

President Clinton's high approval ratings tell us more about the GOP's image problems than they tell us about President Clinton," assessed Rich Tafel, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans.

For many people, the Republican Party has "become a hypocrite party," he said, citing Sen. Don Nickles' hollow claim that merit is what counts when selecting someone for a job. Despite that assertion, the Oklahoma Republican continues to block a vote on the nomination of James Hormel, who is openly gay, to become ambassador to Luxembourg.

Tafel was one of three Republican moderates who discussed the future of the Grand Old Party during a Feb. 16 gathering of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Tafel urged the Republican Party to "enunciate a values agenda" of its core principles, such as individual rights and responsibility, limited government and free markets. He called this "a message of inclusion, liberty and freedom."

He also urged the party to distance itself from the right wing, saying it's the only way the GOP will regain the White House.

"I want to send a wake-up call to the national leadership: The party is in trouble," added Faye Anderson, president of the Douglass Policy Institute. "It must get out of the box of tokenism and offer seats at the table to a broader base of activists and professionals who look like America."

She chastised the party for continuing "to follow the advice of a small group of monochromatic strategists and operatives who clearly do not understand the dynamics of an increasingly multiracial and multiethnic electorate."

GROUSING ABOUT THE GOP

Republican moderates speak out against the right wing's influence in the party and call for a return to the party's traditional focus on smaller government and more individual liberties by Bob Roehr



Log Cabin Republicans Executive Director Rich Tafel

Anderson said this coterie failed to turn out the GOP's support base for gubernatorial races in what were supposed to be their strongholds, places like Alabama and South Carolina.

She believes the candidacy of David Duke in a May 1 special congressional election in Louisiana "will worsen the Republican image

return to the days of white supremacists in sheets, raining terror on black folks," Anderson said.

Ann Stone, chair of the 150,000-member organization Republicans for Choice, offered her argument to convince moderates not to leave the party:

among independent and swing voters and send shivers down the spines of African American and Hispanic voters."

But even more damaging, she said, was the appearance of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi and Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia at a meeting of the Council of Conservative Citizens, an offspring of the old White Citizens' Councils that took up arms against federal troops enforcing desegregation orders in Mississippi and Arkansas in the 1950s.

"A visit to the group's Internet site is a virtual

"Staying in the party irritates the heck out of Gary Bauer, Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson."

She added, "The American people want government to stop butting in."

With the impeachment proceedings, Stone said, the GOP "became the party that wanted to butt into your private affairs." She called for the party to reclaim the legacy of smaller, nonintrusive government.

The three speakers were united in their opposition to the presidential candidacy of ultraconservative Gary Bauer, but Stone reserved her harshest words for Steve Forbes: "He sold out to the religious right. He reversed his position on abortion."

Tafel called Forbes the most dangerous of the candidates because Forbes has "a lot of money and clearly has no principles." Tafel recounted numerous policy flip-flops and concluded, "I don't think he could win the nomination, but with all of his money he could do a lot of damage."

According to Tafel, Log Cabin is concentrating on the Republican presidential race "because nobody else is doing that." He also thinks his group could have some impact on trying to move Hormel's nomination.

OF DYKES AND DRINKS

Lesbian libation is featured in this advertisement in the October 1998 issue of *Girlfriends* magazine

One of the strongest predictors of women's drinking in the general population is their relationship with their male partners," says Tonda Hughes, a researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

So what happens when two lesbians are in a relationship? Hughes hypothesizes that if a woman "couples with a woman who is a heavy drinker or drug user, that is likely to have a bigger impact than it does on a heterosexual woman" paired with a drinking man. Hughes says this may be a result of "the closeness of the relationships that [lesbians] form."

Hughes was recently awarded a four-year grant by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism for the first National Institutes of Health-funded study on lesbian alcohol use.

"Studying lesbians is really exciting because it is a prototype for studying women who don't adhere to traditional gender roles," she says. "[That adherence] has been thought to be pro-

ective for women in the general population against drinking. I'm hypothesizing that it may be a risk factor for lesbians."

According to Hughes, "myths and stereotypes of lesbians as alcoholics and heavy drinkers are largely based on studies in the 1970s that recruited most of their samples from gay bars."

She says her study is designed to provide a more realistic picture of the patterns and variability of lesbian drinking habits and to provide information for developing alcohol abuse prevention and early intervention strategies.

Hughes plans to conduct detailed interviews with about 400 lesbians. She will define "lesbian" using multiple measures that look at both behavior and identity.

The grant comes a month after the release of a National Academy of Sciences report outlining the need for additional research on lesbian health issues.

■ Reported by BOB ROEHR



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