

# 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.

D

**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

the district by 10 percent, and President Bush achieved an eye-popping 26 percent margin over Al Gore. Departing Assemblyman (he ran for the state Senate) Dick Dickerson's decision to join four Republicans voting for Gray Davis's tax-hike budget last year raised the issue of loyalty to conservative positions even higher than usual for these voters. Once a clear conservative front-runner emerged, the race was essentially over. LaMalfa ended up coasting to a 59 to 23 percent victory over Kight.

Democrat Doug Kinyon will do well to break 40 percent in November.

#### SAFE REPUBLICAN

#### DISTRICT 3 Reg: R 43%; D 35%; DS 15%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Sam Aanestad (R) running for Senate. Geography: The northeast quadrant of the state, including Butte, Lassen, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra, and Yuba counties.**

This district lies alongside District 2, and both its Primary and Primary results resembled those of its next-door neighbor. Entering stage left was Butte County businessman Dan Ostrander, a former Democrat who, although he changed parties, apparently changed few of his views.

Stage right was Chico Councilman Rick Keene. As in District 2, A.D. 3's GOP electorate is solidly conservative. Ostrander hoped to win by burying Keene (and hiding his own liberal views) beneath an avalanche of money. He put more than \$400,000 of his own cash into the race. But Keene, like Doug LaMalfa nearby, was helped by the statewide conservative network, and

had been endorsed by local GOP heroes Senator Rico Oller, Assemblyman Sam Aanestad (who vacated the seat to run for state Senate), and Congressman John Doolittle.

These endorsements, and sufficient cash to allow Keene to contrast his views with Ostrander's for GOP Primary voters, added up to an easy 59 to 41 percent Keene victory. As we will have occasion to mention more than once in these analyses, Primary victories in safe GOP districts by clear conservatives over clear moderates or liberals is a "dog bites man" non-story. Moderate "pundits," looking at Democrat voter-skewed 2000 Primaries, have, on occasion, added two plus two to reach five. If Democrats can't vote in Republican primaries, conservatives start with a large advantage everywhere in the state with the exception of a handful of Bay Area districts. Primary election results, unsurprisingly, tend to reflect the make-up of the typical Primary election voter.

Not only will Keene win in November; he will certainly be able to serve all three terms in the Assembly. Democrat Stuart King will be no "king for a day" come November.

#### SAFE REPUBLICAN

#### DISTRICT 4 Reg: R 47%; D 34%; DS 14%

**Incumbent: Tim Leslie (R) Geography: A slice of north Sacramento County, Alpine, El Dorado and Placer counties.**

Tim Leslie — one of the Legislature's genuinely nice people — will easily be re-elected here, his old, familiar stomping grounds, for his last term in the Legislature.

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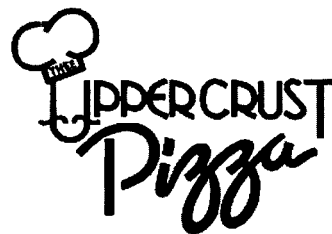
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Democrat Scott Warren is unlikely to equal Al Gore's 38 percent.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 5   Reg: R 44%; D 38%; DS 13%**

**Incumbent: Dave Cox (R) Geography: Northern Sacramento County and a slice of southern Placer County.**

Republican Assembly leader Dave Cox is snug as can be in A.D. 5, which gave President Bush a 12-point margin over Al Gore and thrice elected conservative leader Barbara Alby. Cox used this security to good effect during the 2002 budget battle, holding his fractious caucus together longer than anyone thought possible. Termed out in 2004, Cox — unless Congressman Doug Ose runs against Senator Barbara Boxer (which he is hinting at doing) — has no obvious place to land. Having shown a strong, steady hand in leading the Assembly Caucus, he will be re-elected easily. Democrat Eric Ullis poses no threat.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 6   Reg: D 50%; R 27%; DS 16%**

**Incumbent: Joe Nathan (D) Geography: Marin County, western portion of Sonoma County.**

Most everything has been said that can be about Marin, John Walker Lindh, and the rest of the self-absorbed, angst-ridden liberals inhabiting this district. Joe Nation will easily be re-elected. Republican Kenneth Hitt will certainly *not* be one on election day.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 7   Reg: D 52%; R 29%; DS 14%**

**Incumbent: Patricia Wiggins (D) Geography: Napa County, most of Sonoma County, the northwest portion of Solano County.**

Nearly 60,000 registered Republicans live in this district, and not one of them could be convinced to run for the Assembly. If it's true that politics is a game of fundamentals — blocking and tackling — then the GOP here hasn't even put on their pads: a telling commentary on the state of the Party in this wine country enclave. Pat Wiggins, although not a prolific fundraiser, can ship whatever spare cash she has to Democrats in close races around the state.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 8   Reg: D 47%; R 32%; DS 16%**

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Helen Thomson (D) termed out. Geography: Most of Solano and Yolo counties.**

Just as conservatives won most of the GOP's contested primaries, liberals won most of them in the donkey party. Yolo County Supervisor Lois Wolk benefited both from her leftist ideology and her gender. In a three-way race she was the only woman, and far and away the most liberal. That brought her 41 percent of the vote in March, enough to beat second place finisher, West Sacramento Councilman Chris Cabaldon, by 10 points. Wolk joins a long list of ultra-liberal winners of closely-contested Democrat Primaries. It will be interesting to see if this does anything to explode the myth — propagated by the California business community — of the existence of a group of "moderate" Assembly Democrats. Business spent lots of money trying to nominate "moderates" in districts like this one. Their batting average approached zero.

GOP nominee John Munn has the potential to run an interesting, though probably not winning, race if he's able to put any financing together. The two less-liberal Democrat candidates received 59 percent of the vote in March. President Bush pulled 41 percent in 2000. Wolk's brand of leftist puritanism plays well in the People's Republic of Davis, but not in the district's rural areas. Munn might at least force Wolk to campaign vigorously, but he won't beat her.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 9   Reg: D 58%; R 23%; DS 14%**

**Incumbent: Darrell Steinberg (D) Geography: All but the north and eastern portions of Sacramento County.**

This district came in at 29 percent for President Bush. It won't deny Darrell Steinberg his last stint in the Assembly. Steinberg's worry is not Republican David Pegos, but what office to run for in 2004. With Deborah Ortiz in the state Senate and Bob Matsui in Congress, no obvious openings are available. Steinberg is a serious liberal, seriously addicted to government. Count on seeing him on the ballot again, somewhere, for something.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 10** *Reg: R 45%; D 40%; DS 12%*

**Incumbent:** Open Seat — Anthony Pescetti (R) not running. **Geography:** Amador County, southern El Dorado County, southeastern Sacramento County, and northern San Joaquin County.

Lodi Mayor and ophthalmologist Alan Nakanishi won a spirited, four-way GOP Primary with some ease, garnering nearly 50 percent of the vote. That was no surprise. Nakanishi had run twice before in the area, including a very strong race for the state Senate against Mike Machado, losing that contest by less than 1,000 votes. Additionally, Nakanishi was seen as the leading conservative candidate, another plus in this district. Labor unions tried to make mischief here, backing Jon Bagatelos. However, as this wasn't 2000, and Democrats could not vote in the GOP contest, Bagatelos flamed out at 14 percent.

**T**he Democrat Primary was also spirited, with legislative aide Katherine Maestas defeating another (former) legislative aide, Ken Cooley. As an interesting side-note on the difference between the two Parties, this district contains a high number of state employees. The GOP most usually nominates local businessmen: Nakanishi now, incumbent Anthony Pescetti the last two times. The Democrats' 2000 candidate, like Maestas and Cooley, was a legislative aide. Term limits have broken the GOP's bad habit of promoting Capitol workers — usually with no "real life" work experience — up to the Legislature. No such salubrious effect has yet been noted among the Democrats.

Were it not for all those state workers, this district would be absolutely solid GOP turf. President Bush received 53 percent of the vote here, as did Matt Fong against Barbara Boxer. Dave Stirling, Chuck Quackenbush, and Bill Jones also all carried the district in 1998. But expect the Democrats to make a run here. For one thing, they have precious few other areas in which to spend their money. For another, they came close to carrying the district — though in a slightly less Republican configuration — in 1998. Nakanishi and his campaign are well aware of these factors and will attempt to bury Maestas early in hopes of diverting Democrat eyes — and money — elsewhere. That is the most likely scenario: a Democrat feint here, but not a total, five-alarm effort. Still, this seat bears watching.

**LIKELY REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 11** *Reg: D 54%; R 27%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent:** Joe Canciamilla (D) **Geography:** Northern and central Contra Costa County.

This district was zigged and zagged specifically for Joe Canciamilla, who will reap the benefit in November. GOP nominee Jan Denny's best hope is that the district's working class voters mistake her name for the restaurant chain.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 12** *Reg: D 54%; R 15%; DS 26%*

**Incumbent:** Open Seat — Kevin Shelly (D) termed out. **Geography:** South and west San Francisco, a slice of north San Mateo County.

San Francisco Supervisor Leland Yee put this race away early, perhaps even before filing closed, with the support of Mayor Willie Brown, state Senator John Burton, and outgoing incumbent Kevin Shelly. He coasted to a 2-to-1 victory in the Primary. He will do much better against Republican Howard Epstein in this district with a GOP registration of 16 percent.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 13** *Reg: D 57%; R 12%; DS 24%*

**Incumbent:** Open Seat — Carole Migden (D) termed out. **Geography:** Northern and eastern San Francisco.

As befits a district that gave President Bush 13 percent, the Democrat Primary to succeed ultra-liberal Carol Migden was a fight between the far left, represented by County Supervisor Mark Leno, and the very far left, represented by former County Supervisor Harry Britt. Leno carried endorsements from local heavyweights Dianne Feinstein, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, and neighboring Assemblyman Kevin Shelly. Britt was endorsed by Migden, Board of Supervisor President Tom Ammiano, and the local labor council.

