

# The Governor's Race

**Can  
inexperience  
survive a  
neophyte's  
mistakes?**

# 2002

**Can  
hard-edged  
careerism  
survive a  
coin-operated  
image?**

## Arnold Steinberg

*A look at parallels from the past.  
Aspects that make this year one-of-a-kind.*

I don't really remember the governor's race in 1958. But it was the year that Governor Goodwin Knight and U.S. Senator Bill Knowland played musical chairs. Knight decided to run for U.S. Senate. And Knowland decided to run for governor. It smacked of a political deal and didn't sell well to voters. That same year, there was right-to-work, a ballot

measure that energized organized labor. Overall, the result was a disaster for Republicans. Attorney General Edmund G. "Pat" Brown became governor.

Before Knight, the governor (for three terms) was Earl Warren. All this was during the time when California was in Republican hands. For Democrats, 1958 was a watershed year. Indeed, two years later, the Party held its national convention here, right in Los Angeles, in Richard Nixon's political backyard. In November, John F. Kennedy barely edged out Nixon. Rather than bide his time for 1964, Nixon decided to return to his home state and run for governor. A political mistake, since many Californians figured he had little interest in governing the Golden State.

What I remember about 1962 is Richard Nixon being a bad loser. He



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*Arnold Steinberg is a political strategist.*

defeated the conservative Joe Shell in the Republican Primary. In turn, Nixon was defeated by Brown. "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore," Nixon said in a famous news conference. Everyone thought his political career had ended. Two years later, he shrewdly campaigned for the Party's presidential nominee, Barry Goldwater. Then, in 1966, in a strategy copied by others years later (and probably Al Gore this year), Nixon campaigned hard for his Party's Congressional nominees. In 1968, Nixon ran successfully for president.

Between graduating high school and starting UCLA, I became active in the campaign of a novice candidate for public office. His name was Ronald Reagan. Together with my friends, we formed Youth for Reagan. From the outset, I was convinced that Reagan would win.

People compare 1966 to 2002. It's true that pundits expected Reagan to lose to moderate San Francisco Mayor George Christopher. And they expected Bill Simon to lose to Richard Riordan, who had just completed eight years as Los Angeles mayor. But Reagan already had near-total identification, and Simon had none. And Reagan could set the world on fire.

What Simon did in the March Primary was to manage a tremendous come-from-behind victory. Yet, it was essential that he grasp the meaning of his win. It was, at least partly, a repudiation of the Richard Riordan campaign. Only Simon himself could make it an affirmation of Simon, if he could quickly and decisively define the general election.

And while he lost some opportunities in the months following the Primary, and over the summer, Republicans remain hopeful that Simon

will set the agenda for the fall. But he has his work cut out for him. Davis started on the air with television commercials after the Primary, and, after a hiatus, he resumed in late July. The Davis campaign claims Davis will *never* be off the air.

That makes it imperative for Simon to use free or "earned" media to make a strong case for himself and his ideas. He cannot match Davis dollar-for-dollar, so he must have a superior press operation.

Early on, the White House targeted Simon for special attention. No sooner had Simon won, than the president's men were reaching out to support the Republican nominee. President George W. Bush had several fundraisers for Simon, and Laura Bush visited the state. Probably no Republican candidate this year received more fundraising help than Simon.

It's a challenge, in part because Republicans hold neither U.S. Senate seat and only one statewide office, secretary of state. The Party does not have a majority in either state legislative house. So, the Republican standard bearer for governor must motivate the Party faithful. In many ways, he sets the tone for 2002.

Back in the Reagan days in 1966, the California Republican Party was a model for the nation. Now, it barely resembles its old dynamic self. Successive defeats have taken their toll.

But nearly 30 years ago, and despite the disasters of 1958 and 1962, the Party was a pretty solid machine. In fact, even the Los Angeles County Republican Party had a bigger budget and more staff than nearly any state Republican organization. Those were the days when busloads of Republican volunteers would come from everywhere into a district for a special legislative election.

