, after all, are major opinion leaders who are in a position to help frame a public official's public image. Apparently, Governor Gray Davis has adopted a novel approach to editorial boards: go postal. Meeting with the *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial board last month, Davis managed to commit three "cardinal sins" of politics. He picked a fight with someone who "buys ink by the barrel" by ridiculing the *Chronicle's* placement of the story about his signing of the assault weapons ban. He then compounded that sin by assailing their coverage of his special-interest fund raising as cheap ... er, shoot. And then there was the *coup de grace*. Davis told the Chron that the California Legislature is obliged to rubber stamp his personal agenda – whatever *that* agenda may be. Exactly what Davis hoped to accomplish with this bit of vituperative venting is a mystery. But we do know he got himself a long round of statewide, nay, even national media ridicule. And he made the already-touchy job of mending fences with his party in the Legislature a whole lot tougher. "Our job is to pass legislation," Burton told the *Associated Press*. "Those people [the Davis administration] can go [perform a physical impossibility upon] themselves, all right?" 🏠

Correction: Due to an editing error, a utility surcharge (*Demanding Cleaner Power*, August 1999) known as the "Competition Transition Charge" was inadvertently attributed to the California Energy Commission. It was in fact imposed by the California Public Utilities Commission.

"If you laid out all our laws end to end, there would be no end."

— Arthur "Bugs" Baer
newspaper columnist

umbrage

Case Study: Horror stories galore

By now, HMO horror stories are common enough that you could make a pretty lively evening of swapping the spooky tales around a campfire. Here's another one to add to a repertoire of frighteningly illogical health care conundrums: The practice of offering free cancer screening to low-income folks — but no hope of follow-up care once the disease is detected.

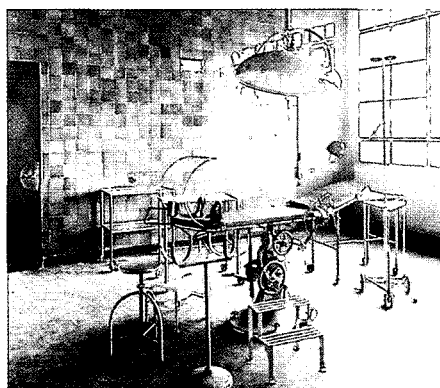
This is what California will face next year unless money is nailed down to extend the life of a fund for women of little means whose breast and cervical cancer is discovered during free screening. Since the early 1990s, federal and state officials have extended the no-cost detection to women with scant or no insurance. But until 1993, when the Breast and Gynecological Cancer Treatment Fund was established, there was no pot from which to cover early treatment. Now the fund is scheduled to run dry by December 2000 — unless, of course, a task force formed to prevent that from happening can find a solution. In the process of pushing two bills in the Legislature (AB 40 and SB 1154) and educating the public and policymakers, the Breast and Gynecological Cancer Treatment Task Force members hope to find benefactors to help resuscitate the fund. Then maybe they can do away with that cruel punchline at the end of the story.

— Cynthia H. Craft

Excerpts: Mary, Mary (not) quite contrary

Pardon us for doing a double take while thumbing through our July/August issue of the California Manufacturers Association magazine. There, in full color, and with a soft-focus filter usually reserved for aging Hollywood sirens, is a photographic portrait and feature-length profile of state Resources Secretary **Mary Nichols**, who, in a more liberal Democratic administration, might be classified as more of a foe than a friend of manufacturers. After all, **Governor Gray Davis'** appointment of Nichols, with her solid environmental pedigree, was heralded by lefties who hoped for a payback-era to compensate for two terms of former Republican **Governor Pete Wilson's** policies. But this is the age of shades of Gray, and while characterizing Nichols as a bedfellow of Big Business would overstate things, she — like her boss — clearly shuns sharp black-and-white ideological divisions for the fuzzy line down the middle between two opposing special interests. It's a tough territory to stake out, as one risks alienating both sides by forging compromises none is entirely happy with, but it's clearly the road most traveled in this administration.

— Cynthia H. Craft



Quotables.....

"The devil had that money long enough. It was about time we got our hands on it."

— The Reverend Lou Sheldon, founder of the Traditional Values Coalition, of \$156,000 that gambling interests paid his son to lobby against new, competing card clubs.