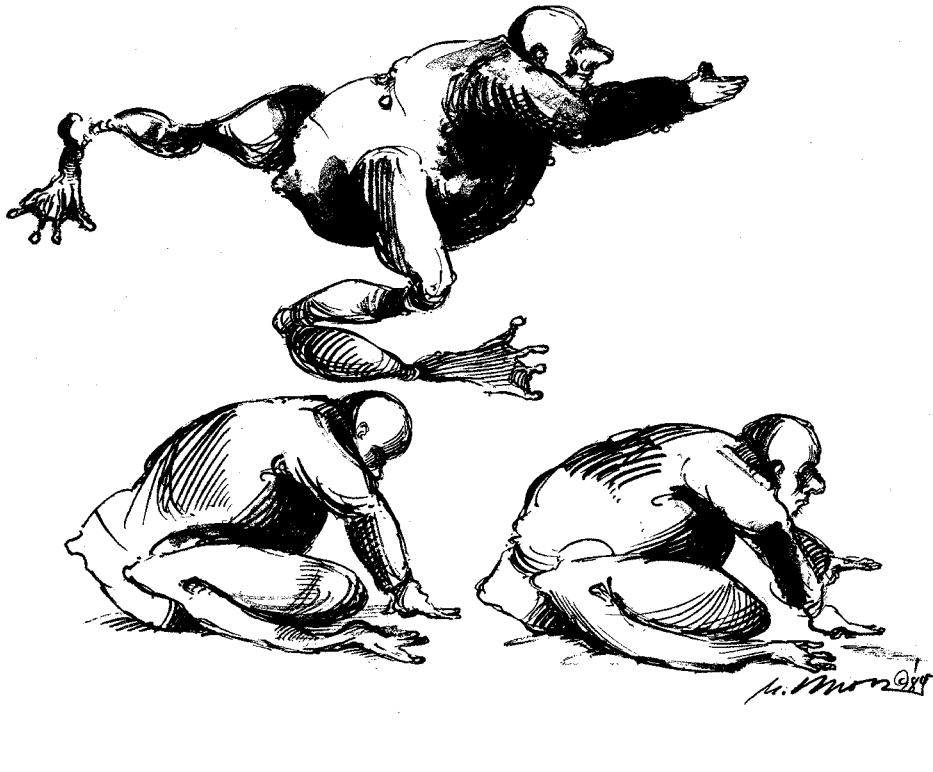


August 2, 2004

The race for recognition



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Top Story

Party conventions hold little drama, but they do allow ambitious governors to reach a huge audience in hopes of one day leaving state politics to make good on the national scene.

SNCJ Spotlight

Democratic Governors Compete for National Spotlight

Coming in second doesn't usually bode well for career-driven lawmakers, but don't tell that to IOWA Gov. Tom Vilsack (D), whose recent stint on the short list of vice-presidential candidates has made him a rising national star in the Democratic Party. Vilsack was in high demand last week at the Democratic National Con-

vention, being sought out regularly by reporters from both the print and electronic national media that he says did not even know his name just a few short years ago. But Vilsack was only one of a large number of Democratic governors who came to Boston with dual agendas: to officially place MASSACHUSETTS Sen. John Kerry on top of the Party's presidential ticket while also staking a claim on their own political futures.

Vilsack, who is also the chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, was clearly one of the convention's most sought after people. The Iowa governor and his wife, Christie, were in constant motion, being shepherded via limousine to more than 50 events, which many viewed as a reward for their early endorsement of Kerry's campaign. NEW YORK delegate Stuart Shapiro summed up how many felt about the runner-up to eventual vice-presidential selection John Edwards when he said that Vilsack was "important to the party and the political landscape nationally" and "part of the foundation of the new Democratic leadership."