Like most internecine wars, this contest got ugly, personal, and bloody, Leno emerging the winner by less than 2,000 votes. He will have no problem disposing of GOP nominee Gail Neira.

Although nearly \$1 million was spent by all candidates and independent expenditure committees on this race, the official Democrat Primary turnout was 35 percent. Perhaps the bitter Primary turned people off. But, perhaps too, a more likely explanation is that most

of the 65 percent who didn't appear at the polls are voters that *don't really exist*.

Remember, San Francisco is the town where last election a ballot box was found floating in the bay. Remember also, Mayor Willie Brown's less-than-legendary concern for combating voter fraud. My bet is that real turnout among voters who have not assumed room temperature was in the mid 60s. Anyone want to bet a martini on the result and do the research? Let me know.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 14** Reg: D 60%; R 18%; DS 16%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Dion Aroner (D) termed out.**

**Geography: Western portions of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, including Berkeley, Richmond, Oakland, and Lafayette.**

A repeat of the ideological battle of District 13, without the spice of the local internal warfare. Democrat Primary winner Loni Hancock probably considers the label "far left" a compliment. She is a Democrat in the Maxine Waters/Barbara Lee, "hate America and blame it first for all world ills" mold. A former councilwoman and mayor of Berkeley, she won the three-way Primary with a surprisingly strong 54 percent of the vote.

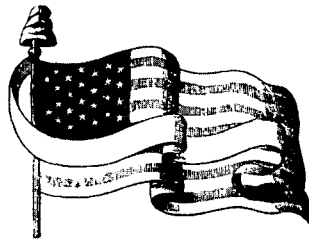
What remains of a "center-left" coalition in Bay Area Democrat politics was represented by West Contra Costa school board member Charles Ramsey. He had strong labor support, and the endorsement of Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamonte — all for naught. Those in Sacramento who insist on speaking of "moderate" Democrats would do well to study Ramsey's 28 percent showing. Few voters in this district will notice that no GOP candidate appears on the ballot.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 15** Reg: R 44%; D 38%; DS 14%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Lynne Leach (R) termed out. Geography: Eastern portions of Alameda and**

**Contra Costa County, southern portion of San Joaquin County, a far western slice of Sacramento County.**



**Perhaps most of  
the 65 percent who  
didn't vote *don't  
really exist.*  
San Francisco is  
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last election a  
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in the bay.**

This once rock-solid Republican turf is now the GOP's last island of east bay legislative representation. Redistricting reduced the Republican registration edge by a couple of points, but actually strengthened the Party's base vote, replacing moderate Contra Costa swing voters with more loyal Republicans in San Joaquin County. Nonetheless, the GOP hold here is tentative, and the last thing the Party needed — or wanted — was a conservative/liberal fight.

Such a fight was brewing in the Primary, but conservative Gordon Blake never had the cash to engage in much of a battle. His 40 percent of the vote is more a testimony to left-over name ID from a strong 2000 race for Congress. Guy Houston, former mayor of Dublin, is more moderate (though still fairly described as conservative on most issues) in his politics and was the choice of Sacramento GOP leadership, who figured Houston would be the stronger bet to keep the dis-

trict in the pachyderm column.

He will test that theory against Democrat nominee Contra Costa County Supervisor Donna Gerber. To win this swing district, she will try to convince voters she is "moderate." Houston will try to convince voters that Gerber is really a "San Francisco Democrat."

Whoever wins the ID battle wins the election. Though the task is that simple, enormous amounts of cash will be spent in its execution. This district is at the top of both Party's target lists. President Bush won here, 49 to 47 percent, in 2000, and while that's not overwhelming, it is eight points above his statewide average. Because the district is in the San Francisco media market, television is prohibitively expensive, at least under the usual rules. If the candidates appear on the tube, it will be a reliable marker both Parties have decided this is a "bottomless checkbook" race. Expect it to end up in that category.

Pockets of strong, loyal GOP registration exist here.

If Houston gets them to vote, he should end up the winner, bloodied and battered though he may also be. Gerber, however, cannot be counted out: in a "bottomless checkbook" war, the Democrat checkbook has a much deeper bottom. This race will be close to the end.

**LEANS REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 16** *Reg: D 63%; R 12%; DS 18%*

**Incumbent: Wilma Chan (D) Geography: Southern Alameda County.**

A Bay Area district where Decline-to-State voters outnumber Republicans, the 16th elected Green Party member Audi Bock in a 1999 special. But one-term incumbent Wilma Chan need fear no such apostasy in a regular election. Republican George Nugent should set his sights on breaking double digits in November.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 17** *Reg: D 49%; R 40%; DS 8%*

**Incumbent: Barbara Matthews (D) Geography: Parts of Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties.**

It's been a see-saw year so far for the newly-drawn 17th, created by Democrat map-makers to give Barbara Matthews — a narrow winner in 2000 — as much breathing room as possible. When the district was created, GOP registration was 35 percent. Shortly after that, the Dean Andal GOP registration machine went into action and drove the Republican share into the low 40s. After that, Democrats responded with a registration drive of their own that dropped the GOP number a couple of points.

**W**hat it all means is that the 17th remains very much in play. Matthews is one of the "moderate Democrats" that California big business likes to tout. While she has been careful on some votes, especially those that are ag-related, her overall record is still well to the left of this area's average voter. Therein lies her weakness, or there it *would* lie, except that GOP nominee Brian McCabe's moderate views are more suited to a Bay Area district's GOP base than to that of this San Joaquin Valley, ag-based seat. Republicans here are loyal though, so McCabe should have little trouble keeping them in his column.

The 17th, like the neighboring 26th, is a top target for both Parties. But whereas Bush hit 52 percent in the

26th, he pulled only 44 percent here. McCabe's challenge will be to convince as many as possible of the district's conservative Democrats and its 27 percent of voters who are Hispanic to abandon Democrat Matthews. That challenge will be less formidable if Republicans achieve election-day GOP registration in the low- to mid-40s. Watch that number. Anything much below 40 percent quickly starts to move this seat out of Republican reach. Conversely, every point above 42 or so puts Matthews in exceptional danger.

Matthews maintains significant advantages, incumbency not the least of them. And given the Democrat war chest and the paucity of competitive seats, she ought to be able to outspend McCabe. Even so, she remains no more than a slight favorite.

**TOSS-UP**

**DISTRICT 18** *Reg: D 56%; R 24%; DS 15%*

**Incumbent: Ellen Corbett (D) Geography: Central Alameda County.**

Ellen Corbett is secure in this district full of blue collar — and yellow dog — Democrats. Republican Jack Hoving won't teach these old dogs any new tricks.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**District 19** *Reg: D 51%; R 27%; DS 18%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Lou Pappan (D) termed out. Geography: All but northern-most San Mateo County.**

How the mighty have fallen. In *CPR's* pre-Primary edition, the 19th was described as the "celebrity death match" district for the Democrats, and thus it turned out to be. The "Pappan dynasty" was the celebrity that died, and the Democrat left-wing once again emerged victorious in a safe Democrat seat.

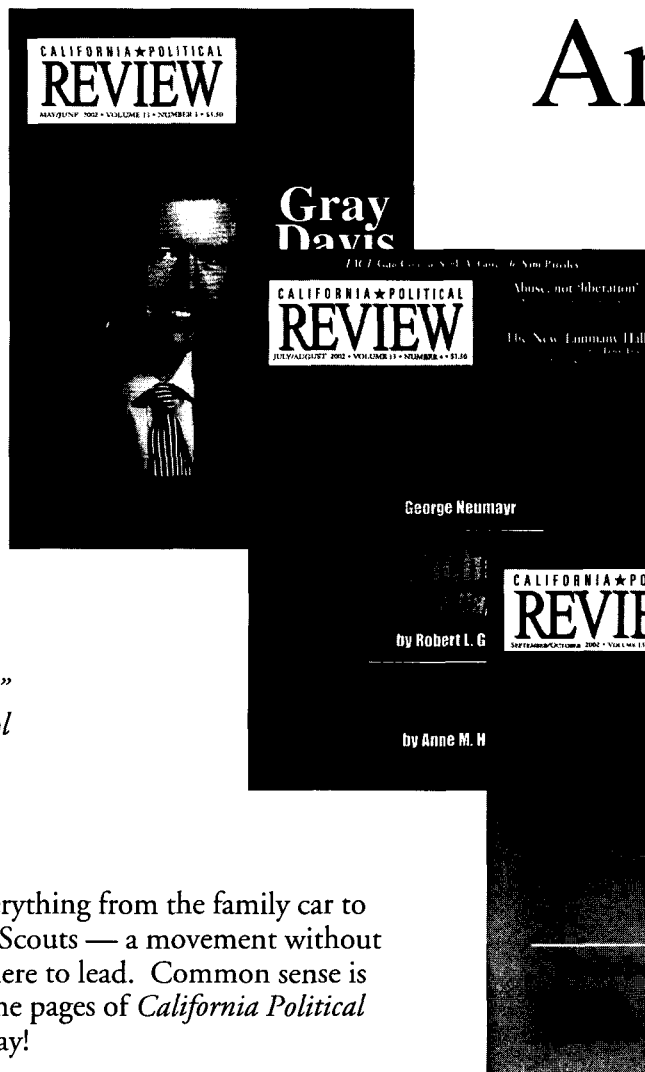
Lou Pappan once ruled the roost as Willie Brown's right hand man, and main thuggish enforcer. After a losing state Senate race and a return to the Assembly, he seemed to have mellowed some. Also, his politics actually merited the much overused description: "moderate," at least on business issues. The Primary was a battle to see a) if Pappan could elect his daughter Gina; and b) if real moderates have any future in the Assembly Democrat caucus. The Primary results delivered a resounding "no" to both.

