

Those old custom inspection blues should be obsolete

The long line of cars idle restlessly in the summer heat. Waiting motorists gaze longingly at those who have passed through the border checkpoint and have been sent on their way.

Each carload of passengers pray they won't be the ones indiscriminately pulled out of line by the guards to undergo further interrogation.

Sounds like Checkpoint Charlie, Berlin. But it isn't. This is a typical day at the border crossing between Windsor, Canada and Detroit, U.S.

Every day thousands of Canadians and United States citizens go through this senseless and parochial ritual.

The scenario is nearly the same for everyone. "Of what country are you a citizen?" asks the glaucous-faced uniformed figure standing in the guard booth.

"America," comes the reply.

"Of what country are you a citizen?" repeats the customs officer in the same monotone. Only a slight frown reveals the wrong answer has been given.



"Excuse me, sir, the United States," comes the sheepish answer.

In case you've forgotten your fifth grade geography lesson, the customs officer will remind you with that Canada also is part of America.

"FOR WHAT REASON are you coming to Canada?" he asks.

The interrogation continues. Each word must be weighed carefully to insure the customs officer's suspicions are set to rest.

Dress, tone of answers, type of vehicle or the mood of the customs officer that day can determine whether you'll pass through unscathed or be stopped for an indeterminate amount of time for further search and questioning.

Standards vary with the particular prejudice of each customs officer. Everyone is suspect.

Little reason exists to have such border stations between Canada and the United States. Smuggling drugs or other contraband from Toledo to Detroit is no less of a social crime than smuggling from Detroit to Windsor.

Throughout history, borders have been established to separate, to intimidate and to foster archaic nationalistic feelings.

In truth, the customs booth separating these two

North American countries differs little from the walls and guard towers which separate the two Berlins. The Windsor barrier is just a little harder to understand.

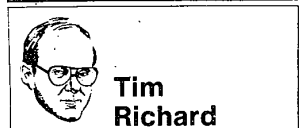
The Berlin wall, however reprehensible, separates two diverse ideologies on the verge of conflict. No such ideological barrier separates Canada from the United States.

But fear does and that's far worse.

CANADA AND the United States have an opportunity to break new ground, to set a new standard for international understanding. We have nothing to fear from one another.

Realists know that border crossing checkpoints do very little in stopping criminals from plying their trade. What they do manage is to separate two common peoples who must unite in the future and work together to solve the problems of America.

"Excuse me, sir, Canada and the United States, of course."



Tim Richard

Dem security and a lout named Woody

The Republican National Convention in 1964 gave the GOP an image of being nasty to the press when delegates stood up, booed and jeered working representatives of the media.

Democrats are just as nasty. I can report after attending the 1980 convention, but they do it in subtle ways.

Republicans issued us a week's worth of Joe Louis Arena passes in one package.

To get into the Democratic convention in Madison Square Garden, I had to make a trip downtown to the Democratic National Committee's headquarters hotel each morning. Each trip took 90 minutes or more of what could have been working time interviewing delegates back at the Michigan headquarters hotel.

The air-conditioned chartered buses that took the delegates to plenary sessions weren't running at that early hour. Now, New York's subways are a fast, cheap way to travel, and we should build some in Detroit, but the New York subway stations are steamhubs in August. One needed another shower afterwards.

MY PRINTED instructions from the DNC said that to get daily tickets I would need to show 1) my Secret Service pass, 2) the letter from the DNC telling how many tickets I was authorized and 3) a letter on company stationery from the boss saying that I was indeed the authorized newspaper representative.

It turned out to be not enough. The DNC functionary demanded still another piece of identification before he would issue the day's ticket. It wouldn't be the first time the party would violate its own printed rules.

Outside Madison Square Garden, I bought a New York Times so I would have something lively to read during the interminable speeches that preceded the big show. The security people made me pass it under their X-ray scanner. The notion that a New York Times would be a security risk must have made Sen. Joe McCarthy laugh in his grave.

The weekly press seating — despite our 150,000 circulation, larger than 90 percent of American dailies, and our twice-weekly publication, we are still classified as a weekly — was behind the screen at the rear of the podium. We couldn't see a single thing on stage except the blue field of the flag.

Most days we were free to move out of our hidden area to the guest seats. One day, however, two uninvited functionaries on the west side said "no," we were to be confined. They were dead wrong, and we all knew it. So we walked out around the east side.

TO GET FLOOR passes where we could interview delegates, we had to show our Secret Service passes and daily tickets — so said the printed instructions. The DNC, however, had no regard for its printed rules.