But while Vilsack was clearly a focal point of the media's attention, a collection of fellow Democratic governors were also working hard to load their barns with political hay. Kathleen Sebelius of KANSAS, Mark Warner of VIRGINIA, Janet Napolitano of ARIZONA, Rod Blagojevich of ILLINOIS, Jim McGreevey of NEW JERSEY, Jennifer Granholm of MICHIGAN, John Baldacci of MAINE and Ed Rendell of PENNSYLVANIA used the high-profile event to network, make speeches and generally work toward advancing their careers to the national level.

Sebelius was also among the early mentions for the VP slot, but fell out of that race early. But Party managers love that she managed to win a heavily Republican state like Kansas, giving them hope that she could help influence the Sunflower State to lean Kerry's way in November. Kansas voted for President George W. Bush in 2000. Although she spent the week giving the standard "I just want to be governor of (fill in the name)" speech that most governors gave when questioned about their future ambitions, nobody would be surprised if a Kerry win lures her into a national position.

Arizona's Napolitano is another governor who drew speculation about joining the ticket. That talk also ended quickly, but based on her role in the convention, she has reserved a seat on the Party's fast track. Napolitano was granted a

*State Recaps
available this
week on the
State Net Web site*

AK, AL, CO, CT, FL, GA,
HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY,
LA, MD, ME, MN, MO, MS,
NC, NE, NH, NM, OK, RI,
SC, SD, TN, UT, VA, VT,
WA, WI, WV, WY

2003-04 State Session
Recaps showcase legislative
statistics for each state.



place in GEORGIA” or “Kentucky: The first state to recognize same-sibling marriage.” Fletcher laughed but countered with suggestions of his own on how Los Angeles, where the show is taped, could improve its often-troubled image. Fletcher suggested. “LA: Come for the silicone, stay for the Botox” and “LA: Married, divorced, remarried, all in about an hour.” But the appearance was no laughing matter to the people working to market the Bluegrass State. A representative of the marketing firm hired to coordinate the state’s branding campaign said that “when you have negative stereotypes out there, as Kentucky has, you have to take those on.” (COURIER JOURNAL [LOUISVILLE])

GOVERNORS IN BRIEF: Citing a need to stay home and work on his reelection campaign, **INDIANA** Gov. Joe Kernan (D) became the first Hoosier State governor in nearly 25 years to bypass the Democratic National Convention (INDIANAPOLIS STAR). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) reaffirmed that he is considering calling for a special election next year to ask voters to return the Golden State Legislature to a part-time basis. California is one of only four states with full time lawmakers, the other three being **MICHIGAN**, **NEW YORK** and **PENNSYLVANIA** (WASHINGTON POST).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Budget & taxes

CALIFORNIA PASSES BUDGET: The CALIFORNIA Legislature passed a \$105 billion state budget last week, ending a 26-day standoff between lawmakers and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) that had become heated in recent weeks. The plan calls for no new taxes — fulfilling one of Schwarzenegger’s campaign pledges — but relies on billions of dollars in borrowing to avoid most of the cuts in government services the governor had requested. Lawmakers also rejected the deal the governor negotiated in June that would have guaranteed future funding for local governments in exchange for their acceptance of deep cuts over the next two years. That issue, which had constituted the main sticking point in negotiations, was settled last Monday, when legislative leaders agreed to require a two-thirds vote to borrow from cities and counties and to limit such borrowing to twice every 10 years. Other major stum-

bling blocks were overcome when lawmakers resolved to soften a law allowing workers to sue their bosses over minor labor violations and to postpone talks over another law restricting school districts from contracting with private companies for noninstructional services. The agreement came just one week after the governor had appeared at a series of rallies, during which he referred to Democratic lawmakers as “girlie men” and called on voters to remove them from office. While most observers pointed to State Controller Steve Westley’s announcement that he would not be able to make the month’s \$500 million payment to K-12 schools, community colleges and transportation agencies unless a budget was passed as the reason for the sudden movement on negotiations, Senate President Pro Tem John Burton (D) quipped that it was because he and his colleagues

“accepted the fact that we were really ‘girlie men.’” The agreement ends the most trying period in the governor’s eight months in office, which saw the first serious criticism of his administration and a seven-point drop in his approval rating (from 64 percent two months ago to 57 percent). That largely explains why Schwarzenegger, despite failing to get much of what he’d asked for, was characteristically upbeat about the deal. “I said many times, when I was lifting weights and shooting for a 500-pound lift and maybe ended up at 495, I was still happy to get it done.” (USA TODAY, LOS ANGELES TIMES, SACRAMENTO BEE)

Bird’s eye view



Cheap government?