Gina Papan entered the contest with enormous advantages, including not only her father's name but

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— Irving Kristol

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\$360,000 of his campaign cash. She was endorsed by Speaker Herb Wesson, former Speaker Bob Hertzberg, Senate President John Burton, Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamonte, the California Professional Firefighters, and the California AFL-CIO. That kind of line-up used to insure a runaway win in Democrat primaries.

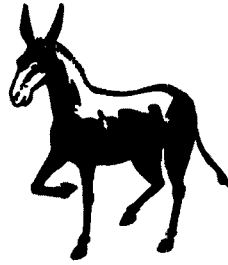
No more. The Democrat winner, South San Francisco Mayor Gene Mullin was supported by the Donkey Party's new power nexus: left-wing incumbents and well-healed statewide associations that are now quasi-socialist in their politics like the California Nurses Association and the League of Conservation Voters. Most decisive though, Mullin was supported by the group that is fast becoming Democrats' ultimate puppet-master: trial lawyers. Against this new ruling politburo, Gina Papan's traditional Democrat campaign could muster only 34 percent to Mullin's 42.

As with numerous other safely-Democrat districts, the results here should be a bucket-full of ice cold water for the California business community and others who say "moderate" Democrats not only exist in sizable numbers but that their numbers can be increased. As card players are wont to say, "read 'em and weep." Primary results here and around the state tightened the hard left's strangle hold on the Assembly Democrat caucus. Only time will tell if business can shed its blinders and stop living a charade. Big business's excuse for "feeding the alligator" of Democrat legislative dominance — that they could "triangulate" between Governor Davis and a small, but large enough to be decisive, group of moderate Democrats — was exploded in the March Primary. The fall campaign's giving patterns will indicate if the suits in the wood-paneled corporate suites have gotten the message. Mullin need not worry about GOP nominee David Kawas.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 20** *Reg: D 48%; R 27%; DS 20%*  
**Incumbent: John Dutra (D) Geography: Western**

**and southern Alameda County, northeastern Santa Clara County.**



**Gene Mullin was  
 supported by the group  
 that is fast becoming  
 Democrats' ultimate  
 puppet-master:  
 trial lawyers.**

Republicans held this seat briefly in the 1980s, and a few more registration points could make them at least competitive again, thanks to the district's many working-class, somewhat conservative Democrats. But for now, John Dutra has two things to crow about. First, sharing a last name with the premier GOP political printer in the state. And, probably more important to Dutra personally, his solid lock on this assembly seat. Republican Daniel Dow will find a definite bear market for his stock among the voters.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 21** *Reg: 45%; R 33%; DS 18%*

**Incumbent: Joe Simitian (D) Geography: Northern and central Santa Clara County, southwestern San Mateo County.**

Registration figures like these would make a district competitive in other parts of the state. But this district's Republicans, by and large,

are wealthy liberals who wake up each morning with guilt pains about their success, not to mention their Party registration. They assuage these feelings by voting like Democrats once they get into the voting booth; giving Bush 35 percent in 2000, Dan Lungren 32 percent in 1998, and the Green Party's Assembly candidate 10 percent in 2000.

Joe Simitian won easily against a somewhat serious GOP effort when this was an open seat in 2000. GOP nominee James Russell will not be able to mount such an effort this year.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 22** *Reg: D 44%; R 29%; DS 22%*  
**Incumbent: Open Seat — Elaine Alquist (D) termed out. Geography: Central Santa Clara County.**

Like Gina Papan in District 19, Santa Clara City

Councilman Rod Diridon, Jr., entered this Primary with huge advantages. As the son of a popular and eponymously-named former county supervisor, he was well-known. He had the endorsements of Senator John Vasconcellos, Assemblyman Fred Kelley, former Congressman Norm Mineta, and a broad range of labor organizations. He practiced "centrist" politics, at least what passes for such in the Democrat Party. But like Gina Papan, Diridon ran into the left-wing buzz-saw that dominated Democrat legislative primaries this year.

The same coalition that supported the victorious Gene Mullin against Papan weighed in behind the victor here, Mountain View City Councilwoman Sally Lieber. Another Democrat "moderate" vanquished, another leftist vote for the Assembly Democrat Caucus, and another defeat for the California business community's Sisyphean efforts to moderate legislative Democrats. The phrase "good money after bad" does come to mind. As noted earlier, business's contribution profile to legislative candidates this fall will tell whether they've learned from these Primary battles, and whether they've returned to their Republican roots or now think they can buy the kind of influence they have with Gray Davis with this new crop of hard-left Democrat legislators.

Lieber is a cinch for November. On election day, about the same number of voters will know how to spell GOP nominee Stan Kawczynski's name as will vote for him.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 23** *Reg: D 53%; R 22%; DS 20%*  
**Incumbent: Manny Diaz (D) Geography: San Jose**

Manny Diaz's toughest race was his first, the 2000 Primary, which he won by a hair. He won't need to stock up on rogain to keep this Democrat and Hispanic seat. No Republican filed.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 24** *Reg: D 46%; R 32%; DS 18%*  
**Incumbent: Rebecca Cohn (D) Geography: Southern Santa Clara County.**

Another sign of atrophy in the Republican infrastructure. This district, while remade by the map-makers into a strongly Democrat seat, still contains pockets of strong Republican registration such as

Campbell and Saratoga. A GOP candidate with even modest financing could make a respectable race here. However, although 70,000 registered Republicans live in the district, not one could be coaxed into running for the Assembly. In other parts of the state — Senate District 6, for instance — failure to field a candidate can be blamed on slip-ups in a conservative-leaning GOP infrastructure. But the 24th A.D. GOP is controlled by "moderates." Their lack of a candidate here undercuts the argument that more liberal Republicans are better equipped to lead the Party to victory.

Freshman incumbent Rebecca Cohn is the beneficiary of both the map-makers munificence and GOP incompetence. She can set about wondering what else to run for when she is termed out in 2006.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 25** *Reg: R 45%; D 40%; DS 11%*  
**Incumbent: Dave Cogdill (R) Geography: Calaveras, Madera, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne counties and most of Stanislaus County.**

Don't let the registration numbers fool you. The Democrats here are conservative, and vote Republican. This district is smack in the middle of the Republican-trending swath that runs through the Sierra foothills from just north of Bakersfield to the Oregon border. How Republican trending is it? In 1998 every statewide GOP candidate, including Dan Lungren, carried the district. Freshman Dave Cogdill can concentrate on helping elect Republicans in adjacent, competitive seats. Democrat E. Denise Smith will be no distraction.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 26** *Reg: D 45%; R 43%; DS 8%*  
**Incumbent: Open Seat — Dennis Cardoza (D) termed out. Geography: Western Stanislaus County, eastern San Joaquin County.**

In the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, this is a seat Republicans should win, and probably will win, but the Democrats are going to make them work for it. GOP nominee Greg Aghazarian, a narrow loser to Barbara Matthews in 2000 (*see* A.D. 17), is running again in this similar, but significantly more Republican district. Aghazarian, a conservative businessman/attorney from Stockton, announced early for the seat and lined up impressive local endorsements and dollars. He was rewarded with a surprisingly easy 2-to-1 victory over fel-

low-conservative, Escalon farmer Rick Veldstra.

Democrat standard-bearer, attorney Tom Hallinan, is also a trustee of the Yosemite Community College District. In a district hostile to cultural and fiscal liberalism, he is campaigning as a moderate Democrat. President Bush's 7-point win here and Lungren's loss by only two shows a definite GOP tilt, but not so strongly as to prevent a Democrat victory under the right circumstances.

One factor that guarantees Democrat attention to the district is that it sits beneath the Condit Congressional seat (C.D. 18, Monteith vs. Cardoza) and the open 12th Senate District (Areias vs. Denham). These races will be hotly contested by both Parties. Voter registration and GOTV will be conducted with gusto. The Aghazarian/Hallinan contest will be swept along in the partisan warfare around it.

The potential GOP problem is that the well-funded Democrats, with only a small number of competitive races to absorb their cash, can buy as much campaign activity as they want to. Even if the Democrat hierarchy decides Aghazarian is the likely winner, they might continue to spend dollars here just to force the GOP to respond in kind, depleting Republicans' much-shallower treasury and their ability to fund GOP candidates in other close races. So the Democrats will make Aghazarian, a good fit for this still rural, conservative, Republican-leaning district, sweat and fight for it. But if he takes nothing for granted, he should be an Assemblyman come December.

**LIKELY REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 27    Reg: D 46%; R 30%; DS 16%**

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Fred Keeley (D) termed out. Geography: Monterey, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties.**

Like Greg Aghazarian in A.D. 26, Democrat John Laird announced early for the 27th, lining up impressive endorsements and cash. The reward for the Cabrillo College trustee was an unopposed Primary in this safely Democrat district. The GOP nominee, realtor Chuck Carter, has Republican pockets of strength to work with in Monterey County, but not nearly enough to balance the heavy Democrat turf in Santa Cruz. This largely coastal district will give Laird smooth sailing to Sacramento.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 28    Reg: D 51%; R 31%; DS 14%**

**Incumbent: Simon Salinas (D) Geography: Inland portions of Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, parts of San Benito and Santa Clara County.**

Incumbent Simon Salinas may be the only legislator in America who shares the name of the town he represents. (For the geographically handicapped, that's the city of Salinas. There isn't a town named Simon in California as far as I know.) That factoid aside, this district, with 59 percent Hispanic population and 38 percent (and growing) Hispanic voter registration, fits Salinas comfortably. Although former Assemblyman Peter Frusetta, who was fluent in Spanish, won the old 28th three times for the GOP, redistricting removed several loyal Republican areas. Republican nominee Jane Howard, though well-known and liked locally, will perform no Frusetta-esque magic.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 29    Reg: R 50%; D 37%; DS 10%**

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Mike Briggs (R) not running. Geography: Parts of Fresno, Madera, and Tulare counties.**

This district is part of the emerging GOP Central Valley "lock," so the Primary was the whole show. And quite a show it was. Both Steve Samuelian and Larry Willey are conservatives, so the contest lacked the ideological content seen elsewhere. But that didn't stop it becoming one of the state's uglier, more bitter races.