One day, they wanted also to see the letters from the boss on company stationery. The next day they didn't ask for the letters but instead posted this sign:

DRIVER'S LICENSE
OR PASSPORT
WILL BE REQUIRED
IN EXCHANGE FOR
FLOOR PASS

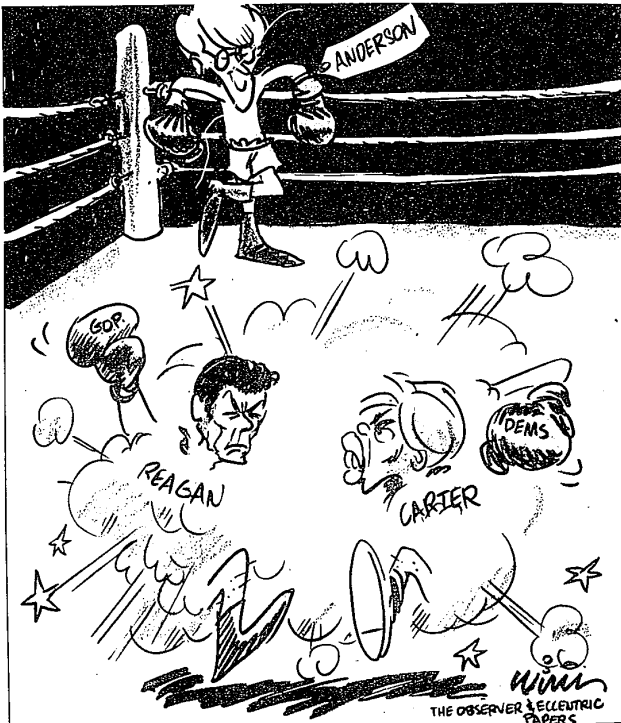
It was too dark to shoot a picture of it, so I copied down the text and asked the head guard to initial my notes in case folks back home didn't believe me. He wanted to know why.

I told him why. He refused, got sore, refused to issue me a floor pass and even refused to give me his name.

I walked down to the press office and told the DNC functionary I wished to lodge a formal complaint against him. The functionary identified the lout as "Woody." He said I would have to call the DNC press office at 664-6108.

I went to a phone and called 664-6108. Twice. Each time a recorded message said, "This is not a working number. Please check your directory."

Guess what. There were no directories at any of the phones.



Shaking Teddy's hand

Now that the political conventions with all their flag waving, marching and oratory have passed into history, the voting public can settle back and be prepared for what looms as one of the most serious campaigns in years.

This was evident on the final night of the Democratic convention in Madison Square Garden. Both Vice President Walter Mondale and President Jimmy Carter spent most of their time at the microphone taking verbal shots at Ronald Reagan, the GOP candidate.

The Stroller sat staring at the tube and wondering just how far they would go with their verbal brickbats. And he developed a longing for the good old days before television when candidates made personal appearances.

Then, one had a chance to see the rivals in the flesh. Not only that, but you got a chance to shake hands with the candidate.

IT IS too bad the same conditions do not apply today. One of the brightest memories The Stroller has of a political campaign was the morning in 1912 he was taken to the railroad siding of our little town in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country to see and hear Teddy Roosevelt. Roosevelt was conducting his Bull Moose campaign against President William Howard Taft and Gov. Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey.

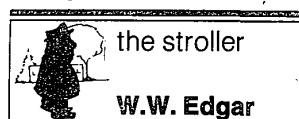
On this morning, virtually the entire town turned out to get a look at the man who was waging a battle to win back the highest office in the land. When he finished, he leaned over the railing of his private car on the old New Jersey Central railroad and started to shake hands with those closest to him.

Like all other boys at the age of 15, The Stroller was up front and finally was lifted up to grasp the former president's hand. It was a moment he never will forget.

But now, with the battle for votes being waged on the tube, there is little chance for a young fellow of today to get such a thrill. And it is too bad.

ANOTHER THING missing too in the campaigning is the Democratic candidate's opening his bid for election from a stand in Cadillac Square in Detroit on Labor Day.

It was from this stand that FDR started on his way to the White House. And Harry Truman, after becoming president through the death of FDR, opened his campaign for election in 1948 on the same spot.



And anyone who was on the scene never can forget the thrill of seeing youthful-looking John F. Kennedy leaving the Book-Cadillac Hotel for the short trip up the steps in front of the old City Hall. JFK was on his way to make his first pitch for the labor vote. The momentum would carry him to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

It was from the platform of his special train during a short visit to Saginaw that Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower got one of his chances to blast the Democrats.

On this day, he was not quite finished with his speech when his train pulled out and left him talking to himself. It was always charged that the Democrats played that trick on him. At any rate, it gave him a good argument.