Reagan not only won big in 1966, but he won reelection in 1970 against "Big Daddy" Jess Unruh, the Democrat Speaker of the Assembly. It was Unruh who coined the phrase, "Money is the mother's milk of politics." Unruh was so desperate for press attention that he held a news conference in the driveway of the Bel Air home of Henry Salvatori.

I remember Henry Salvatori well. He was an early supporter of intellectual and political activities of young people. I was active in the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, then the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists. Henry helped us, also, in Young Americans for Freedom. To many, he was Ronald Reagan's godfather. Along with auto tycoon Holmes Tuttle, and aviation pioneer C.C. Moseley, and others,



Salvatori put up the seed money in 1965 to launch Reagan's exploratory committee.

By 1970, Unruh was hoping to make an issue of "undue influence" of oil man Salvatori. The only problem is that Salvatori never really wanted much for himself. His interest was in good government and sound public policy. The press saw Unruh's ploy as a desperate act for a sagging campaign.

Reagan's re-election was not accompanied by a sufficient consolidation of the Republican base. In many ways, Reagan's appeal was personal. He was surrounded by pragmatists without any long-range interest in the Republican

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Party. At best, they tried to elect more legislators, but Republican control of the state Legislature remained elusive. The dynamic Reagan years hid a (slowly) declining GOP.

This was already apparent in 1974, when the Party nominated an uncharismatic moderate named Houston Fluornoy. A nice and sincere man, he could not excite the Party base, and certainly not Democrats. He lost to the spirited Jerry Brown, the enigmatic bachelor son of Pat Brown. Jerry had started his political career on the Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees. Like many Democrats, and more than Republicans, he understood how you could use a lower, nonpartisan office as a springboard to higher, even statewide office.

As is the case in many losing Republican campaigns, the Fluornoy campaign was not underfunded. The candidate had the usual coterie of Republican frat boys with walkie-talkies and the high-powered scheduling and advance operations that one associated with a smooth running campaign.

But there was no excitement. To some, the thoughtful Fluornoy was a nerd before his time. And he was personally no match for the flair Brown displayed. Brown had the enthusiasm of out-of-power Democrats. Finally, in fairness to Fluornoy, he ran in a bad year. It was right after Watergate.

Jerry Brown did a miserable job. But I won't re-run the governor's race against him. During his first term, Brown repudiated his father's growth policies. In many ways, his administration was a caricature. His counter-cultural advisers

were in charge of building freeways. The man responsible for what order existed was his chief of staff, a stuffed-shirt named Gray Davis. More on him later.



But remember, in that June 1978 Primary, a fellow named Howard Jarvis was trying again for a property tax measure. The iconoclastic Jarvis had become the Harold Stassen of ballot measures. Try, fail, and try again. This time, it was called Proposition 13. It didn't have much of a chance. In fact, the political establishment developed a rival measure called Proposition 8. The strategy seemed likely to succeed — defuse Proposition 13 with Proposition 8.

But, then, it was revealed that Jerry Brown was sitting on a surplus. At the same time, property assessments were being mailed out. They were much higher, causing huge increases in property taxes. It was a double whammy: the indignity of homeowners being hit with a huge property tax bill with the revelation that the state might have billions extra.

The Republican Primary candidates for governor included the former Los Angeles police chief, Ed ("hang 'em at the airport") Davis and

the slow-growth mayor of San Diego, Pete Wilson. But the guy who won the Primary was not a



plotter, but a plodder, the state's attorney general. His name was Evelle Younger, and he surprised the *Los Angeles Times* and "moderates" when he boldly supported Proposition 13 — which Davis and Wilson opposed.

The main leader of the statewide opposition to Proposition 13 was none other than the governor himself, Jerry

Brown. He led the parade of public officials who predicted doomsday if Proposition 13 passed. Younger, the state's chief law enforcement officer as attorney general, refused to join the chorus. Once Younger belatedly committed himself in the Primary, he urged voters to support Proposition 13.

But after Younger's Primary victory, something funny happened on the way to November.