Most people would never call governance a bargain, but perhaps they should. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the annual cost of running a state legislature is \$47.5 million, or only about .02 percent of all state government spending. Not surprisingly, the most expensive state legislature is in CALIFORNIA, where 120 full-time lawmakers oversee a population of 35.4 million. With all those large staffs and lawmaker salaries starting at \$99,000, the Golden State spends \$280 million a year on its legislative body, or \$8 for each Californian. In contrast, WYOMING’s part-time legislature runs only \$5.5 million a year. The Equality State’s per person cost, however, is almost \$3-per-person higher at \$10.99. The map below shows the most and least expensive state legislatures.





nan's last-minute effort to provide tax relief to residents hit hard by last year's court-ordered property tax reassessments. Lawmakers did manage to push some legislation through both houses in spite of the tensions, however, including a bill that will grant civil immunity to gun owners whose weapons are stolen and later used in a crime; a measure creating a commission to consider pay increases for legislators, judges and prosecutors; and a slew of economic-development proposals that were stuffed into a single bill (ASSOCIATED PRESS, JOURNAL AND COURIER [LAFAYETTE]). • The ALASKA Legislature closed its 2004 session with a budget that significantly increased funding for K-12 education, but without a long-term fiscal plan, which Gov. Frank Murkowski (R) had urged lawmakers to pass to cover the state's chronic budget shortfalls. Lawmakers also came close to approving but ultimately failed to pass a 60-cents-per-pack tobacco tax, a measure that will likely resurface next session. Legislators did, however, pass more than a third of the 1,132 bills and resolutions introduced during the session, covering such issues as Senate vacancies (HB 414), graduated drivers' licenses (HB 213), senior health benefits (HB 374), fish and meat labeling (HJR 25 and HJR 32), end-of-life health care (HB 25) and open meetings law (HB 563) (JUNEAU EMPIRE).

POLITICS IN BRIEF: Opponents of a CALIFORNIA proposition that would mandate partisan primary elections asked a court last week to throw the measure off the Nov. 2 ballot, contending it violates the state constitution's single subject requirement. The measure, Prop. 60 was placed on the ballot by lawmakers

in June to counter another measure, Prop. 62, which would establish nonpartisan primaries. To make Prop. 60 more appealing to voters, lawmakers added an unrelated provision allocating funds from the sale of surplus state property toward paying down the state's debt. A ruling on the issue is expected soon, with the Nov. ballot scheduled for printing this month (SACRAMENTO BEE).

... unquote

"We again proved that working together, Democrats and Republicans working together, we can do the impossible."

— **Schwarzenegger after lawmakers had agreed on a budget.**
(LOS ANGELES TIMES)

Quote...

"If they don't have the guts to come up here in front of you and say, 'I don't want to represent you, I want to represent those special interests, the unions, the trial lawyers. If they don't have the guts, I call them girlie men.'"

— **CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) chiding Legislative Democrats that he claimed were catering to special interests during the state's annual budget battle.**
(ASSOCIATED PRESS)

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*



Hot Issues

B **BUSINESS:** A **MISSOURI** appeals court upholds a Show Me State law that bars cities, counties and the state from suing gun manufacturers who have legally sold their products. The decision stems from a 1999 suit brought by the city of St. Louis against several gunmakers (**JEFFERSON CITY NEWS TRIBUNE**). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) vetoes SB 1492, legislation that would have exempted the state’s natural hot springs from the same kind of regulations that govern public swimming pools and spas. The governor said local officials should be allowed to decide what bodies of water in their areas are covered by the state regulations (**LOS ANGELES TIMES**). • **PENNSYLVANIA** Attorney General Jerry Pappert files suit against the nation’s largest maker of bulletproof vests, claiming the company hid information about life-threatening flaws while still heavily marketing in the state. The suit asks for reimbursement for police departments that bought the suspect vests (**PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE**).

