

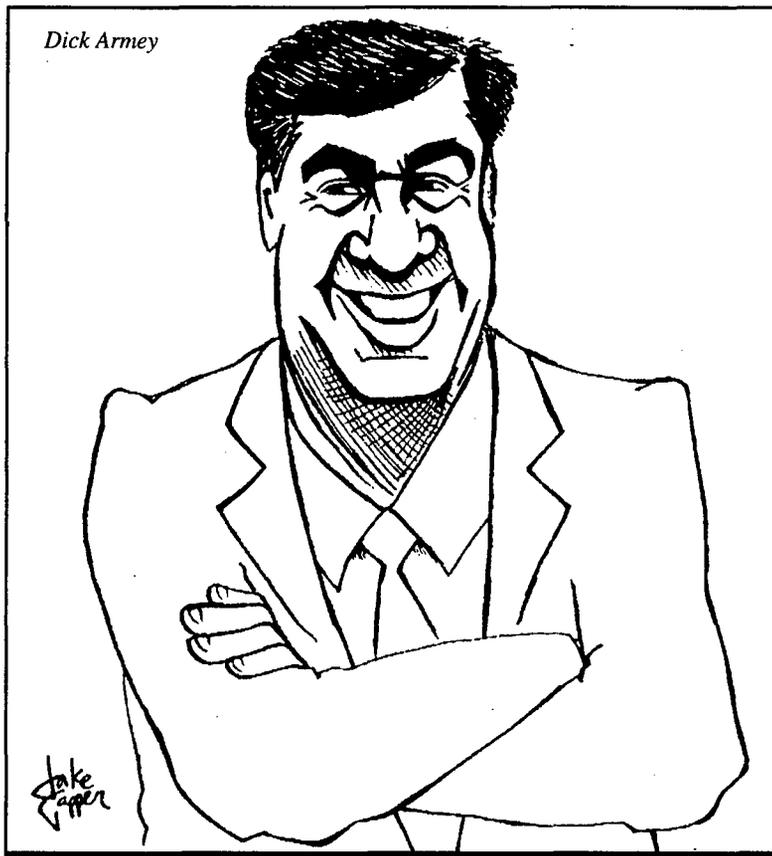
Grover Norquist

It's My Party . . .

Upcoming elections for the leadership of the Republican National Committee and key congressional posts will determine whether the GOP settles for the embarrassed and embarrassing politics of the 1992 campaign.

George Bush was a successful commander-in-chief, but a failure as a party leader. He managed the decline of the Soviet empire and crushed the fourth-largest army in the world, but he left the Republican party weak. The coalition that gave the Republicans three presidential victories in a row was ignored, ill-used, and betrayed to the point where 27 percent of Republicans and 35 percent of conservatives voted for Ross Perot or Bill Clinton.

Debates on how the Republican party can patch back together the Reagan coalition—low-tax, small-government, and traditional-values conservatives and supporters of a strong defense—now begin with the question of *who* will lead such a restoration. Robert Dole has offered himself as the leader of the Republicans in the Senate, and hopes to graft the Perot voters to the Bush voters of 1992 and recon-



stitute a 57-percent governing majority. One wonders, however, if Bob Dole, one of the negotiators of the 1990 tax increase, can be a credible leader of the Reagan coalition. Dole never understood the low-tax, pro-growth strategy of Ronald Reagan and Jack Kemp. He shares Ross Perot's obsession with the deficit and would cheerfully walk back into a negotiating room to raise taxes in return for promised spending cuts. The

Republican party has been taken on this ride in 1982 and 1990. Exit polls and the results of tax-cutting initiatives demonstrate that the party and nation are firmly against higher taxes.