In the Primary, as one of Younger's outside consultants, I had fought hard for Younger to endorse Proposition 13. After the presentations, conference calls, and memos, I finally, and barely, prevailed. Then, right after his Primary win, I urged Younger to seize the moment and build on his momentum for November. As one of Younger's two advertising consultants, I wanted to contrast Younger with Brown on this issue, and on others. I thought it was necessary to define Brown quickly, especially on Proposition 13. But Younger wanted to go to Hawaii. And his principal campaign consultant overruled me. He told Younger and his wife it would be just fine for them to go to Hawaii. Like many candidates, Younger wanted to be told what he wanted to hear. He liked the "good news" consultant who told him to go to Hawaii.

That brings to mind the Bill Simon campaign. We don't know the whole story behind Bill Si-

mon's initial decision not to release his tax returns. But we know his campaign team went along. Instead, they would have served him better by telling him what he needed to hear. Early.

In his first iteration, Simon began as an appealing and earnest "candidate of ideas." I wrote early-on that this Clark Kent had the capacity to morph into Superman. But, like any candidate, especially a novice, he needed tough advisers who would present a united front. From the beginning, they had to tell him what the race for governor required. For example, around April 15, you would be asked for your tax returns. Have them ready.

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The Simon tax returns showed that the candidate made good money, paid plenty in taxes, and gave generously to charity. All in all, Bill Simon's tax returns were a positive. He had reason to be proud. What would have been a plus for him was transformed into a negative.

From the beginning, the Simon campaign ran Simon as a business success. This was, in many ways, like the original Richard Riordan campaign for mayor of Los Angeles in 1993. The difference was that Riordan was prepared to tell his story. And Simon's campaign said the story was a secret. He was a business success, they said, but the details would breach confidential agreements. Once again, Simon needed his closest advisers to help him get his story out. Don't make your business success a theme unless you can talk about it.

By the time you read this, top Republicans hope the people closest to Bill Simon are help-



ing him by telling him what he needs to hear. This is a candidate that Republicans want to win. They want a "candidate of ideas." Moreover, Republicans believe Gray Davis has done a poor job. Republicans are not seduced by the supposed moderation of Davis. They know he is a committed partisan.

Republicans are frustrated, because they believe Davis is vulnerable. His persistent bad numbers tell the story of an unpopular governor who lacks any enthusiasm, even among his own Party. That's why Republicans have hoped for a long time that Simon will make the compelling case that Davis almost single-handedly is responsible for the state's budgetary woes.

Davis is relentless. In some ways, his model is his one-time boss, Jerry Brown.

Right after the Primary in 1978, Jerry Brown hit the ground running, and he never stopped. By November, people forgot that in June Younger had supported Proposition 13, and Brown opposed it. Polls showed they put their faith in Brown over Younger to implement Proposition 13. Indeed, Brown had neutralized Howard Jarvis himself, who moved from backing Younger, who had gone out on a limb for him, to a sort of benevolent neutrality.

Thus, Davis learned the importance of ballot measures. He was cautious in not going overboard to oppose the 1994 measure, Proposition 187, to limit state benefits to illegal immigrants. Nor was he a leader in taking on Proposition 209, the 1996 measure to prohibit state government race and gender preferences. Indeed, upon his election, Davis angered his lieutenant governor by not aggressively challenging Proposition 187. And he announced that he would implement, not challenge, Proposition 209.

Davis also learned a lesson from the Rose Bird era. Governor Jerry Brown had appointed Bird the chief justice of the California Supreme Court. Bumbling and meddlesome, she was an academic liberal quite unqualified for the post. A strident feminist, she even angered women's groups with one decision suggesting a rapist did not intend "great bodily harm." Anyway, Davis emerged from the experience determined never to concede crime to the Republicans. In the Legislature and as governor, he formed alliances with victims groups and law enforcement groups.

So, with Jerry Brown in the summer of 1978, we had a lesson in momentum. If you have a Primary win — and Bill Simon had an impressive victory in March — you move quickly to build on it. And Jerry Brown defined the election his way.