Samuelian, former staffer for popular local Congressman George Radanovich and nephew of GOP icon Karl Samuelian, was the early favorite. Reports of Samuelian's run-in with the law for soliciting a prostitute, however, threw that status into a cocked hat. Willey, a former sheriff's deputy carrying much law-enforcement support, was well-funded and ran a strong race. A couple of weeks before the Primary the contest was considered neck-and-neck. But Samuelian, perhaps showing his long political experience, lapped Willey in the last 10 days and ended up winning by a surprising margin of 12 percent. In a throw-back to what used to be a Republican strength, Samuelian was greatly aided by an effective grass-roots effort.

Not all the wounds from the Primary here have healed, a process that may take some time. But Democrat Richard Martinez need not get excited, this is

straight-ticket Republican territory, and Samuelian will take his Assembly seat come December.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 30** Reg: D 50%; R 37%; DS 10%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Dean Florez (D) not running. Geography: Parts of Fresno, Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties.**

One of the hottest races in the state will take place in this district, thanks to Democrat Primary voters. Had moderate-conservative farmer Jim Crettol won the Democrat Primary, the GOP would probably not have given this seat a second look. But the winner, by a comfortable margin, was Nicole Parra, the very liberal aide to local Congressman Cal Dooley. That Primary was closely contested most of the way and quite bitter at times. Parra's large victory margin is probably attributable to late missteps by Crettol's campaign. Parra also benefited mightily from massive help from the same left-wing juggernaut that rolled over more moderate Democrats in primaries up and down the state. She is said to be less than shy about proclaiming her liberal views, which *could* become a handicap in this slightly Republican-leaning district.

The GOP nominee is businessman, former teacher Dean Gardner. Once expected to have a tough Primary himself, he coasted to a 2-to-1 victory over the more moderate Jerry Salazar, a government biologist. The pachyderm Primary avoided the kind of vitriol in Parra/Crettol, and Salazar is actively helping Gardner woo the 40 percent of the district's voters who are Hispanic. These voters, who gave strong majorities to the 2000 "defense of marriage" initiative, should be turned off by Parra's in-your-face brand of liberalism, both fiscal and cultural.

The burning question is whether GOP funds will be sufficient to make the 30th a real priority. Republicans must defend the 10th and 15th A.D.s, and the open 26th has better registration numbers. But if Republican coffers still hold any cash for serious campaigns be-

yond those three seats, this district will likely be next in line. Bush beat Gore here by 6 points. And Matt Fong, Chuck Quackenbush, and Bill Jones all carried the district in 1998. Dan Lungren pulled a respectable 43 percent.

It will be interesting to see the giving profile of California business in this district. Nicole Parra is by no stretch of the imagination a "moderate" or "pro-business" Democrat. GOP nominee Dean Gardner ought to be close to the top of the business target list. If the GOP hierarchy targets the district, the only explanation for business staying out will be fear of offending the Democrats' Sacramento machine.

This seat is winnable for both Parties, and the U.S. Postal Service deficit might be covered from the mail in this district alone. Given sufficient Republicans resources, this race will be hand-to-hand combat down to 8 p.m. election night.

**TOSS UP**

**DISTRICT 31** Reg: D 52%; R 35%; DS 10%

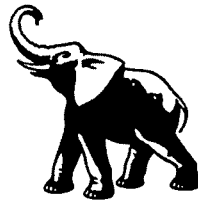
**Incumbent: Sarah Reyes (D) Geography: Northern Fresno and most of Tulare County.**

Yet another illustration of systemic problems with the GOP infrastructure. Thirty-four percent Republican registration ... 47,000 registered Republicans ... no Republican candidate on the ballot. Sarah Reyes would certainly have been re-elected, even against a strong Republican, but that's not the point. The hyper-partisan Reyes can now spend her time and money helping neighboring Democrats in tight races: Nicole Parra, say, just to pull a name out of the hat.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 32** Reg: R 53%; D 32%; DS 11%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Roy Ashburn (R) termed out. Geography: Most of Kern County and a slice of San Bernardino County's high desert.**



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make Aghazarian,  
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for it.**

An ugly GOP Primary battle royal here brought moderates one of their few victories over a conservative. Kevin McCarthy, a top aide to local Congressman Bill Thomas, bested conservative Bakersfield Councilman Mike Maggard. The difference here was Thomas's local machine and clout. Few Kern Countians are neutral about Thomas; those who love him and those who hate him were active in the McCarthy and Maggard camps respectively. The Thomas factor clearly carried the day for McCarthy, whose politics are frankly a bit out of step with a rather conservative GOP base vote here. Nonetheless, he put together a winning effort after all the fussin' and fightin' was over, besting Maggard by a relatively comfortable 7 percent.

As the southern terminus of the GOP's emerging Central Valley "lock," Democrat Michael Shea will not be a factor.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 33** *Reg: R 44%; D 36%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent:** Abel Maldonado (R)  
**Geography:** All of San Luis Obispo County and northern Santa Barbara County.

This loyal Republican seat — Bush carried it by 14 points — will allow Abel Maldonado to spend his time preparing to run for one of the Senates (state or U.S.) in 2004, instead of worrying about re-election. Democrat Lawrence Houlgate is unlikely to surpass Democrat registration.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 34** *Reg: R 48%; D 36%; DS 12%*

**Incumbent:** Open Seat — Phil Wyman (R) is running in A.D. 36. **Geography:** All of Inyo County, rural portions of Kern, San Bernardino, and Tulare counties.

In one of this year's odder developments, this solidly-Republican seat had no Primary contest. Tulare

County Supervisor Bill Maze, unopposed in the Primary, saw his potential Democrat opponent drop out before the March voting. This is another solidly Republican Central Valley district. Bush won 61 percent here in 2000; Lungren beat Davis by nine points. And Maze will be in the Assembly in December.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 35** *Reg: D 44%; R 33%; DS 16%*

**Incumbent:** Hannah-Beth Jackson (D) **Geography:** Southern Santa Barbara County and a slice of coastal Ventura County.

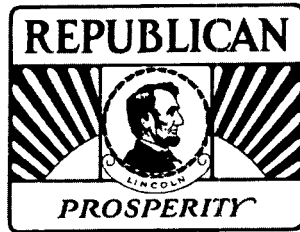
Both liberal Republican Brooks Firestone and moderate Democrat Jack O'Connell have represented his turf. To Hannah-Beth Jackson's relief, redistricting reduced the chances the new, more-dependably Democrat district will swing between Parties for a while.

Jackson's opponent, GOP nominee Bob Pohl, has the kind of resume that should resonate with the self-consciously moderate voters here: former Santa Barbara School Board member, former real estate

investment specialist, and now consultant for underperforming schools. But he faces two difficulties in addition to redistricting on the road to viability as a challenger to Jackson.

First, while the newly-redrawn district has bastions of heavy Republican registration (Montecito, Solvang, Santa Ynez), these Republicans are so "moderate" they seem eager to vote for liberal Democrats as atonement for being Republican.

Second is the more mundane concern of money. The GOP command apparatus has open Republican seats to defend, a newly-drawn open seat to snare (A.D. 26), and at least a couple of Democrat-held seats more vulnerable than this one. Even so, this District has elected Republicans at the local level in the past, and both Quackenbush and Jones carried the district in 1998. So Pohl's task is to show enough local support, savvy, and momentum in September to be considered seriously by Sacramento's pachyderm powers in October. If he



**The emerging Runner  
dynasty proved too  
much for old warhorse  
Wyman (first elected to  
the Assembly in 1978,  
a 'Prop. 13 Baby'),  
and Sharon Runner  
ran a well-executed  
campaign.**

makes that cut, this district could be in serious play. Jackson is clearly still the favorite, but by no means is a slam dunk.

#### LEANS DEMOCRAT

#### **DISTRICT 36** Reg: R 45%; D 37%; DS 13%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — George Runner (R) termed out. Geography: The Antelope Valley portion of Los Angeles County, the Victorville area of San Bernardino County.**

CPR's pre-Primary analysis called the 36th the location of "a pitched battle between two GOP high desert dynasties": the Wymans and the Runners. The Runners won, by a surprisingly large 11 percent. Hindsight indicates Phil Wyman would have been better served running in the newly-drawn, and, at one time, vacant, 34th A.D., where redistricting placed his Tehachapi home. But Wyman, never one to duck a fight, chose to stay and contest the 36th which contained more of the people he represented over the years.

The emerging Runner dynasty proved too much for old warhorse Wyman (first elected to the Assembly in 1978, a "Prop. 13 Baby"), and Sharon Runner ran a well-executed campaign. She was aided immensely by support from local hero state Senator Pete Knight and a \$200,000 "independent expenditure" campaign against Wyman by the prison guard union (CCPOA). Wyman, in the past, supported private prisons, and the union badly wanted his scalp. They got it.

But for all the heat the Primary generated, precious little ideological difference separated the candidates. Wyman is a graybeard of the California conservative movement. Sharon Runner, who will succeed her husband George in this Assembly seat, is the co-founder, with him, of the Desert Christian School. She should be a reliably conservative GOP Caucus vote. And this is rock-solid GOP country. Democrat Robert Davenport should rest on his davenport rather than waste time trying to change the certain outcome.

