

were presented in various ways to the voters. As they always do, voters responded positively to our core conservative ideas when they were presented in positive and interesting ways. As ol' Willie Shakespeare had Cassius say to Brutus, the fault lies not in our stars, but in ourselves. Our nominees and leaders forgot Ronald Reagan's banner of "bold colors" and opted for the "pale pastels" of moderation to get us through on the historical tide of sixth year defeats for the incumbent White House Party. Such a result was not in the stars.

Here in California the Lungren campaign was a case of suicide. As nice as the people who ran that campaign are, there wasn't a seasoned political warhorse among them. By that I mean someone who had gone up against the best and the brightest that the Democrats have. Because of this, Lungren was out-maneuvered almost daily during the critical last three weeks of the election, a time when most voters solidified their choice. The result was sadly predictable. We sent the political equivalent of our junior league board of directors into the Oakland Raiders locker room and expected them to emerge on the other side without a hair out of place. The resulting unsightly carnage should not have surprised anyone.

That's the past now — what of tomorrow? One of the few advantages of getting older is the perspective it provides. My first political campaign was the 1964 Goldwater for president effort, which received all of 34 percent of the vote in California. As I tell friends of mine, when *that* is your first election night, things never, ever get any worse.

However, I still carry lessons from that debacle. The main one being that the press and the moderate Republicans are always wrong in their postmortems. Literally every *two years* since 1964 I have heard exactly the same thing. "So and so" was just too conservative to win. That's when the GOP loses. When the GOP wins, it is "well, the victory would have been much more sweeping if the right-wingers had just shut up." It never fails. These people said Barry Goldwater had destroyed the Republican Party as a viable institution and had single-handedly killed the two-party system. They really said that! These same people — the forebears of our John Jacobs, George Skeltons, and Tony Quinns — said it was pure idiocy and suicide to nominate Ronald Reagan for governor. All the "realists" in the GOP knew Reagan would be annihilated by Pat Brown. All the "realists" in the GOP

knew San Francisco Mayor George Christopher was the *only* Republican with a chance of getting elected. On and on it went — and on and on it goes, every two years like clockwork. When Senator-elect Fitzgerald won his primary in Illinois, these Cassandras moaned that we had just re-elected Carol Mosely Braun. The same with Jim Bunning in Tennessee. These folks never tire of being wrong and never, ever change their tune. Which is fine — unless we forget history and start to believe them!

Your hear now that the issues of guns and abortion killed the GOP. Lungren botched the abortion issue sadly, and neither he nor anyone else on the statewide ticket engaged on the gun issue. In fact, the *only* legislative campaign where guns were a major factor saw pro-Second Amendment Democrat Joe Baca defeat GOP nominee Eunice Ulloa for a Senate seat.

Ulloa attacked Baca for being too close to the NRA. Sarah Brady even mailed against Baca. Baca got 60 percent of the vote. Don't look for this analysis in your local newspaper.

The conservative banner has many bold colors to it. It is up to us to be bright enough to know how to sell our philosophy as a whole to an electorate that agrees with us overwhelmingly — on the whole.

The immediate future might look dark. The next two years will bring us setbacks and defeats. Yet a new day will dawn, as surely as the previous day set. The great conservative victories of this century — 1966, 1980, and 1994 — took place for two reasons: First, because liberals let their mask slip and accidentally revealed their true selves and true plans to the American people; Second, because the conservative movement was ready for that moment with a broad-based, positive, and persuasive agenda to present as an alternative.

We can't control the timing of the next liberal meltdown. But we can be certain it will come. It's up to each of us to make sure our movement is ready to seize the moment and lead our state and country to a bright tomorrow.

TIM W. FERGUSON

It's pretty well established by now that, contrary to what we were told on Election Night, this was not a national or state election that was decided by ethnic or ra-

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cial minorities or by a big turnout of blue-collar unionists. The Republican Party's downfall in California, as elsewhere, resulted from middle-class to affluent whites either not voting or voting for Democrats.

Leading the defection, in an increasing drift to the left, were women. There's some evidence that the Dems' raising of abortion and gun control issues accelerated that trend. But the comfortable class was just as broadly moved by the money and skillful messages of the Iron Triangle of the now-dominant Party of California:

— Public employee unions, foremost the California Teachers Association but also including the prison guards (thanks, Pete, for building them up), the state and local police and fire unions, and the nurses (a quasi-public union).

— Command-and-control environmentalists, especially the League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club.

— The trial lawyers, who bankrolled much of the campaign.

You saw this threesome's handiwork in nearly every mailer and broadcast ad — and those ads, often coordinated with the state Democrat Party, were devastating.

Until such time as the GOP finds issues with which to get between these groups and the majority electorate, it will be intimidated in the governing process and beaten at the polls. It's easy to find fault with many of the Republican candidates in 1998, but it took an extraordinary personality (or one with a weak Democrat opponent) to survive in the competitive races this time. The reason is that "education," "the environment," and "consumer protection" (vs. HMOs or Big Tobacco of late) have been ceded to the Dems.

But how to reach a contented, indulgent, and largely inattentive electorate? No easy answers. Discouraging as it may be for Republicans to hear this, it may take a recession — when taxes to fund activist government hurt, when regulations really begin to scare off jobs, when a class-action attorney's greed is particularly odious — before the minority GOP can again drive a wedge between voters and the statist triumvirate behind the Democrats. Meantime, don't help feed the enemy, such as by padding "public safety" payrolls.

Energizing trade unions, especially linked as they are to Latinos in California, did Republicans no good in 1998. But while repairing relations with these two sectors will help to cushion the GOP in years ahead, it will

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—Tim W. Ferguson

Republicans cannot passively wait for Democrats to make fatal errors. They cannot trounce Democrats by engaging in a soft-sell campaign to moderate voters without providing real issues to feed their base.

—Mary Louise Frawley

not get to the heart of what wracked the Party in November.

MARY LOUISE FRAWLEY

Republicans' 1998 campaign strategy seems to have been built on a prayer — that public horror over the Monica Lewinsky scandal would translate into huge GOP victories. According to this scenario, Clinton's shenanigans would so enrage conservatives — especially Christian Coalition types — that they would flock to the polls while disheartened Democrats stayed home. Meanwhile, Republicans could concentrate all their efforts on reaching out to moderate swing voters.

Back in August, when Clinton first admitted to his relationship with Lewinsky, that upbeat scenario for Republican victory seemed all but certain to play out.

In California, Republican candidates in Democrat leaning districts actually expected to win. Scandal-driven polls launched Matt Fong into a lead over Barbara Boxer in the Senate race and Dan Lungren into a standoff with Gray Davis for governor. Fong scored points attacking Boxer for being slow to condemn the president's affair, while Lungren gained plaudits for TV commercials where he announced that character was the essential quality for any candidate.

The Monica strategy was paramount to Republicans nationally. In fact, it overrode other policy decisions: According to Republican consultant Dan Shnur, it was Republican Congressional leaders' fear of a government

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