By 1982, the mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, looked like quite the formidable candidate for governor. He was at the height of his popularity in a city whose television and radio market reached nearly half the state. He could mobilize black voter turnout, and he could appeal to moderate whites. They could feel comfortable voting for Tom Bradley as an expression of their open-mindedness. Bradley was soft spoken and a former police officer.

The Republican candidate, George Deukmejian, was yet another attorney general. Before that, he had been a state senator. Deukmejian's detractors criticized him as boring. But Tom Bradley was hardly exciting. Neither campaign generated excitement. The Deukmejian campaign was quite pedestrian. Near the end, it seemed that Bradley would win. By election night, pollster Mervin Field was insisting that Bradley had it. In his most famous example of unprofessionalism, Merv Field that election night (indeed, even in the wee hours of the morning of the day after) also predicted that Pete Wilson would lose his senate race to Jerry Brown. In fact, Wilson won handily.

So, there was something more at work than absentee ballots. Field's numbers were not very accurate, and it was not merely that absentee votes upset his exit poll calculus. His stubborn personal preference for Democrats affected his work. For reasons unclear, the Field poll has continued to be taken seriously.

The absentees were helpful for Wilson, but



they were hardly decisive. Wilson won his U.S. senate race easily, in part because his opponent was Jerry Brown. Voters finally found a way to repudiate his years as governor.



But it was a different matter in the Deukmejian race. Bradley's campaign, not great, seemed to be going better than Deukmejian's. However, a gun control ballot measure helped turn out some rural Republicans and conservative Democrats, and that helped Duke. Despite Bradley's mistakes late in the campaign, he actually still won on election day. But the victory margin was trumped by Duke's lead in absentee ballots. The California Republican Party had done a brilliant job of securing absentee ballots. In a technique that Democrats learned and now do just as well, or better, the Republicans put big bucks into getting voters to apply for absentee ballots, and then vote.

In a Deukmejian-Bradley rematch in 1986, Duke easily won reelection. Bradley's popularity had peaked in 1984 with the Olympics. By the mid-'80s, the California economy was doing well again. Deukmejian had shown himself to be a competent governor in an administration free of scandal.

After Duke's eight years, Pete Wilson was elected in 1990 in a tough race against Dianne Feinstein. The Wilson campaign was a good one. And he was reelected in 1994 in an easy race against Kathleen Brown. Her campaign was full of false starts and changing slogans. She lacked a strategy. Eventually, her campaign spent so much, so early, that it actually ran out of money near the end.

And that brings us to 1998. Once again, we had a California attorney general (remember — Bill Knowland, Pat Brown, Evelle Younger, George Deukmejian, John van de Kamp) running for governor. This time, it was Dan Lungren. He ran a well-funded campaign that never connected with the electorate. We need not go

into the details except to say that it was not a fair test of ideas. It was more a rejection of Dan Lungren's style.

For 2002, there was great concern that no one could raise enough money against Gray Davis. The incumbent governor had always been a prodigious fundraiser. But in the 1998 Primary, Davis had run against mega-bucks Al Checchi. This

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rich guy spent \$40 million in a disastrous primary. Like Riordan four years later, Checchi had TV spots that actually made him look worse on camera than in person. But Davis determined to raise money for his reelection. Immediately upon his swearing-in, and with a vengeance, he personally and relentlessly spearheaded his fundraising.

Part of Simon's challenge is to differentiate Davis from other politicians. Voters believe all politicians raise money for access. They need to understand that linkage between public policy and contributions in the Davis administration is more than politics as usual. And the consequences for the public interest are profound.

Davis has had persistently bad numbers. The myth was that a candidate had to spend as much as Davis to defeat him. All an opposing candidate requires is credibility for himself and his campaign, a theme, a strategy, and technical excellence in the execution of a campaign plan.

If Bill Simon loses, we'll be told it's because he has the wrong position on abortion. Win or lose, this campaign will not be decided on the basis of abortion or any other single issue.

## The Other Statewide Races

The Republican Party's impressive candidates

for statewide office face one overriding problem: money. The Democrats are vastly better funded. In some cases, we're talking about the advantages of incumbency — as with Attorney General Bill Lockyer. In other cases, we're talking about personal wealth (Steve Westley for controller).