#### SAFE REPUBLICAN

#### **DISTRICT 37** Reg: R 46%; D 35%; DS 14%

**Incumbent: Tony Strickland (R) Geography: Most of Ventura County, the northwest portion of the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles County.**

Tony Strickland is the prime example of a Republican considered "too conservative" to win by the

experts, but not by the voters. Opposed by liberal Primary challengers, and then Democrat nominees, all repeating the "too conservative to win" mantra every time he has run, Strickland has never lost an election here. Democrats finally decided they had wasted enough money and drew him a comfortable district, now 46-to-35 percent Republican in registration.

Strickland, only 31, can thus spend his time helping elect other Republicans to the Assembly, and figure out where he lands after term limits take him from the Assembly in 2004. Democrat Bruce Thomas won't interrupt those plans.

#### SAFE REPUBLICAN

#### **DISTRICT 38** Reg: R 45%; D 36%; DS 14%

**Incumbent: Keith Richman (R) Geography: Simi Valley portion of Ventura County, the far northern parts of the San Fernando Valley in LA County.**

This is one of L.A. County's few remaining reliably Republican areas, allowing Keith Richmond the luxury of concentrating on his campaign for mayor of the San Fernando Valley, if Los Angeles voters form that city in November. Richmond's simultaneous candidacy for both Assembly and mayor might give Democrat nominee Thomas some talking points, but not enough votes to make a difference.

#### SAFE REPUBLICAN

#### **DISTRICT 39** Reg: D 60%; R 20%; DS 15%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Tony Cardenas (D) termed out. Geography: Central, western San Fernando Valley in L.A. County.**

City of San Fernando (not the city of San Fernando Valley referred to directly above) Mayor Cindy Montanez was the clear favorite going into the Primary, and her 2-to-1 win over legislative staffer Yolanda Fuentes showed she deserved that status. In what was basically an Hispanic turf battle, the Alaracons (state Senator Richard) beat the Cardenas (this district's termed-out incumbent Tony). Whoever emerged the winner of that blood battle was certain to be the Assemblyman from this heavily Democrat district come December. Republican Ely De La Cruz Ayao, while getting honorable mention in the "longest name" category, will not be mentioned by many voters on November 5.

#### SAFE DEMOCRAT

**DISTRICT 40** *Reg: D 49%; R 31%; DS 15%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Bob Hertzberg (D) termed out. Geography: The northwest portion of the San Fernando Valley in L.A. County.**

This district in the heart of the San Fernando Valley is perhaps the ultimate symbol of the shredding the far-left gave more centrist Democrats in this year's Primary. The 40th's current incumbent, Robert Hertzberg, was, until a few short months ago, speaker of the Assembly. His anointed successor was his aide, Andrei Cherny. Hertzberg used the prodigious powers of the Speakership to line up high-powered endorsements and bucketsful of cash for Cherny. Additionally, the California business community spent more than \$200,000 in "independent expenditures" to help Cherny. It wasn't enough.

Legislative aide Lloyd Levine, the candidate of the hard-left coalition that brought down Gina Papan (A.D. 19), Rod Diridon (A.D. 22) and so many others, was the easy winner (56-to-44 percent). Levine, an aide to Assemblyman John Longville and son of long-time Democrat consultant Larry Levine, enjoyed an array of local union endorsements to compliment the port-side coalition's efforts.

The Primary was nasty and brutish, but not short. Both candidates started running well before the first of the year. Both candidates were young, articulate, and aggressive. Neither candidate pulled any punches, with charges and counter-charges of low-blows flying almost daily in the campaign's closing weeks. In the end, the former Assembly Speaker, the incumbent, was repudiated by his own voters. His reputation, if not his name, was on the ballot, and he couldn't deliver.

**T**he California business community might learn a lesson: they might as well look for Amelia Earhart, Jimmy Hoffa, and Elvis as search for the elusive "moderate, pro-business" Democrat in the Legislature. If such ever really existed as a force, that force is now shattered. The few hold-overs coming back next year have been thoroughly neutered — and probably thoroughly intimidated — by the Democrat Primary electorate. Business undertook a grand "feeding the alligator" experiment that has failed. The alligators will now turn on them. And business can expect little help from either legislative house's Republican Caucuses, having spent the last three years distancing itself from its former allies there.

A slight chance exists the GOP could benefit from

the Democrat battle's venom, by some reports still flowing at Labor Day. The district has pockets of Republican strength, and GOP nominee Connie Friedman has connections and friends in both Parties. But Republican registration here is only 31 percent, and President Bush managed just 35 percent. If the GOP high-command were rolling in dough they might take a flier here, or at least make some feints to keep the Democrats tied down. But the GOP has several much more attractive opportunities around the state, which make a serious effort here unlikely.

**LIKELY DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 41** *Reg: D 49%; R 31%; DS 15%*

**Incumbent: Fran Pavley (D) Geography: A small portion of the southern San Fernando Valley and the coast of western Los Angeles and southern Ventura counties.**

Fran Pavley won this seat easily for the first time in 2000, turning back a determined Republican effort that spent nearly \$400,000. The GOP will make no such mistake this year, and Republican Michael Wissot's November vote total will be little more than his Party's 31 percent registration.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 42** *Reg: D 55%; R 23%; DS 18%*

**Incumbent: Paul Koretz (D) Geography: Most of the Santa Monica Mountains area of L.A. County.**

From wealthy Los Feliz and Toluca Lake on the east to wealthy Bel Air and Pacific Highlands on the west, this district is very rich and very Democrat. It is one of the state's few districts where President Bush actually lagged behind GOP registration, receiving only 21 percent, so freshman Paul Koretz is safe as can be. Republican Jeffrey Bissiri is not likely to eclipse Bush's mark by much.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 43** *Reg: D 45%; R 33%; DS 17%*

**Incumbent: Dario Frommer (D) Geography: Most of the city of Glendale, all of the city of Burbank, and the North Hollywood and Eagle Rock portions of Los Angeles.**

Ten years ago, not a single Democrat represented

this territory at any level of partisan government. Today, not a single Republican does so. Demographic changes and astute Democrat map-drawing helped transform this GOP turf into a Democrat bastion. Dario Frommer is safe here, especially this year. The district retains enough remnants of old Republican strength to allow the GOP to make a realistic run when circumstances are right. Unfortunately for GOP nominee Ingrid Geyer, this is not the year.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 44** *Reg: D 46%; R 34%; DS 15%*

**Incumbent: Carol Liu (D) Geography: Eastern San Gabriel Valley, including the cities of Arcadia, Pasadena, South Pasadena, and Temple City in L.A. County.**

Most of what was said above about A.D. 43 also applies here. The difference is that circumstances might exist that tempt Republicans to put this district into play. The 44th has slightly more loyal GOP registration than the 43rd. It also has precincts that give Republican candidates 75 percent of the vote (in La Canada-Flintridge, Arcadia, and a few enclaves of Pasadena). The GOP recruited an exceptionally attractive candidate, L.A. County Deputy D.A. Dan O'Connell, whose specialty is prosecuting hate-crimes. And in the Primary, only 200 more Democrats than Republicans went to the polls district-wide.

This should be, and probably was, a wake-up call for Democrat freshman incumbent Carol Liu. She proved her political abilities in 2000, when she won a tough four-way Primary, than easily won the general against a semi-celebrity (Susan Carpenter-McMillan of Paula Jones fame) on the Republican ticket. Perhaps most important, Liu has the ability to self-finance in a pinch. She put \$500,000 of her own money into the race in 2000.

This district may be too tempting of a target for the GOP apparatus to resist making at least some thrusts into. Should they show signs of paying off, this seat could see full-blown warfare through the fall. That's

still unlikely, given Liu's moxie and deep pockets. But this district bears watching.

**LIKELY DEMOCRAT**



**Carol Liu proved her political abilities in 2000, when she won a tough four-way Primary, than easily won the general against a semi-celebrity (Susan Carpenter-McMillan of Paula Jones fame).**

**DISTRICT 45** *Reg: D 60%; R 17%; DS 17%*

**Incumbent: Jackie Goldberg (D) Geography: Hollywood and nearby areas of Los Angeles.**

The 45th, with its 16 percent Republican registration is a perfect home for Jackie Goldberg, an acerbic, outspoken member of the Democrat Caucus's left-most fringe. In 2000, the 45th's voters showed their approval, giving her 95 percent of their votes. Facing no Republican and only a Libertarian opponent in November, she stands to repeat that near-unanimous victory.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 46** *Reg: D 69%; R 12%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Gil Cedillo (D) termed out. Geography: Central and eastern Los Angeles with the cities of Huntington Park and Maywood in L.A. County.**

The Primary here was an Hispanic turf-war between what can loosely be called the Villaraigosa/Cedillo and the Royball-Allard/Becerra factions. The Villaraigosa/Cedillo's won, behind the candidacy of L.A. School District Legislative Advocate Fabian Nunez. He handily defeated (57-to-32 percent) the Royball-Allard/Becerra standard bearer, Pedro Cedillo, a staffer for 33rd District Congresswoman Lucille Royball-Allard.

As with most family battles, this one became heated and left scars, which may give GOP nominee Manny Aldana, Jr., a fighting chance to beat Dan Lungren's 10 percent showing here in 1998 — or even George Bush's 12 percent in 2000.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 47** *Reg: D 67%; R 14%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent: Herb Wesson (D) Geography: Culver City and surrounding areas of Los Angeles.**

Term limits will force Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson out of office in 2004. He need not sweat this last reelection effort. A Medal of Valor with Oak Leaf Cluster, though, should go to the GOP's Keith Clemens, carrying the fight for the 13 percent of voters registered Republicans.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 48 Reg: D 73%; R 9%; DS 12%**

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Rod Wright (D) termed out. Geography: West-central Los Angeles.**

Long time L.A. City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas was expected to have an easy Primary in the 48th A.D., but supervisorial aide Mike Davis had other ideas.

Thomas put together early cash and endorsements. But Davis, not intimidated, came on strong at the end, aided greatly by the celebrity value of Magic Johnson, who spent the last several weeks actively campaigning for Davis on a daily basis. The result was a Ridley-Thomas 1,500-vote squeaker.