CRIME & PUNISHMENT: The **MASSACHUSETTS** Supreme Judicial Court orders the state to free poor criminal defendants if they are not provided a lawyer within seven days, and to dismiss any charges entirely if defendants go 45 days without a lawyer. The court blamed “chronic underfunding” of legal services to the poor for a lack of attorneys willing to take on cases involving indigent clients. Lawyers had asked the court to simply raise the pay rates for such cases, but the justices ruled that any pay hikes should be a function of the Legislature (**BOSTON GLOBE, BOSTON HERALD**). • Wildlife officials in **NORTH CAROLINA** institute strict new fines for anyone caught shooting game from a public road, shooting game from a motor vehicle or carrying a loaded gun in a motor vehicle. The punishment grows from a \$50 fine per offense to \$1,000 and a loss of the perpetrator’s hunting license (**RUTLAND HERALD**).

EDUCATION: Education officials in **ILLINOIS** drop mandatory writing and social studies exams for Prairie State students. The decision is expected to save the cash-strapped state more than \$6 million per year. The state’s board of education will continue to test students in reading, math and science (**NORTHWEST HERALD [CHICAGO]**). • A federal appeals court rules that **MICHIGAN**’s high school sports seasons are discriminatory against girls and must be realigned. The ruling focuses primarily on girls’ basketball and volleyball. In most states, girls play volleyball in the fall and basketball in the winter. Michigan is one of three states —

HAWAII and **RHODE ISLAND** being the others — where those seasons are reversed. The court says the current schedule causes female athletes to miss out on national tournaments and hinders them from being recruited for college sports (TOLEDO BLADE).

ENVIRONMENT: The attorneys general of six Northeastern states — **MASSACHUSETTS, DELAWARE, CONNECTICUT, NEW JERSEY, RHODE ISLAND** and **NEW YORK** — file suit against the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The suit claims that new regulations on how power plants manage the water they use will degrade water in local waterways and harm the environment (BOSTON GLOBE). • **NEW MEXICO** fish and game officials recommend that two new species, one amphibian and one reptile, be placed on the state’s endangered species list. A species is considered endangered if it is considered likely to disappear completely from the state without conservation efforts (SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN).

HEALTH: The **MICHIGAN** Supreme Court rules that the Wolverine State’s tort-damages cap must be applied to wrongful-death lawsuits where the underlying claim is medical malpractice. The decision overturns a lower court ruling that granted a medical malpractice plaintiff’s estate a \$10 million judgment against her doctor (CRAIN’S DETROIT BUSINESS). • **ALABAMA** public health officials announce they will continue to offer the “morning-after” birth control pill at health clinics despite being told by federal health officials that they are not required to do so. Heart of Dixie officials have been under increasing pressure from pro-life and religious groups to stop dispersing the pills, which many conservative groups liken to abortion (BIRMINGHAM NEWS).

SOCIAL POLICY: **ALASKA** Gov. Frank Murkowski (R) signs SB 30, legislation that establishes a state-run Web site that provides information about fetal development, including links to photographs of “typical” unborn children. Women seeking an abortion will also need to certify in writing that their physician either

In the Hopper

State Net’s database tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states at any given time. Here’s a snapshot of what’s in the legislative works:

- **Number of prefiles/intros this week:** **852**
- **Number of prefiles/intros overall in 2004:** **117,249**
- **Number of bills enacted/adopted this week:** **328**
- **Number enacted/adopted overall in 2004:** **23,418**
- **Total number of measures in State Net database:** **186,237**

— Compiled By GINA HUMMELL
(2003-04 data current as of 7/23/04
Source: State Net)

gave them specific information from the site or provided them with similar information that meets the state standard (ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS).