Senator Phil Gramm of Texas would like to be a leader of Senate Republicans, but as an architect of the 1990 budget deal, he is tied to the failures of the past. Thus weakened, he was able to win re-election as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee by only one vote over Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

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In the absence of strong leadership in the Senate—and in the absence of a strong presidential contender such as Ronald Reagan between 1976 and 1980—many Republicans are looking to the House Republican leadership to provide a strong Republican voice in opposition. But when Bob Michel decided not to retire, he disappointed some of the more activist members of the Republican caucus in the House. Newt Gingrich, who won an insurgent campaign to become whip in 1989, has worked to move Michel into a more confrontational political position, while calming the fears of House Republicans who are frightened by anyone courageous (crazy?) enough to take on and topple both Speaker Jim Wright and Tony Coelho. But Michel is still Michel. To the dismay of some young Turks, Gingrich has promised Michel that he will not run against him for the position of Republican leader this year.

Another possible challenger, Henry Hyde of Illinois, is temperamentally unsuited to such a challenge. Both Gingrich and Hyde have made it clear, however, that should Michel choose to move over to a ranking position on an important committee, such as Appropriations, they would like to be considered by their peers.

The most important race for the future of the House Republicans is the contest for Republican Conference chairman, a post currently held by Jerry Lewis of California. With a staff of fifteen, it is the institution through which the Republicans in the House get together to vote on resolutions that define party positions.

Dick Arme y, the feisty former economics professor from Texas, is challenging Lewis. Prior to the election, Arme y announced that he had a majority of the votes of Republicans. The election demographics helped, as twenty-six of the thirty retiring Republicans were Lewis supporters. Arme y and Lewis have clashed before, and past conflicts are an indication of just how big a shift replacing Lewis with Arme y would represent. In 1990, Arme y led the call for a revolt of House members that resulted in a two-to-one vote putting the Republicans on record against any tax increases. The vote took place July 18 and was correctly read by the White House and the press as a warning from House Republicans that they would not support the tax increases Darman was then cooking up with the Democratic leadership.

Lewis repeatedly refused to allow Arme y's resolution to come to a vote. A year earlier he had dragged his feet on an identical anti-tax resolution. Each time, Arme y went to the effort to get fifty signatures of fellow House Republicans—thus requiring Lewis to bring the resolution up as soon as possible.

Over Lewis's extralegal delays, Arme y forced a vote on the resolution that made headlines around the country, reminding voters that the House Republicans—if not the President—remembered they were the anti-tax party. The *New York Times* headline read: "Defying President, House Republicans Vote Opposition to Tax Rise."

Arme y is well remembered as the congressman who cut the Gordian Knot on military base closings by fashioning a vote to empower a bipartisan commission to recommend a list of obsolete bases to be closed, consolidated, or downsized. Its initial list of bases to be closed will save the taxpayers \$700 million each year. The process was so successful that the Pentagon has institutionalized it. Now, every two years, the commission will recommend more bases to close. Setting the vote in odd-numbered years removes charges of partisan politics and allows all mem-

bers to vote unsuccessfully to stop the closure of bases in their districts. Arme y's commission has worked so well that some of Clinton's more moderate advisers are looking to replicate it to save costs in the agricultural extension agent offices and other departments.

It is just this success that rebuts criticism that Arme y is a mere partisan battler.

Lewis serves in the present leadership meetings as a supporter of Michel's worst instincts: to cooperate with the Democratic majority and avoid fights. But his days are numbered. In past years, Lewis had a tremendous advantage in his campaigns for reelection as Conference chairman. He had served as the California representative on the Committee on Committees, which decides who will serve on what committee. Lewis would cast as many votes as there are Republican members from California—a total of nineteen out of 187 votes.

Thus Republican members of Congress who wished to get a good committee assignment were well advised to promise to vote for Lewis for Conference chairman, and they did. But in 1991, for many of the same reasons that Arme y is challenging Lewis today, the conservative California delegation stripped Lewis of his powerful position on the Committee on Committees and gave it to Ron Packard. This happened only days after Lewis had won reelection as Conference chairman in return for promises to help those who voted for him in his capacity as California's representative on the Committee on Committees. Packard was besieged by fellow members, who asked if their deals with Lewis were still good with him. When Packard asked Lewis about this, Lewis denied

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that there were any deals at all. Members who remembered their conversations with Lewis differently were not pleased.