He need fear no such close fall race from Gerard Robinson, the GOP nominee in this district that gave

George Bush 8 percent in 2000. But, inasmuch as I have excoriated other GOP infrastructures for failing to field candidates in much better districts, I also tip the hat to the L.A. County GOP for finding brave souls like Robinson and the 47th's Keith Clemens, to show the flag at least.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 49 Reg: D 48%; R 27%; DS 20%**

**Incumbent: Judy Chu (D) Geography: Southern San Gabriel Valley, including El Monte, Alhambra, Monterey Park, Rosemead, and San Gabriel.**

Judy Chu, the first Asian to represent this area in the Legislature, won't be the last, but she will retire undefeated in 2008 when term limits force her out. Republican George Shen could run a respectable race — statewide GOP candidates still routinely pull in the low 40s here. And the district's socially conservative major ethnic groups — Latino and Asian — offer the GOP future promise.

Additionally, when Chu either retires or runs for another office, a bruising Asian-Latino Democrat Primary battle could erupt. Such prospects, however, are for future Republicans to chew on.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**



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**DISTRICT 50** *Reg: D 63%; R 18%; DS 13%*  
**Incumbent: Marco Firebaugh (D) Geography: Southeastern L.A. County.**

Latinos now comprise 57 percent of this district's registered voters, and Marco Firebaugh represents them well. Republican Gladys Miller won't change that November 5.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 51** *Reg: D 65%; R 17%; DS 13%*  
**Incumbent: Jerome Horton (D) Geography: Southwestern L.A. County, including the cities of Inglewood, Hawthorne, Gardena, and Lawndale.**

Long the stomping grounds of bombastic, proudly profane Dick Floyd, this fiercely loyal, blue-collar Democrat district is now represented by former Inglewood City Councilman Jerome Horton, a CPA in real life. Republican Cliff McClain, working with 17 percent GOP registration, wins kudos at least for running, but the incumbent is in no danger here. Horton will *not* hear a who, but rather a resounding yes, on election day.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 52** *Reg: D 74%; R 8%; DS 10%*  
**Incumbent: Open Seat — Carl Washington (D) termed out. Geography: All of Paramount, south-central Los Angeles, and northern Long Beach.**

CPR's pre-Primary analysis said "Old soldiers may never die, but at least they fade away. Not so old politicians, at least not here, in California's least Republican legislative district." Democrat Primary voters agreed, giving former Assemblyman, former state Senator, former Congressman, and former Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally 52 percent of the vote in a five-way Primary. He even beat his closest opponent better than 2-to-1, and could up that margin by a factor of 10 over Republican Mark Iles in November.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 53** *Reg: D 42%; R 36%; DS 17%*  
**Incumbent: George Nakano (D) Geography: Beach cities El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, and Redondo Beach, most of Torrance and the Venice section of Los Angeles.**

Like S.D. 28, this L.A. County South Bay district used to be solid GOP turf, and appears to be trending toward solid Democrat turf, though not there yet. Incumbent George Nakano has won here twice easily, and signs point to a repeat this year.

Yet any district with 35 percent Republican registration (only 18,000 fewer voters than the Democrats' 41 percent) won't be written off by GOP planners. Too many other, better opportunities for Republican cash may exist this year for GOP nominee Linda Wilson to hope to be officially "targeted." But President Bush did win 42 percent of the vote here, and both Quackenbush and Jones carried the district in 1998. Even Dan Lungren's 39 percent was among his highest showings in L.A. County, testimony to the loyalty of the GOP base.

As a swing district (and given the uncertainty of developments in other races), the 53rd remains in play, but with a strong pro-incumbent bias. Come 2004, though, when this seat opens, look for all-out warfare.

**LEANS DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 54** *Reg: D 44%; R 36%; DS 14%*  
**Incumbent: Allen Lowenthal (D) Geography: Most of Long Beach, the San Pedro area of Los Angeles, and Palos Verdes.**

The 54th has changed partisan hands three times in 10 years and remains competitive. Additionally, a Primary that saw GOP nominee Cesar Castellanos receive nearly 1,500 votes more than incumbent Alan Lowenthal shot this district to the top of both Parties' "watch" list.

Lowenthal advantages are being a two-term incumbent, having a nice stockpile of cash, and membership in a Democrat Assembly Caucus with far more cash than their GOP opponents. Castellanos speaks fluent Spanish, and the district's 12 percent of registered voters who are Hispanic could be key in a close race. He also has Lowenthal's voting record, which is several steps to the left of this closely-balanced district's average voter. And he has the district's Palos Verdes Peninsula portions that are heavily Republican and vote that way, up and down the ticket.

The question is: are these factors enough to interest seriously the Sacramento GOP brain trust? If they are, Lowenthal could have a battle on his hands, like his 1998 three percent victory. If not, he will likely coast to a repeat of his 20-point win in 2000. Only time — and GOP Assembly fortunes elsewhere — will answer the

question. In the meantime, the district is "in play."

**LEANS DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 55** *Reg: D 56%; R 25%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent:** Jenny Oropeza (D) **Geography:** North Long Beach, cities of Carson and Lakewood, the "Harbor Corridor" section of Los Angeles.

Former Long Beach Councilwoman Jenny Oropeza won a tough 2000 Primary when this was an open seat. That would be her last difficult election here, even had Republicans fielded a candidate.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 56** *Reg: D 52%; R 29%; DS 15%*

**Incumbent:** Open Seat — Sally Havice (D) **running for Congress.** **Geography:** Southeast Los Angeles County, including the cities of Norwalk, Cerritos, and Whittier, and the northern Orange County city of Buena Park.

Yet another patch of once-solid GOP turf turned Democrat friendly *via* demographic change and map-making legerdemain. With slightly different boundaries, the 56th changed partisan hand three times during the '90s. That was then, however, this is now — and the 56th's "now" version is solidly Democrat.

Norwalk City Councilman Rudy Bermudez carried into the Primary a slew of endorsements, including Assembly Speaker Hertzberg's and incumbent Havice's, a ton of cash, and strong labor support — enough to provide a comfortable 19-percent win over his closest challenger in a three-way Primary.

Republican John Brantuk may be an energetic campaigner, but 29 percent GOP registration gives him no chance to throw his Democrat opponent into a Bermudez triangle of a tough race in November.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 57** *Reg: D 52%; R 20%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent:** Ed Chavez (D) **Geography:** East San Gabriel Valley cities of Azusa, Baldwin Park, Covina, La Puente, and West Covina in L.A. County.

Former La Puente Mayor and current incumbent Ed

Chavez has a solid lock on this gaggle of small, San Gabriel Valley municipalities. Republican Anne Moll has small chance of mollifying their loyal Democrat voters.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 58** *Reg: D 55%; R 27%; DS 13%*

**Incumbent:** Open Seat — Thomas Calderon (D) **running for Insurance Commissioner.** **Geography:** Most of the city of East Los Angeles and the eastern L.A. County cities of Downey, Montebello, Pico Rivera, and Whittier.

This is one of the few districts in the state that saw a higher Democrat Primary turnout than Republican, fueled mainly by a tightly-contested Democrat assembly race. This is also the one district where the state's business community and its allies came out on top contesting the liberal juggernaut that swept most other Democrat Primaries.

The winner by a close, but comfortable, five percent was Ronald Calderon, sibling to current incumbent Thomas and former state Senator Chuck. The leftish loser was former state Democrat Party Vice Chairman Charles Fuentes. Victor Ronald will extend the streak of Calderon representation of this turf to nearly its third decade. Republican Dave Butler has a few pockets of GOP strength to play to, but *too* few to hear the voters say "the Butler did it" on election day.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 59** *Reg: R 48%; D 35%; DS 13%*

**Incumbent:** Dennis Mountjoy (R) **Geography:** High desert cities of Apple Valley and Hesperia in San Bernardino County, San Gabriel Valley cities of Claremont, Glendora, La Verne, Duarte, Sierra Madre, and San Dimas in L.A. County.

The newly-redrawn, Republican-friendly 59th gives a respite to Dennis Mountjoy, son of former Assemblyman and Senator Dick Mountjoy. Mountjoy had tough, sometimes bitter elections in both the Primary and general in 2000. The Democrats, giving their best shot and failing to dent him, okayed fattening up GOP registration, which now approaches 48 percent, 10 points higher than the district Mountjoy won last go 'round. These are loyal Republican San Gabriel Mountain foothills voters. Every statewide GOP candidate, including



Dan Lungren, carried the district in '98. Democrat Patrick Smith won't change those allegiances.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 60** *Reg: R 49%; D 32%; DS 15%*

**Incumbent: Robert Pacheco (R)** Geography: East Los Angeles County cities of La Mirada, La Habra Heights, Diamond Bar, and Walnut, north Orange County cities of Orange and Yorba Linda.

The state's new district lines made Former Walnut City Councilman Robert Pacheco one happy camper. Map makers moved his seat into Orange County, changing what had been a competitive (and deteriorating) Republican seat into a safe GOP bastion. Termed out in 2004, he'll have little time to enjoy his new security, but can at least cruise through this election. Democrat Adrian Martinez will be no factor.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 61** *Reg: D 50%; R 32%; DS 13%*

**Incumbent: Gloria Negrete-McLeod (D)** Geography: East Los Angeles County city of Pomona, west San Bernardino County cities of Chino, Montclair, and Ontario.

Redistricting made what had been a highly competitive district into a safe haven for the Legislature's only great grandmother. This seat had elected Republicans in the recent past, and the GOP put a scare into current incumbent Gloria Negrete-McLeod when she first won the seat in 2000. So the map makers worked their magic and eliminated any chance of a Republican repeat. GOP nominee Matt Munson might pull his Party's registration, or even a bit more, but, realistically, his expectations top out in the mid-30s.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 62** *Reg: D 58%; R 27%; DS 11%*

**Incumbent: John Longville (D)** Geography: Western San Bernardino County cities of Fontana, Rialto, Colton, and San Bernardino.

