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Schwarzenegger's classic revival

I really enjoyed "Arnold Schwarzenegger, Reviving a classic film role," (John Kurzweil, *CPR*, Nov./Dec.) — combining one of my all-time favorite films with what I have long considered an absolutely accurate assessment of our governor: a weather vane with no real convictions of his own, except perhaps for a consistent determination to serve himself. He's done well in movies and, going by reports I have read, in various business ventures, by giving his customers what they wanted.

That works, in a way, in business, but not as head of a Party at odds with another Party that controls the Legislature. Giving the customers whatever they want in that context means first telling Republicans what they wanted to hear (Milton Friedman, Ronald Reagan) as long as they were buying a candidate to replace Gray Davis, then switching to tell Democrats what *they* want to hear when you see they are better able to reward or punish you.

As for journalists like Dan Weintraub, they are part of a profession that long ago forgot all about the romantic ideal of a free press serving the truth. If you want their attention, show them power. Weintraub's column was merely reciting the standard formula: as long as it wins, it is right; if it's a lie that wins today, it is right today; if it is a truth that loses, it is wrong or, more to the point, unimportant, at least until it figures out how to win. In the meantime, they urge everyone to follow the course they are on: attach yourself to whatever seems to be moving, and never mind where it is taking you — just be sure you jump off the minute you see the momentum shift to some new center. Then flock there.

During World War II, Hollywood knew how to answer this sort of thing: with films like *Casablanca*, inspiring us all to grow up and move beyond it.

Richard Sylvester
San Bernardino

Reversing *Kelo*

My thanks to the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assoc. ("Imminent peril," Jon Coupal, *CPR*, Nov./Dec.) for its continuing efforts to reverse *Kelo*. Without property rights, there is no law; without law, there is no freedom

Catherine Rodriguez
Studio City

Criswell — still amazing

The Amazing Criswell ("Three Los Angeles Prophets," Charles A. Coulombe, *CPR*, Nov./Dec.) was a man ahead of his time. "Can our whirling, turning, churning earth last out the night?" Indeed! Were he alive and talking that way today, Criswell probably would be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, receive it, and be toasted worldwide as sage, seer, and soothsayer extraordinaire.

Come to think of it, I just saw, during the current heavy rainstorm with its high winds, several garbage cans roll across my street, although not, in fairness, "for no apparent reason," so I suppose the corrosion may not yet be so advanced as to spell the end of the Earth. And that's just as well. Nothing fouls up the fun of predicting The End as quickly or thoroughly as real indications that it may actually be here.

John Williams
Chico

CPR

SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

The governor's announcement of support for Proposition 93 caught most of Sacramento off-guard, and caused polar opposite reactions in the partisan caucuses here. The GOP members — elected officials and staff of all persuasions from steel-spined conservative to wishy-washy moderate — were appalled. The Democrats were delighted and surprised.

First, the Democrat reaction. They were delighted because the governor still has some good-will left with the electorate — a commodity he may well not have after this year's budget debacle. So he likely gave a boost to what was clearly a failing effort.

But in unguarded moments, Democrat legislators, staff, and their friends among Third House types were positively giddy ... because, one, the governor received absolutely nothing for it which, two, leads them to interpret this as Schwarzenegger's final, ultimate surrender to his ostensible partisan foes.

The weak, unenforceable Democrat promise to support a future Common Cause re-districting measure was minuscule even for a fig-leaf, and transparent to boot. Nobody in Sacramento on any side of this issue believes the Democrats will lift a

finger to help the Common Cause measure. So the Democrats scored not only a sizable victory on term-limits but also a Schwarzenegger admission that his Sacramento status is eunuch — a plaything the Dems may use and discard at whim.

Remember that this governor flat-out said, dozens of times, that he would not support modifying term limits without a companion ballot measure to deal with redistricting. The Demo-



crats laughed at him, delivered no redistricting ballot measure, and, in effect, dared him to do anything about it. Even so, this absolute white flag he ran up stunned even long-time Capitol observers.

Now Democrats will do what they would have done anyway: support Schwarzenegger's plan to socialize private insurance in California and raise taxes while doing so. Your *Spectator* cannot remember ever seeing Democrats quite so pleased with themselves — or so contemptuous of a vanquished foe.

Given the above you can understand that the mood among GOP types was sul-
len, bitter, even morose. GOP legislators in particular believed, at the very least, that the governor's ego and pride would stop him from giving away the store for nothing in return. The consensus here is that his will to fight, against Democrats anyway, is absolutely gone and that he will spend the rest of his term in roll-over mode.

All this presages interesting times in the Tomato for spectating, but bad times for citizens interested in good public policy. Late last year Republican appointees in the governor's administration were warned to expect a "sharp left turn." This is apparently just the beginning. Given this betrayal of his own promises, the reasons for Schwarzenegger remaining a Republican dwindle down to ... well, a handful of dust.

And, in closing, a tid-bit from one of the many fronts in the P.C. wars: *WorldNet-Daily* reports that a textbook being used in middle schools defines "jihad" as working to convince others to take up worthy causes, like funding medical research. You know, like that good-will tour at Islam's birth when, all the way from Spain on through Northern Africa and the Middle East to the Asian Pacific, it worked to convince others to take up, well, Islam, or else — just like boy scouts out doing their daily good deeds.

— A.P.C.