A second key race pits Tom DeLay of Texas against Willis D. (Bill) Gradison of Ohio for the job of Secretary of the Republican Conference, made vacant by the retirement of Vin Weber. Gradison represents both the moderate wing of the party and the non-confrontational Bob Michel style of leadership. DeLay, like Armev, is an aggressive conservative who fought the 1990 budget fiasco. He co-authored the 1991 DeLay-Wallop tax-cutting legislation, which would have cut the capital gains tax, rolled back the Social Security tax increase, and speeded up the depreciation for business investment. The legislation once again put the conservative House and Senate Republicans on the record as favoring lower taxes and pro-growth legislation. Facing Democratic and White House opposition, the legislation did not pass, but it put down a Republican marker and began to reclaim the tax issue for Republicans.

Faced with the possibility of a House leadership that consists of Bob Michel surrounded by Newt Gingrich, Dick Armev, Henry Hyde, and Tom DeLay, the moderates, led by Steve Gunderson and tax pledge breaker Fred Grandy, have offered a novel reform: Why not elect only two leadership positions, the minority leader and the whip? (Thus protecting Michel and Gingrich.) The other leadership positions would be appointed by Michel. This, some hoped, would lead to the appointment of moderate—in tone and principle—members who could never get elected on their own. The idea was floated and defeated just before the election, but is certain to resurface.

It is worth a great deal of effort to outside conservative groups and would-be House Republican activists to ensure that Dick Armev and Tom DeLay join Gingrich and Michel in the leadership. Gingrich would be cheered and encouraged by the reinforcement, and

Michel would find it easier to confront the Democrats. Conservatives remember how successful Newt Gingrich, Vin Weber, and Bob Walker were as backbenchers organized in their Conservative Opportunity Society in defining an activist forward-looking Republican agenda.

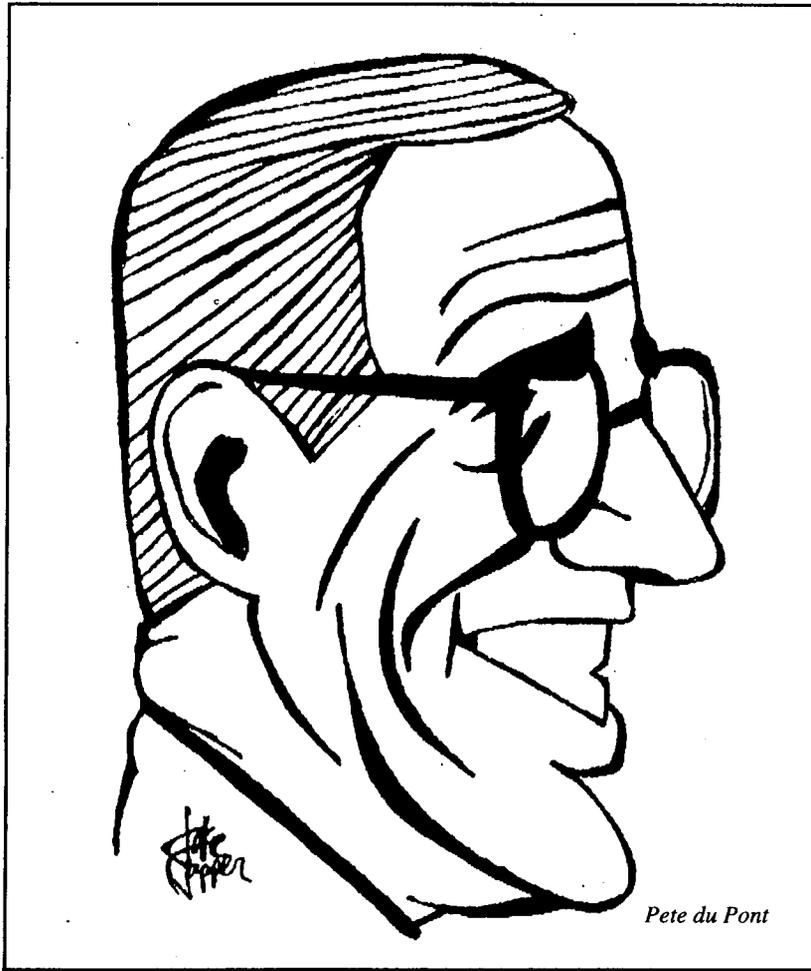
Once the House and Senate Republican leadership is settled by mid-December, the party will then focus on who will replace Republican National Chairman Rich Bond. The 165 members of the RNC—three from each state and territory—will meet in St. Louis, Missouri, on January 28-29 to elect Bond's replacement.