One benefit of heading the legislative committee in charge of drawing new districts is that you usually get a really great one. John Longville found himself in just such a position last year, and used it to full advantage. When term limits force him to leave in 2004 the dis-

trict will be likely to elect an Hispanic. No matter how hard Republican Ed Scott campaigns here, the Assembly will remain "Scott free" come November.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 63** *Reg: R 46%; D 38%; DS 12%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Bill Leonard (R)** termed out. Geography: Urbanized western portions of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Just as the amalgam of big business groups that tried to resuscitate liberals (as opposed to left-wingers) in Democrat Primaries got their clock cleaned, so too did the New Majority PAC (a group of Orange County fat cats) get shut-out in its attempt to elect and nurture liberal Republicans. Rancho Cucamonga Councilman Bob Dutton, the conservative in the race, benefited from long-time family GOP connections, as well as endorsements by current incumbent and local hero Bill Leonard, Congressmen David Dreier and Gary Miller, and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayer's Association. That combination was going to be hard to beat in this conservative-oriented, safe Republican seat.

**R**edlands City Councilwoman Susan Pepler gave it a game try, supported by Assemblyman Russ Bogh, Congressman Jerry Lewis, local public employee unions, and the aforementioned New Majority PAC. In the end, Dutton's hard-charging campaign, coupled with his endorsements and a conservatism that is simply a closer fit with the GOP base vote than is Pepler's ideology, gave him a fairly comfortable seven percent victory.

Everyone has kissed and made up since the Primary, and even had they not, these are loyal Republican voters but will top out there.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 64** *Reg: R 49%; D 35%; DS 12%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Rod Pacheco (R)** termed out. Geography: Riverside County communities of Moreno Valley, Palm Desert, most of the city of Riverside, and half the city of Moreno Valley.

One of the state's most convoluted primaries produced one of its more surprising results. Take a deep breath and try to follow this.

Riverside businessman Ray Horspool entered the

Primary the clear favorite as a solid conservative endorsed by local Senator Ray Haynes, Assemblyman Dennis Hollingsworth, and most of the anti-tax, pro-gun volunteer conservative GOP infrastructure. Riverside public affairs executive Lou Monville ran as a moderate, endorsed by current incumbent Rod Pacheco and the "Democrat lite" faction of the local GOP apparatus.

**S**ix weeks before the election, Monville supporters succeeded in having the San Bernardino County District Attorney invalidate Horspool's registration, which resulted in the county Registrar removing him from the ballot. This had been a bitter Primary anyway, but the Monville tactics struck a sour note among rank-and-file GOP voters not aligned with either candidate. They saw the Monville maneuver as inherently unfair.

The beneficiary was a third candidate, retired CHP Officer John Benoit. *CPR's* pre-Primary issue said "the ultimate beneficiary might not be Lou Monville, but John Benoit .... conservatives might throw their support to him, preferring to select their Republican nominee at the ballot box rather than seeing him chosen for them in a courtroom. Benoit has sufficient funding to pick up the pieces if circumstances call for it."

That is exactly what happened. Horspool's supporters joined Benoit's campaign *en masse*, helping Benoit trounce Monville 55-to-45 percent in March. There is still bad blood here, but it is between the Horspools and the Monvilles, with little of it touching Benoit. He will win easily over Democrat Robert Melsh.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 65 Reg: R 48%; D 36%; DS 11%**

**Incumbent: Scott Bogh (R) Geography: Central San Bernardino and Riverside counties including the cities of Moreno Valley, Yucaipa, Twentynine Palms, Banning, Beaumont, Hemet, and San Jacinto.**

Rich retirees and conservative, middle class families make this district a safe haven for Scott Bogh. Democrat Darrel Scholes will founder on this district's conservative shoals in November.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 66 Reg: R 52%; D 30%; DS 13%**

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Dennis Hollingsworth (R)**

**running for state Senate. Geography: Southwest Riverside County, north San Diego County including the communities of Fallbrook, Temecula, Murrieta, Lake Elsinore, and a portion of Riverside.**

Conservative rising star Dennis Hollingsworth ran for the state Senate (S.D. 36), paving the way for longtime conservative leader Ray Haynes to move from the Senate back to what is basically the district that elected him to the Legislature in 1992. On this rock-solid GOP turf, Democrat David Brostrom will do well to match Gore's 38 percent.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 67 Reg: R 48%; D 33%; DS 15%**

**Incumbent: Tom Harman (R) Geography: Northern and coastal Orange County.**

If the New Majority PAC had its way, all GOP office holders would be like Tom Harman: self consciously "moderate," at great pains not to seem unreasonably "strident," and certainly not believing in any issue or idea strongly enough actually to make a fuss about it. That, after all, would be *gauche*, and simply isn't done, don't you know, at the yacht club.

Republican voters statewide, however, don't share the Harman/New Majority view, as evidenced by the PAC's near-zero Primary batting average. Harman, and fellow Orange County moderate Lynn Daucher, are about all the New Majority has to show for the hundreds of thousands of dollars it has spent the last couple of cycles. And even Harman and Daucher would have come up losers but for the bizarre — and now unconstitutional — "open Primary" rules of 2000 that allowed Democrats to choose Republican nominees.

Luckily for Harman, the GOP base vote here is a loyal bloc, so Harman has safe sailing 'til term limits oust him in 2006. At that point, the selection of Harman's successor will be a strictly Republicans-only affair, virtually guaranteeing a more conservative occupant for this seat. Democrat William Orton will receive some GOP protest votes, but too few to make Harman sweat.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 68 Reg: R 44%; D 34%; DS 16%**

**Incumbent: Ken Maddox (R) Geography: The central Orange County cities of Costa Mesa, Garden**

**Grove, Anaheim, Fountain Valley, and Westminster.**

Redistricting transformed Ken Maddox's theretofore slightly marginal seat into steadfast GOP territory, moving Democrats into A.D. 69 to bolster Lou Correa, so Maddox will have no trouble securing his third Assembly term. This seat will be open in 2004, and should see an intense, ideologically-driven Primary fight. This year, Democrat Al Snook has no chance of snookering voters into electing a Democrat.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 69** *Reg: D 51%; R 31%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent: Lou Correa (D) Geography: Central Orange County cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana.**

Democrat map makers (*see* A.D. 68, above) pulled every possible loyal Democrat precinct into the 69th. That probably made it safe for Lou Correa, as he seeks his last Assembly term. But this seat opens up in 2004, giving Republicans a shot at reclaiming a district they held until '98. Republican Reuben Ross may run an energetic campaign this year, even if just to warm up for '04.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 70** *Reg: R 52%; D 28%; DS 16%*

**Incumbent: John Campbell (R) Geography: Southern Orange County coast including the cities of Irvine, Newport Beach, Tustin, and Lake Forest.**

Wealthy Republicans here are different from Wealthy Republicans in the San Francisco Bay Area. These GOP voters seem not a bit guilt-ridden about either their money or their Party affiliation. The result is a solidly conservative and loyally Republican district, well-represented by John Campbell. Democrat John Kane will inspire no mutiny among the voters in November.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 71** *Reg: R 55%; D 28%; DS 14%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Bill Campbell (R) termed out. Geography: Western Orange County cities of**

**Mission Viejo, Santa Margarita, and Orange, western Riverside County cities of Corona and Norco.**

In one of the Primary season's more unusual developments, the 71st, one of the state's most solidly Republican seats, like A.D. 34, saw an uncontested Primary. Orange County Supervisor Todd Spitzer parlayed a huge bankroll and a slew of endorsements from local GOP heavyweights into a TKO: no other Republican filed.

He will breeze into office come November, as Democrat Beatrice Foster will get the deep freeze treatment from these loyal Republican voters.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 72** *Reg: R 49%; D 33%; DS 13%*

**Incumbent: Lynn Daucher (R) Geography: Northeastern Orange County cities of Anaheim, Brea, Fullerton, Orange, Placentia, and Yorba Linda.**

Lynn Daucher, like Tom Harman, would not hold office except for a Blanche Dubois act in 2000: relying on the kindness of strangers, *i.e.*, Democrats, who voted in the Republican Primary, giving her the victory. Like Harman, she is safe in this loyal GOP seat, and like Harman she terms out in 2006. Also like Harman, given a genuinely Republican 2006 Primary, she will almost certainly be succeeded by a more conservative member.

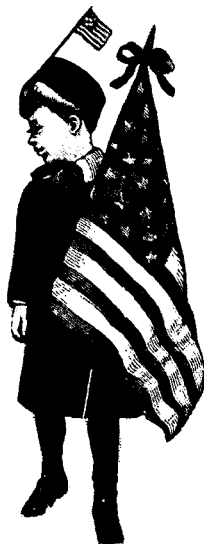
**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 73** *Reg: R 51%; D 28%; DS 16%*

**Incumbent: Pat Bates (R) Geography: Coastal areas of south Orange and north San Diego counties.**

Former Laguna Niguel Mayor and Councilwoman Pat Bates represents one of California's more beautiful stretches Pacific coast, which also happens to be home to some of California's most loyal Republican voters. They gave Bush a 20 percent margin over Gore in 2000, and Lungren a 13 percent win over Davis in '98. As with Ken Maddox's 68th, the 73rd will see an intense ideological struggle in 2004, when term limits open the seat.