Observe that although money is the starting point, we're talking about more than campaign money. The Democrats will have the unions and other Democrat constituencies mounting get-out-the-vote drives. Republicans cannot do anything comparable. Thus, the expenditures in support of Democrats are beyond what you see in the candidate's campaign. A synergy affects these races. Redistricting has effectively frozen Democrat power in the state Senate and Assembly. This encourages lobbyists to contribute to Democrats. They have more secure seats than do Republicans. There is more coordination among Democrat legislators and legislative candidates. Although many Democrat incumbents are known to be hostile to Davis, they remain committed to Democrat patronage.

The two political parties both serve as conduits for campaign cash for legislative races. That's because the new campaign laws vest more power in each party. But the Democrats, as the majority party, have more fundraising clout. All in all, it's a smooth-running machine.

Moreover, the \$60 million Davis raised has not come at the cost of these Democrat candidates' fund raising. Attorney General Lockyer is a prodigious fundraiser, based on the experience he gained as a state legislator and as

Democrat leader of the state senate. Steve Westley, who runs against Tom McClintock for controller, is independently wealthy. That means *nine* digits: more than \$100 million.



Consider what the reporting period showed for the six months ending June 30. These are the reports that were filed by July 31. Probably the most important figure is cash on hand, minus any payables. I examined the Republican campaigns to see if they had invested their campaign dollars in assets. For example, suppose a campaign invested in fundraising mailings prior to June 30, but it had yet to see the proceeds. Or, suppose a campaign had prepaid a consultant for services. Or, suppose a campaign had bought television time in advance. These kinds of investments or prepayments would be assets.

That generally was not the case with these Republican campaigns. What you saw was what you get. These are not campaigns trying to lull the Democrats into a false sense of complacency. They are having a tough time.

Davis had nearly \$32 million on hand, Simon \$5 million. But, again, I believe that there is potential for the right kind of campaign despite the cash imbalance.

### Lieutenant governor

Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante faces state Senator Bruce McPherson. McPherson had already spent nearly a half million dollars by June 30. His cash on hand was about \$800,000, compared to Bustamante's \$2.2 million. If Simon does well, McPherson has potential. And if Simon is not doing well, there remains the question of whether voters disenchanted with Davis would vote for a Republican lieutenant governor. They did this in 1978, when they voted for Mike Curb for lieutenant governor at the same time they elected Jerry Brown governor. But Bustamante is no Mervyn Dymally (Brown's lieutenant governor).

### Secretary of State

The incumbent secretary of state is Bill Jones, who ran unsuccessfully for governor in the Republican Primary. The Jones showing in March was not as dismal as you might remember. Sure, he received only 18 percent, compared to Riordan's 30 percent. But Riordan started the race 'way ahead, then spent \$6 million on TV ads to Jones's \$200,000. Republican Keith Olberg, who served with distinction in the Assembly, wants to succeed Jones. Olberg already spent nearly

\$468,000 during the first half of the year. His balance of about \$500,000 is more than Kevin's Shelley's, in part because Shelley spent more than \$2 million in the Primary.

### Controller

Incumbent Kathleen Connell is termed out this year. Steve Westley bought his Primary victory, spending \$4.6 million. Still, Westley has more than a million on hand and he has deep pockets. He lists himself as businessman educator. State Senator Tom McClintock defeated Dean Andal in the Republican Primary. For conservatives, the race was needlessly divisive, since both McClintock and Andal were appealing and attractive. McClintock has potential, because he is a knowledgeable and articulate candidate.

### Treasurer

The incumbent is Philip Angelides, a highly-charged partisan Democrat. His Republican opponent, Greg Conlon, lists himself as businessman/CPA. On June 30, Angelides had \$6 million in the bank. Conlon had \$28,000 and debts of \$150,000.

### Attorney General

Incumbent Bill Lockyer is former majority leader in the state Senate. Lockyer's opponent is the respected Dick Ackerman, a state senator and an attorney. Here, the money balance is especially marked: Lockyer had more than \$6 million, one hundred times what Ackerman has. But Lockyer does not use the office nearly as effectively as past incumbent AGs. Ackerman has a story to tell, if he can get the resources.