THESE ARE all fond memories of past campaigns. They are the reason The Stroller got to wishing for the good old days when the candidates campaigned from the backs of private railroad cars and the small town stops along the way.

Now the mud slinging is being done on the tube as the rival candidates read from Teleprometers. And the young people never have a chance to shake hands and be given a life-long memory.



discover
Michigan
Bill Stockwell

Did you know that Michigan is linked to the discovery of "the oldest fossil whales" in far-away Pakistan through the work of University of Michigan paleontologist Philip Gingerich? Living some 45 to 50 million years ago, the ancestor of the whale is supposed to have existed on land before it adapted entirely to sea life.



Tom Panzenhagen

Jimmy and Ros go to the movies

It was the summer of '45. The war in Europe was over. Scientists in Alamogordo, N.M., made ready to rock Japan from here to eternity. FDR was dead. A war-weary nation mistrusted whether a squat haberdasher from Independence, Mo., could lead it into an era of peace.

And a 20-year-old midshipman was on leave from the U.S. Naval Academy. His name: Jimmy Carter.

Jimmy, eager to see his family — his mother, Lillian, sister Ruth and brother Billy — and his best girl, Eleanor Rosalynn Smith, hoped the first transport plane to his native Georgia. The flight took him as far as Ft. Benning and the town of Columbus.

FROM COLUMBUS, the midshipman hitched a ride to his home in Plains from a civilian motorist grateful to be of assistance to any young man in uniform.

Jimmy arrived home in time for dinner — pork chops, grits, black-eyed peas and yams. Then, after the meal and a time for reminiscing, Jimmy walked over to Rosalynn's folks' house, said hello to his future in-laws and asked if they'd mind if he stole Rosalynn away for the rest of the evening.

Of course they said no, they wouldn't mind, and the couple ventured into the warm, midsummer night's air.

Hand in hand, they walked down Main Street, past the post office and the hardware store. Past the five and dime, the pharmacy and the gas station owned by Jimmy's uncle.

The events of the previous months made meaningful conversation difficult. Rosalynn knew Jimmy had seen things in Annapolis which perhaps he would never be able to discuss. Jimmy knew Rosalynn had feared things at home in Georgia which perhaps would always leave her uneasy.

SO WHEN Jimmy and Rosalynn, who would be married within a year, passed Plains' only theater, the Odeon, Rosalynn thought a picture might break the ice and allow them both to relax. She suggested they take in that evening's program.

It was a fateful decision, because high on the marquee, above the latest Movietone newsreel, was "Captain Eddie," a picture about the life and times of Edward Vernon "Eddie" Rickenbacker, World War I flying ace, captain of industry, leader of men.

And in the role of Captain Eddie was a 36-year-old Hollywood star of only the second or third magnitude, a performer whose future as an actor — much less as anything else — must have been in doubt.

After all, he had been in films for many years and had yet to attain — indeed, would never attain — the status of a Wayne, Gable, Flynn, Bogart or Cagney.

FOR 50 CENTS, the couple purchased two tickets to the Odeon Theatre, received their complimentary dishware, entered the moviehouse and found seats in the balcony, where Jimmy always like to sit as a lad.

That night Rosalynn had eyes only for Captain Eddie, whom she considered a true American hero, clearly epitomizing the American qualities of family, neighborhood, work, freedom and peace.

So taken by what she saw on the silver screen was Rosalynn that she asked Jimmy if it wouldn't be wonderful to have a president just like that.

Jimmy, who only then began to pay attention to the movie, watched for awhile and he had to agree. It would be wonderful to have a president just like that.

But Jimmy soon realized that he had heard the real Eddie Rickenbacker speak on one occasion, and he remembered Eddie having a hint of a German accent. Since much of "Captain Eddie" traced the life of a young Eddie Rickenbacker, Jimmy told Rosalynn that the actor should have used a German accent in the part — a thick one for youth and a lighter one for middle age.

THAT'S WHEN Rosalynn came to understand something that has kept Hollywood's coffers full for most of this century: she admired the actor playing Captain Eddie more than she admired Captain Eddie himself.

Rosalynn asked Jimmy what must have been a terrible question in 1945. She asked whether an actor could become president. Jimmy laughed and said an actor probably had as much chance as a peanut farmer, and Rosalynn laughed, too.

But secretly she wished that an actor could become president and she even thought of a slogan that this particular actor might use some day: "Together . . . A New Beginning." And Rosalynn dreamt of the day when she could look to Washington and see the ship of state steadily guided by the firm hand of President Fred MacMurray.

Jimmy didn't say so, but he was thinking the same thing.