When Republicans hold the White House, the job of RNC chairman is managerial—raising money, recruiting candidates, and keeping the party structure together. As Ron Brown of the Democratic National Committee has demonstrated over the past few years, in the absence of a President, the party chairman can become an effective spokesman for the party and help set its direction and tone. Thus, the RNC chairmanship is about to emerge from the shadow and become a very important position, rivaling the leadership of the House and Senate Republicans.

A number of would-be chairmen have offered themselves, or have been suggested: former

Governor Pete du Pont of Delaware, former Minnesota congressman Vin Weber, outgoing Labor Secretary Lynn Martin, NRCC chairman Spence Abraham, Mississippi Committeeman Haley Barbour, political consultant Charlie Black, and former Secretary of the Army Bo Calloway.

The RNC chairman has three important duties. First, he must be a spokesman for the entire party, unifying the coalition that won in 1980, 1984, and 1988. Second, he must be technically competent in party-building. And third, he must avoid being seen as the tool of one or another potential candidate for 1996.



Pete du Pont

The first task of any chairman will be to undo the damage of the Bush presidency in losing the tax issue. Opposition to tax increases is, in Phyllis Schlafly's phrase, "the unifying principle" of the Republican party. All members of the coalition share a commitment to limited government and reduction in the tax burden. To this end, the new chairman must be able to denounce the 1990 budget deal without reservation, and support the original Republican platform passed in Houston, which called for repealing the tax hikes in Darman's 1990 agreement and denounced the deal as a "mistake."

Of the above-mentioned possible chairmen, Vin Weber has begun to take himself out of consideration by discussing his plans for organizing an activist think tank or a "Heritage for the 1990s." Charlie Black and Haley Barbour are too closely identified with the Phil Gramm candidacy for the presidency in 1996, as well as with the mistakes of the Bush era. Spence Abraham acquitted himself admirably as the executive director of the NRCC, is strong on the tax issue, and works well with the entire coalition. Gramm's people may complain about his ties to Quayle and Kemp.

A Lynn Martin candidacy would be interesting. In 1991 and 1992, the Republican National Committee unanimously passed resolutions introduced by Virginia Committeeman Morton Blackwell urging the Secretary of Labor to enforce the Supreme Court decision *Beck v. Communication Workers of America*. Dozens of House Republicans wrote to Martin demanding the same. Martin refused to enforce the law—protecting union members from paying compulsory dues used for political purposes—until the Bush campaign called her on the carpet in Spring 1992. Enforcing *Beck* would have taken hundreds of millions off the table, instead of leaving it available for use against Republican candidates. It would be laughable to imagine Lynn Martin standing before a group whose resolution she had not even acknowledged. It is worth noting that the 1988 and 1992 Republican platforms call for the implementation of *Beck*. Some party loyalist.

The du Pont candidacy would be accompanied by a commitment that du Pont would not run for President in 1996. This would greatly reduce the fears of some that he might use the position as a springboard. And he might be acceptable to Kemp, Gramm, and Pat Robertson, as he is known to have been a strong opponent of the 1990 budget deal and is a free-market conservative who is sympathetic to the concerns of social conservatives.

Du Pont also has a record as a technically proficient party builder—he founded GOPAC to help identify, train, and

elect Republicans to state legislatures and to Congress. When du Pont ran for President in 1988, he resigned as general chairman of GOPAC and handed the organization over to Newt Gingrich. (This election cycle alone, when many Republicans were strapped for cash, GOPAC provided \$1.6 million to House challengers.)

