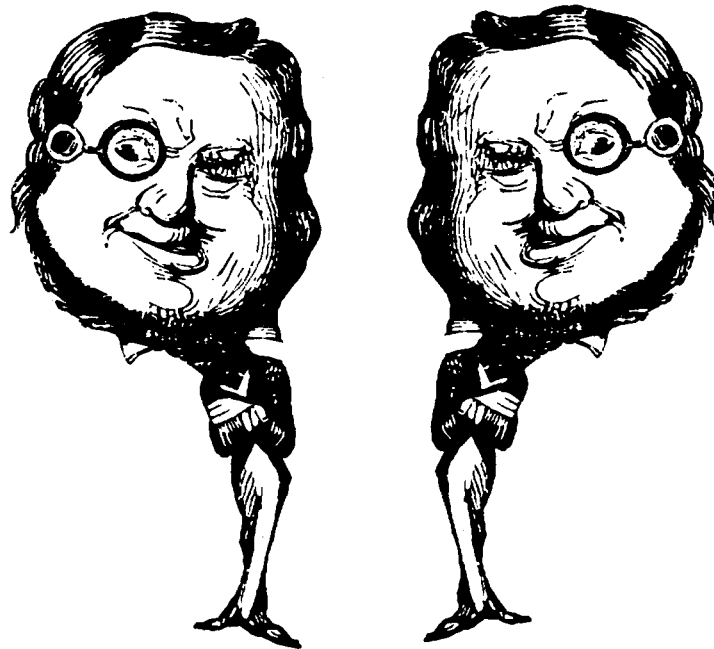


## CAPITOL WATCH



### Jeepers, Speakers

**R**epublican unity appeared to hold in Assembly Speaker battle. As CPR went to press, the Assembly GOP caucus, led by Assemblyman Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga), continued to reject Democrat proposals to end the six-week-old, stalemated speakership battle in Sacramento. Various division-of-power proposals have been floated by both sides, but the sticking point appeared to be the Democrats' insistence that any agreement last for the entire current two-year legislative session and that it reflect the Assembly's current even split between 40 Republicans and 39 Democrats plus Assemblyman Paul Horcher (I — formerly R — Diamond Bar). In effect, agreeing to Democrats' demands could nullify the outcome of any recall elections (especially Horcher's, expected in April) that might restore a 41-vote GOP majority and effective Republican control of the lower house.

Brulte has rejected any such agreement on grounds it would amount to a repudiation of November's popular vote that sent a GOP majority to the Assembly. Horcher's abrupt December 6 repudiation of his Party and his vote to retain Willie Brown as Speaker created the current 40-to-40 Assembly impasse.

*Assemblyman Bernie Richter (R-Chico) "stood down" from his maverick Speaker candidacy. Sources in Richter's office said some 10 to 12 Democrats demanded that Richter renounce the Horcher recall in return for their votes and that the Chico Republican refused to do so. He thus would have needed the votes of 10 or more Republicans to achieve the 41 votes necessary to replace Willie Brown. Unable to muster sufficient GOP support, Richter stood down January 17.*

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**H**orcher recall organizers claimed to have collected more than half the required 18,760 signatures to force a recall election in only the first two weeks of signature gathering. Despite heavy rain and cold weather, more than 1,000 volunteers took the field collecting signatures on recall petitions and Governor Pete Wilson sent a letter to the district (with petition enclosed) urging Horcher's recall. Once the signatures are certified, the governor can set an election date, possibly as early as April. On the same ballot, voters would name their choice to replace Horcher. If the recall passes, the replacement candidate with the most votes, whether or not a majority, wins. If a Republican takes the seat in this strongly GOP (and conservative

*Continued on page 6*

## SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

W hew, it has been a busy couple of months for your *Spectator* what with so many dark and slimy goings on at which to *Spectate*. It's been a real whirlwind of swearing-in parties for new legislators, swank receptions, and general hob-nobbing at posh pleasure palaces where your *Spectator's* well-tuned ear can overhear tidbits definitely not meant to be overheard.

T here are many fascinating tales to relate, but they all pale beside the ongoing saga of Assemblyman Paul Horcher. Horcher as you all know is the man who betrayed his constituents, his GOP Assembly colleagues, and (last but not least) his own self-professed beliefs by selling out to Willie Brown on the first crucial vote for Assembly Speaker.

Y our *Spectator* has frequently been asked why Horcher would commit such an obvious act of political prostitution. The answer lies in the nature of the man himself, and brings to mind a favorite saying of one of your *Spectator's* mentors — "Never be surprised when a jackass brays or a snake hisses." In other words, people always eventually act in accordance with their basic nature. And few people can watch Paul Horcher in action and doubt that his fundamental nature is that of a politician always on the make, always on the lookout for a deal, always willing to sacrifice principle and honor in the pursuit of self-aggrandizement.

W hat frankly amazes many Capitol observers is that Horcher does so little to disguise his vanity. The old high school joke about the lady of questionable virtue who walks around with a mattress on her back comes to mind. If Horcher were a woman, the epithet "hinge heels" might seem appropriate. Many in the lobbyist community and most in the Democrat Party leadership have the



"easy mark" sign on Horcher, just as more adventurous high school boys knew which girls to ask out for a "good time."

P aul Horcher has "looking to have a good time" written all over him. His lack of legislative achievement is matched by his nearly perfect attendance record at lobbyist-sponsored receptions where the food and booze are free. Rumor has it that there is even an underground series of "Horcher stories" among bar managers who have the 2 a.m. "close up" shift. Paul Horcher has managed to become a walking advertisement

not only for term limits but also for the return of Prohibition.

A s with many such sad cases, it is impossible to embarrass Horcher by confronting him with his own contradictions and outright lies. During his unsuccessful special election campaign for state Senate in September, he attacked other candidates for being "too close" to Willie Brown. Two months later, Horcher shreds what is left of his honor and casts the deciding vote to keep Brown as Speaker. He sees no contradiction in this, or at least cannot bring himself to look at the log in his own eye before ranting about the mote in the eye of Assembly GOP Leader Jim Brulte.

B ut now Horcher finds himself in desperate straits. He is rightfully scorned by Republicans in the Capitol, from the governor through the rest of the GOP constitutional officers, and all members of the Assembly and state Senate. He is laughed at openly by his new-found Democrat friends, and savagely ridiculed by the lobbyist community. Who among them, after all, can trust a man willing to sell out constituents, campaign promises, and personal honor? As another old saying goes, there's no longer any debate about what Horcher is. The only question is: who is still willing to play his game?

T he bottom line answer is that his own constituents will certainly not be willing to pay the price for being represented by a moral mutant like Paul Horcher. The recall election will be in April. To the polls, y.e sons and daughters of freedom!

— A.P.C