POTPOURRI: TEXAS officials say they will not honor concealed handgun permits issued in **MISSOURI** because the Show Me State allows permits to be issued before applicants have passed a background check (KANSAS CITY STAR). • **ALASKA** Gov. Frank Murkowski (R) signs legislation that establishes a new provisional driver’s license for drivers between the ages of 16 and 18. The new license will allow teens to drive alone, but bars them from driving with anyone younger than 21 who is not a family member. It will also bar them from driving between 1 and 5 a.m. unless they are with a parent or legal guardian (ANCHORAGE DALY NEWS).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Once around the statehouse lightly

NOT-SO-SILVER BULLET. Any day now, headlines across **FLORIDA** could read, “Shamu Murders Mickey Mouse; Donald Duck Missing.” That’s because their respective theme parks are locked in a death grip over construction of a bullet train from Tampa to Orlando. As noted by The Associated Press, Sea World Orlando — home to the world famous killer whale — is upset that the train is slated to bypass it and instead drop tourists seven miles away at the Central Florida Greenway, which happens to be on property owned by Disney World. The decision to plop the terminal next door to Disney was made, say authorities, because twice as many visitors come to see Mickey Mouse as pay respects to Shamu. Shamu’s response? A ballot measure designed to kill the entire rail project. It could go before voters this November.

OKAY. YOU TRY IT. Three weeks ago, officer Jesse Lee had to face down an animal that none of his colleagues with the **FLORIDA** Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission had ever encountered in the wild — a 600-pound “house cat.” The feline, a Bengal tiger named “Bobo,” was the property of actor Steve Sipek and had escaped from its five-acre compound. Lee and others, including Sipek, were in pursuit when Lee caught up with Bobo in some brush. According to *The Miami Herald*, Lee called for help but Bobo charged before another officer could arrive with tran-

quillizer darts. Lee had only a pistol, which he fired five times, killing Bobo. Since that incident, Lee has been branded an “animal murderer” and harassed with death threats. Last week, the Commission cleared him of wrongdoing. It took two weeks to determine that Lee was justified in defending himself against a tiger?

ADIEU. He has been a “presence” in the political career of former CALIFORNIA Gov. Jerry Brown for more than 30 years, but last week Jacques Barzaghi was canned from his job as “advisor-whatever” to Brown, now the mayor of Oakland and an announced candidate for state attorney general in 2006. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Barzaghi — a former soldier in the French Foreign Legion — was accused of trying to push his 30-year-old wife down a flight of stairs. His explanation: She pushed first. That final straw came on top of a previous suspension for alleged sexual harassment. Barzaghi, 66, first signed on with Brown in 1971 after the pair met at a dinner party. During Brown’s tenure as governor (1975-1983), Barzaghi was Brown’s alter ego and at the center of often-bizarre stories. After Brown became mayor of Oakland, Barzaghi headed the city’s arts program where, true to form, he named his tattooist to the Cultural Arts Commission.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THIS. A politician often is judged by the friends he or she keeps, and in the case of NEW JERSEY Gov. James McGreevey, all is not well. Seems that one of his top contributors was recently charged in a criminal complaint that *The New York Times* likens to the plot of an Elmore Leonard novel. According to the paper, the contributor tried to hire prostitutes to entice a pair of potential witnesses in a federal investigation into sexually compromising situations. The two targets were the contributor’s brother-in-law and his accountant. The accountant declined; the brother-in-law did not and his soiree was recorded on a hidden camera. A McGreevey spokeswoman says the governor is “saddened” by the allegations. Didn’t say whether he was sad because his pal is accused, or because his pal is his pal.

ONLY IN VEGAS. Higher education prepares students for all walks of life, but those who attend classes in NEVADA have a leg up when it comes to the entertainment industry. According to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) will offer a minor this fall in Entertainment Engineering and Design. The goal eventually is to offer a graduate degree in the program. The advantages to UNLV having this program? Where else can professors avail themselves of experts who create water jets and dancing flames?

— By A.G. BLOCK