But for now, all is pacific along the coast. Democrat



Kathleen Calzada will make no waves November 5.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 74** *Reg: R 47%; D 30%; DS 17%*

**Incumbent: Mark Wyland (R) Geography: North San Diego County communities of Carlsbad, Escondido, Encinitas, San Marcos, and Vista.**

The 74th saw a tough, expensive, ideologically-driven 2000 Primary fight, won by local businessman Mark Wyland. He can now coast in this coastal district, where the GOP base is loyal enough to have given Lungren a 10 percent victory margin and Bush one of 15 percent. Democrat John Herrera will get a seat on the local Central Committee, but not in the Legislature.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 75** *Reg: R 47%; D 29%, DS 19%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Charlene Zettel (R) running for state Senate. Geography: Northern portion of San Diego, San Diego County communities of Escondido and Poway.**

A slam, bam, tightly-contested Primary resulted in a slam, bam, tight-as-could-be finish in the 75th. The top three vote-getters were separated by less than 1,800 votes. Finishing first with 30 percent was George Plescia, chief of staff to Senator Bill Morrow, and, like his boss, a strong conservative. Second place, with 27 percent, went to Escondido Mayor Lori Pfeiler, the most liberal of the five candidates. Former San Diego County Sheriff Jim Roache, also a solid conservative, finished a close third at 25 percent. Technology consultant Greg Stein, who ran on a mainly — though not exclusively — conservative platform, finished fourth with 10 percent

According to CPR's pre-Primary analysis, "A much closer outcome [than actually occurred], however, is probable, and if the conservative vote is widely spread between Plescia, Roach, and Stein, Pfeiler could put this seat in the liberal column with a 30 percent plurality." The mayor came within 1,267 votes of doing just that. Plescia won because he was seen as the conservative with the best chance to win by just enough of the GOP conservative base. Conservative candidates received 65 percent of the votes, yet local Republicans almost found them-

selves represented by a liberal. A lesson in that, one might think.

But having emerged victorious, Plescia can look forward to a slam dunk, not slam-bam, general election. Democrat Connie Witt will find the voters witless on election day.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 76** *Reg: D 40%, R 34%; DS 19%*

**Incumbent: Christine Kehoe (D) Geography: Most of San Diego.**

While the liberal voting habits of much of the 76th's Decline-to-State registration gives this district a distinctly Democrat tilt, a Democrat registration number this low will always draw covetous Republican eyes. Former San Diego Councilwoman Christine Kehoe easily won what was initially thought to be a tough race in 2000, when this was an open seat.

The right set of circumstances — a strong top of the ticket GOP performance coupled with a strong local candidate — could put this seat in play. The Primary returns supply supporting evidence: Kehoe received only 3,000 more votes than her GOP opponent, Bob Divine. Divine is not considered a particularly strong candidate, and Kehoe is clearly the favorite, but the district itself carries enough possibilities that the GOP will keep an eye on developments here.

**LIKELY DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 77** *Reg: R 47%; D 31%; DS 16%*

**Incumbent: Jay LaSuer (R) Geography: South and east San Diego County.**

Former San Diego Policeman Jay La Suer won a knockdown, drag-out Primary brawl in 2000 when this was an open seat. No such fisticuffs erupted this year. Loyal Republicans and conservative Democrats will "back the badge." November voters will leave Democrat Sarah Lowery in a salty mood.

**SAFE REPUBLICAN**

**DISTRICT 78** *Reg: D 42%; R 36%; DS 16%*

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Howard Wayne (D) termed out. Geography: About a quarter of San Diego and the cities of Chula Vista and Lemon Grove.**

The 78th's Democrat Primary was great for political

junkies who enjoy mean, nasty, personal grudge matches. And those feelings extended beyond the main combatants — two of the Primary's main candidates — trial lawyer Tim Cohelan and former Gray Davis aide Vincent Hall. You see Cohelan is also Senator John Burton's nephew, and as you might have heard, a slight spat (of Hiroshima proportions) continues to exist between Burton and Davis.

The Primary played out in interesting ways, with Cohelan and Hall both campaigning as *my* liberal candidates, bashing each other relentlessly. This opened the door for a third candidate to compete seriously, San Diego Councilman George Stevens. In fact, as reported in *CPR's* pre-Primary edition, Stevens led for much of the Primary campaign. However, Sacramento's Democrat powers decided Stevens's pro-life and other, non-leftist positions gave him no place in their Party, so they engineered a late shift to Hall, who ended up beating Stevens by 1,000 votes. You didn't read about this heavy-handed Democrat power-play to keep even one pro-life vote from their Caucus? You didn't read anguished media editorials about the lack of "diversity" among Sacramento Democrats? Go figure.

All this Democrat sound and fury has given GOP nominee Chula Vista Mayor Shirley Horton an opening to contest this seat seriously, which, at most, only leans Democrat anyway. Horton is an attractive, articulate candidate. The local San Diego GOP has committed to an all-out funding effort in this district, which, in turn, has caught the eye of the Sacramento GOP apparatus. Look for heavy spending and hot campaigning in the fall. Democrat Primary scars remain, and, though this is a "moderate" district by most accounts, donkey nominee Hall has distinctly left-of-center views. In addition, his former boss Davis may not be an asset come election day.

#### TOSS UP

**DISTRICT 79** Reg: D 47%; R 31%; DS 16%

**Incumbent: Juan Vargas (D) Geography: San Diego County's far southern coast to the Mexican border.**

With a Latino voting base of 40 percent, this district provides Juan Vargas a comfortable home. Republican Mark Fast won't be nearly quick enough to upset that.

#### SAFE DEMOCRAT

**DISTRICT 80** Reg: D 46%; R 38%; DS 13%

**Incumbent: Open Seat — Dave Kelly (R) termed**

**out. Geography: Imperial County, Riverside County's east portion.**

The 80th provided two interesting primaries, and promises a tightly contested race in the fall. Former Coachella School Board member Joey Acuna, Jr., ended up easily winning what had been expected to be a tough Democrat Primary against Cathedral City Councilman Gregory Pettis (68-to-22 percent). Acuna had previously run underfunded but respectable campaigns against Jim Battin and Dave Kelley, and this may have convinced the left-wing Democrat alliance, victorious in so many other races, to stay out of this one. Acuna is no conservative, but Pettis was much further left, and fit the profile of candidates supported by the alliance elsewhere. The district's 35 percent Hispanic registration may also have been a factor in the leftists' decision.

**R**epublican Senator Jim Battin's Legislative Aide Bonnie Garcia was an equally easy winner. She crushed La Quinta Mayor John Pena 60-to-26 percent, and emerged from the Primary in no worse than a tie with Acuna. Both Parties have pockets of strength in this district and both candidates have a loyal voting base to appeal to. Both Parties place the 80th near the top of their target lists, so the fall campaign will be a no-holds-barred affair. The GOP sees this as a chance (perhaps along with C.D. 51) to score a breakthrough with the San Diego Hispanic communities. Republican candidates running in both districts are attractive, articulate, conservative, Hispanic women. The question for the GOP may come down to finances and prioritizing opportunities around the state.

Incumbent Dave Kelley decided to retire, rather than spend two more years as the most reliable Democrat vote in the GOP Assembly Caucus. But it is a GOP seat, at least on paper, so Party leaders see it as a "defend" situation and will battle fiercely for it. But if A.D.s 17 or 26 offer greener pastures come mid-October, tough decisions may have to be made.

The Democrats view the 80th as a prime "take-away" opportunity, and, unlike the GOP, need not be particularly careful in setting spending priorities. The district has a 47-to-35 percent Democrat registration edge, so Acuna certainly starts the fall campaign with advantages. But Republican Garcia has shown herself to be a strong candidate and able fund-raiser in her own right. This race will be fascinating to watch, and should remain close to 8 p.m., election night.

#### TOSS-UP

# California Senate

BY WILLIAM E. SARACINO

MEMBER, CPR EDITORIAL BOARD

**D**ISTRICT 2    *Registration: D 50%; R 29%; DS 14%*  
Incumbent: Wes Chesbro (D); Geography: All or part of Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Napa, Solano & Sonoma counties.

Republicans used to be able to hold their own — and with some regularity actually win — in these north coast and wine-country districts. Don Clausen represented the area in Congress throughout the '60s and '70s, while Don Sebastiani and Bev Hansen were sent to the Assembly through the 1980s.

But that was then, and this is now. Senate District 2 is only 49 percent Democrat, but is 14 percent “Decline To State” — with most such voters DTS because they think the Democrats aren’t liberal enough! To wit, Ralph Nader received 8 percent of the vote for president in 2000.

That lingering after-taste you’re detecting is not a heady cabernet or well-behaved Merlot. Rather it is a rock-solid Democrat district, that Wes Chesbro will hold with considerably more ease than his 1998 margin of 51 to 42 percent over wine scion John Jordan. Republican Peggy Redfearn, despite her felicitous last name for this *tres*-Green district, will plant no roots in the state Senate.

**SAFE DEMOCRAT**

**DISTRICT 4**    *Reg: R 45%; D 36%; DS 13%*

Incumbent: Open Seat — Maurice Johannessen (R) termed out. Geography: All or parts of Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, and Yuba counties.

One of the state’s most interesting primaries occurred in this district this year, and it ended up being a morality play. The moral was “don’t be the deciding Republican vote for a Gray Davis budget that increases taxes.” That’s just what Assemblyman Dick Dickerson was last year, over the vociferous objections of the Assembly GOP leadership. The result, in breathtakingly swift order, was a changing of district lines to include Assemblyman Sam Aanestad’s base of Grass Valley, and a *jihad* among Dickerson’s Assembly pachyderm colleagues to make of him an object lesson.

They succeeded thoroughly, and Dickerson was buried, 57 to 43 percent, in the GOP Primary. Lots of “independent expenditure” money on both sides of this contest basically balanced out. The outcome was no great surprise, given Sacramento Valley Republicans’ conservative instincts. It was a victory for the GOP’s conservative infrastructure. Judging by Assembly Republicans’ greater-than-usual discipline on this year’s budget — lasting all the way to the Labor