### Insurance Commissioner

This is another office with no incumbent. Chuck Quackenbush was one of only two Republicans (along with Bill Jones) to hold statewide office after the 1998 losses. John Garamendi is a Democrat with lots of problems in

his background. Gary Mendoza has an impressive record in accounting, law, and public service. Although Garamendi lists about \$1 million on hand, compared to Mendoza's \$353,000, that doesn't tell the full story. Garamendi has campaign debts of more than \$700,000. So, compared to some of the other candidates, Mendoza is in a relatively good cash position.

### Superintendent of Public Instruction

This is another tough one. Democrat Jack O'Connell spent \$3.8 million, but he still had more than \$500,000 in the bank on June 30. Republican Katherine Smith had less than \$10,000.

For these statewide offices, there are four or five candidates from lesser parties — American Independent, Green, Libertarian, Natural Law, and Reform. It is conceivable that these five parties together could poll as much as 5 percent in any given race, enough to tip the balance.

Either Simon wins, or Simon loses.

If Simon wins, would he have coattails? Or would it simply be an anti-Davis vote? To have coattails, Simon will need a decisive win, which means, in part, a pro-Simon vote, not just anti-Davis.

The Democrats have another advantage, or disadvantage, as the case may be. Three of their major statewide candidates share the same consultant, Bill Carrick. That means they will have a level of coordination that may be missing among Republicans.

Finally, there is a statewide ballot measure that could affect Republicans for years to come: Proposition 52, which would allow election day voter registration. Translated, that means Democrats could use street money to recruit low-propensity voters on the day of the election. Republicans would be wise to put Proposition 52 on their radar screen, along with these statewide candidates.

CPR





# California Assembly

BY WILLIAM E. SARACINO

MEMBER, CPR EDITORIAL BOARD

Continuing CPR's  
ELECTION SPECIAL,  
William E. Saracino  
sketches California's  
153 Assembly,  
state Senate, and  
Congressional  
races leading up  
to November 5.

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**DISTRICT 1** Reg: D 46%; R 30%; DS 15%

Incumbent: Open Seat — Virginia Strom-Martin (D) termed out. Geography: North coast, from Mendocino County to the Oregon border.

A competitive four-way Democrat Primary nominated Eureka-based teacher and liberal activist Patty Berg in this strongly Democrat seat. As befits a district trending increasingly toward extreme liberal and no-growth (anti-private property) positions, Berg is a liberal, anti-private property Democrat. She prepared for this election by leading a ballot initiative in 1999 that stopped a Wal-Mart opening in Eureka. Berg is for "choice" in killing unborn children, but not for local consumers in choosing where to shop.

Lake County Supervisor Rob Brown won the Republican Primary. To have a chance in November, he will require a strong campaign ... by the local Green Party. Given the rumblings of environmental wacko unhappiness with Governor Davis, this could happen. Ralph Nader received 11 percent of this district's vote for president in 2000. To have a chance to win, Brown would need that kind of performance by Green Assembly candidate Doug Thron. He might also win at poker by drawing to inside straights.

SAFE DEMOCRAT

**DISTRICT 2** Reg: R 47%; D 36%; DS 12%

Incumbent: Open Seat — Dick Dickerson (R) running for Senate. Geography: The Sacramento Valley from just north of Sacramento to the Oregon border.

In what became a recurring pattern for the 2002 Primary, a conservative routed a moderate here, as Butte County farmer Doug LaMalfa trounced early favorite Redding Councilwoman Pat Kight. CPR's pre-Primary analysis said that "if either LaMalfa or Byrne (the other conservative candidate) becomes the consensus choice of the district's conservatives, that candidate would be favored to win." LaMalfa worked hard at becoming that consensus choice, picking up endorsements from local icon Assemblyman Tim Leslie, former Senator Jim Nielsen, "Three Strikes" author Mike Reynolds, and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers' Association. The electorate here is conservative: Dan Lungren carried