

COMMENTARY

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Jefferson to Clinton: The cycle remains unbroken

Sometimes predictions and wishes

come true. On my talk radio program in October of 1988, I said that George Herbert Walker Bush would go down in history as a one-term nicknamed George Herbert Hoover Bush. I repeated it even during the Oil War hysteria of 1990. To me, it only made sense. Sooner or later, the drug addiction of Reaganomics would produce painful withdrawal symptoms. In 1988, I even endorsed Ronald Reagan for a third term, stating only half in jest that he should not be allowed the luxury of walking away from such a fine mess.

Last week, The New York Times said this about Nevada: "The shadows of Paul Laxalt and Ronald Reagan were scarcely perceptible on Tuesday, as President Bush garnered only 35 percent of the vote." The Times was wrong. Nevada suffers from an increasing Reagan-Laxalt palsy, the spread of legalized gambling across the country. Their vaunted "New Federalism" foisted many formerly-federal programs onto states and municipalities. Like street drug dealers, once the user was hooked, they started to increase the price. Federal money was slowly withdrawn from necessary programs. Dollar-starved states and cities turned to gambling as a seemingly painless way to raise revenue. Our pain. Their gain. Nevada's future is much dimmer thanks to the sterile friendship of Reagan and Laxalt.

Reagan and Bush also left the Republican Party in its most serious trouble ever, and that's bad for the nation. Televangelist Pat Robertson and his twisted pseudo-Christian minions are poised to take over the Grand Old Party.



ANDREW BARBANO

Nevada insiders tell me that Nevada GOP leaders Brian McKay and Patty Caferata may be ousted next month as Robertson prepares for a January Ascension.

Trying to fight the religious establishment earlier this year, former attorney general McKay and former Lt. gov. Bob Casshell sent out a mailing which included quotes from Robertson's latest book, "The New World Order." The TV preacher accused George Bush of "carrying out the mission...of Lucifer and his followers...It may well be that men of good will like Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter and George Bush...are in reality unknowingly and unwittingly carrying out the mission and mouthing the phrases of a tightly-knit cabal whose goal is nothing less than a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer and his followers," Robertson wrote.

It's time for true Republicans to come back and save their party. In June of 1981, Reno GOP activist and former candidate Orland T. Outland wrote that "the Republican Party has been infiltrated and its power usurped by the Wallaceite third party movement that could not make it on its own: the Independent American Party...has pulled off one of the greatest political coups of the century by gaining control of the machinery of the Republi-

can Party and espousing extreme right radicalism under the banner of Republicans, distorting and corrupting the meaning of the word republican...our party has been stolen from us and there should be a move made to reclaim it," Outland wrote.

He made the statement in a letter to 1980 independent presidential candidate John B. Anderson. Outland headed Anderson's bid in Nevada, overcoming tremendous roadblocks in qualifying the Illinois congressman for the ballot. Outland wrote in response to Anderson's request for a perspective on the future and Outland's role in it. "I want my party back!" the retired army intelligence officer and Common Cause chairman said. "If I cannot have that, and a centrist group appears that presents men and issues of substance; that will deal with the pragmatism of politics without pandering to the cheap ploys of the professional campaign manager mentality...that can be 'human'; that can understand the fallibility of man without being contritely maudlin, yet sustain responsibility; that understands the true meaning of duty, honor, country, beyond the hypocritical commitment made by too many today, I would want to be an active, participating, working part of it," Outland concluded.

It was not to be. At the time he wrote to Anderson, Outland and millions of other true Republicans had been marginalized by extremists. He registered as a Democrat a couple of years back. Others went a separate way, volunteering for Ross Perot. Even Barry Goldwater, whose defeat in 1964 led to

this party's current troubles, this year endorsed Democratic winner Karen English over a religious right Republican for an Arizona congressional seat. Aged but still rough-edged, Goldwater called Pat Robertson's minions "goddamn fools."

The GOP is well worth saving. I hope traditional Republicans come in from a dozen years out in the cold to fight the upcoming religious naut takeover. Otherwise, the loyal opposition will splinter into division and weakness for the next 20 years. Cohesive conservatives are needed to bring healthy balance to the system, just as a reinvigorated labor movement is needed to balance the excesses of management. (Such labor/management perspective was advanced by former secretary of state George Shultz in a speech last year.)

Bill Clinton's election represents permanent change in U.S. politics. The coercive pseudo-conservative era has ended. Baby boom progressives now come to power with a mandate to correct the excesses of the past 24 years. Yes, 24. Many of the depredations credited to Ronald Reagan actually began under Jimmy Carter.

I agree with those who say that last Tuesday's election represents a latter day 1932. For historical perspective, please read "The Cycles of History" by liberal Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and "The Politics of Rich and Poor" by conservative Kevin Phillips.

Phillips traces unbroken presidential cycles dating back to Thomas Jefferson. Each contains a "minority interruption."

This century's blips on the screen were Woodrow Wilson, Dwight Eisenhower and Carter. "All six presidential cycles to date have begun with two decades of lopsided success by the newly ascendant party, and no similar domination has occurred at any other time," Phillips wrote in 1990. Years ago, both scholars accurately predicted a Democratic victory last Tuesday. Phillips also correctly foresaw the election of Richard Nixon in a 1968 book.

The successful leaders of the future will be those who ride this horse in the direction it is already going. Religionists who would impose a theocracy or Libertarians who would take us back to agrarian 1776 proceed at risk of their own political extinction. I predict that one year from today, Bill Clinton will enjoy political popularity unseen since John F. Kennedy renewed the American spirit.

President Clinton is in for a rough ride in tough times. As Ross Perot might say, we'll all have to pitch in. We are capable. At least Clinton will be able to get recession out of the way early in his term, as did Ronald Reagan.

"The Nineties are gonna make the Sixties look like the Fifties," uttered aging hippie Dennis Hopper in the film "Flashback." I say: welcome back to the arena to all those Baby Boomers who took 20 years off. I say "c'mon in" to true conservatives after 12 years in the wilderness. With happy heart and high hope, let the games of the future begin!

Andrew Barbano is a Reno-based syndicated columnist. Barbwire by Barbano originates each Sunday in the Tribune.