Rich Bond elevated the du Pont candidacy to a new high when he included in a November 6 letter to all RNC members a paragraph that reads:

In an act of absolute political treachery, former Governor Pierre "Pete" DuPont [sic] of Delaware began campaigning for the RNC Chairmanship several weeks before election day. It's disloyal, unseemly and cowardly to put one's own ambition before the good of the Party and our President and that is exactly what Pierre did. Please bear this in mind when he contacts you for your vote.

This personal attack was bizarre, as du Pont was *not*, in fact, campaigning for the RNC position, and most of the others listed as possible chairmen were long ago having discussions about their futures—including the possibility of Rich Bond's job.

The last paragraph of Bond's intemperate letter might explain the intensity of the White House-directed attack. Bond writes: "We can't let our opponents 'Carterize' George Bush. . . . He is 'one of us'—a GOP county chairman and a National Chairman and he deserves our undying loyalty, respect and support."

It was du Pont who in 1988 said:

George Bush heroically followed America into war. And he skillfully followed Richard Nixon into China. And he somewhat less enthusiastically followed Ronald Reagan into the modern economics of tax cuts and job creation. But the question is: In a Bush Presidency, who would lead America? So far we haven't seen any vision, any principles, any policies.

Alone in the list of possible party chairmen, Pete du Pont publicly and actively opposed the 1990 budget deal that Ed Rollins points out cost the Republicans some twenty-four house seats.

Any successful RNC chairman or candidate for the presidency in 1996 will have to repudiate the 1990 budget agreement. The Republican party cannot regroup until that deal and the breaking of the no-tax-increase pledge have been exorcised. There is the stench of betrayal and treason in the air, and it comes from the biggest betrayal of all: George Bush's decision in 1990 to tear the heart out of the Republican coalition. □

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Tim W. Ferguson

. . . And I'll Cry if I Want to

California leads the way—down.

Los Angeles

Conservatives in most parts of America come off the 1992 election disappointed but fatalistic. They watched a bad marriage bust up and are hoping it doesn't cost them too dearly. In California, however, it's more like clinical depression. Conservatives lost their most articulate of all candidates for the U.S. Senate in a head-on fight with a beatable left-wing opponent; lost one seat in the state Assembly in a year when redistricting threatened the hold of Democratic speaker Willie Brown; won only twenty-two of fifty-two congressional races, when suburbanization and racial gerrymandering were supposed to give them a majority of the delegation; and crashed and burned on a referendum to control spending.

Those setbacks wiped out years of planning and dreams, and even worse, undermined the idea that a combative, ideological stance is effective in countering the "statist quo." They summoned an awful, unspoken fear not felt since the Goldwater aftermath of 1964: that perhaps the majority of the electorate, on the cutting issues, really is liberal-socialist after all.

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Bruce Herschensohn

It was the sad-eyed visage of Senate hopeful Bruce Herschensohn that brought the most tears to the right on the morning after. He had waged as intellectual a serious campaign as it is possible to run for major elective office, against Barbara Boxer, whose voice, manner, and votes in the House of Representatives are as pleasing as listening to her manicured fingernails streak across the proverbial chalkboard. The aging cheerleader won the race 48 percent to 43. (Minor parties generally

draw 5 to 10 percent of the vote in California races.)

Herschensohn refused to blame George Bush for his loss, as of course he was perfectly entitled to do. Instead, he blamed only himself. There was truth to that only in that he wasn't what he never promised to be: a fund-raiser, a glad-hander, a pork-promiser. He was a television commentator and documentary producer who loved ideas and the Constitution, but not politics. Nevertheless, his sincerity was appealing enough to have brought him and his economic libertarianism (exception: military spending) to even-stein on the virtual eve of the election. Then he stepped in some excrement that Boxer's running dogs had left in his path: evidence of his patronizing a nudie place or two in his hometown of Hollywood. This, a social conservative—even one who wasn't preachy about it—ought never to do. Boxer