

Men cashing in on Gerry and Vanessa

GERALDINE FERRARO finally was pushed off the front pages, but it took another woman to do it. Vanessa Williams, known only to a handful of Trivial Pursuit fans a few days ago, has become momentarily famous as the Miss America who overexposed her body for public consumption.

It has sparked as much, if not more, comment at the local male coffee klatsches as Mondale's choice of Ferraro as his vice presidential running mate on the Democratic ticket.

For the first time, a Miss America was involved in a compromising situation. She had allowed herself to be photographed in her undressed entirety, and in tandem with a similarly undraped woman. The photos are to be displayed in Penthouse magazine in the September edition, the publication of which was preceded by a first storm of publicity inspired by sleaze expert Bob Guccione, the Penthouse publisher.

WHILE IT IS faulty to generalize on the basis of a limited sampling, I got the feeling from conversations and eavesdroppings that women generally were unhappy that another woman had been stupid enough to pose for such pictures and then run for Miss America, as if there were no skeleton in the closet.

But they were also sympathetic, feeling perhaps that women have long been exploited and here was another case of a woman — coincidentally, a Miss America — being used and consumed by greedy male interests.

The men were more interested in determining whether she wouldn't somehow cash in on the publicity.

It is interesting that there is a factor common to the predicament of Williams and to the emergence of Ferraro as a symbol of women's aspirations — the calculated use of publicity to try to gain advantage.

MONDALE CONSIDERED the advantages and disadvantages of a woman running mate, and it is evident that the paramount concern was not qualifications, but



Bob Wisler

whether a woman candidate would help or hinder his election chances.

The advisers knew that a woman would alleviate the pressure from women's groups for a place on the ticket, that the right woman could draw enough women's votes to give Mondale the edge, and that the right kind of woman candidate would help unite the party. And they knew that such a move would generate reams of favorable publicity at a time when Mondale's presidential quest sorely needed it.

The choice of Ferraro — a woman who worked for everything she got, an immigrant's daughter, a representative of Archie Bunker's neighborhood — was a public relations man's dream.

GUCCIONE, ADEPT at manipulating publicity, cashed in in his own fashion. The differences are also obvious. The magazine publisher is following a long tradition of coupling men's insatiable desire for fantasy objects with the tradition of exploiting women willing to feed those fantasies.

The male politicians who accepted Ferraro are realizing not only the inevitability but the righteousness of the advancement of women to the pinnacle of power in the U.S.

At the same time, there is a calculating air about both cases — as if the movers and shakers are sure that they must act quickly before the fickle interests of the public and the media zip off to some new hero or heroine, some new tragedy, some new fallen angel, some new superstar who will shoot upward like a skyrocket from the plains of anonymity to the upper strata and then spiral slowly back to earth as the newness wears off and the reporters and television cameras move on.

Political posters prove worthless

WITH THE primary election campaigns moving into their final stages, intersections of many cities and hamlets are cluttered with candidates' signs.

The Stroller often has wondered if this election clutter is worthwhile. So far as he can find out, very few folks pay attention to the signs and placards that crowd over into residents' yards.

Most everyone in the region knows — or should know — who is running for office and when election day is. But for some unknown reason, each election campaign brings out a growing number of these so-called ads.

Who reads them? And who pays any attention to them?

THIS HAS ALWAYS been a puzzle. And it becomes a problem after the election if some are not taken down and become eyesores.

One big reason this type of advertising has become a puzzle is The Stroller's own experience. Some years ago, he was bitten by the political bug and sought a public office.

One of the first things his advisers told him was to get fancy and attractive signs.

After a week or two of viewing designs and putting together wording, an order was placed. In due time, the area was covered with signs which, friends said, were the most eye catching they had ever seen.

With that sort of reaction, The Stroller felt confident that he had been given good advice. Even on election day as he visited the polls, he was told how attractive the signs were.

When he went to dinner that evening he had reason to be confident he would be a winner. The candidate never when he was called to the phone and found by a top-notch official to appear there the next evening he felt in on a winning and elite for a new office.



the stroller W.W. Edgar

THEN CAME THE shock. When the votes were tallied, The Stroller finished last in a field of four. The Stroller couldn't believe it. His signs had been the talk of the area, but evidently they didn't help.

He could have finished last if he hadn't had a single sign cluttering a single intersection.

This puzzled him for days. Finally, he got up enough nerve to ask a successful candidate in another area about the value of colorful billboards.

When he told the late Orville Hubbard about his problem, he was greeted with a laugh.

"Would you believe that I have only one sign that is worth anything during my campaigns, and it isn't in Dearborn?" asked the longtime mayor of Dearborn.

"MY BEST SIGN — and the one that brings results for all to see — hangs in Cadillac Square in Detroit."

"The theory behind this is that people from Dearborn who work downtown look at the sign and wonder why it is displayed in Detroit," he explained.

It becomes a winning point — one that never had been forgotten on election day. Outside of that sign, the others are worthless.

The Stroller's question was answered. But it is still a puzzle why candidates waste so much money cluttering highways with worthless signs thrown through the wind that they are worthless.



On a smelly day on I-696

I PUSHED the speedometer a bit past the double-nickel mark as the car moved along I-696. Usually, I stick to the 55 mph speed limit, but there was a stinking blue cloud emanating from the vehicle ahead of me, and I wanted to get ahead of it.

Holding my breath, I glanced at the pretty dog on the seat next to me, eager for whatever adventure I had in mind, and wondered if dogs could hold their breath when they encountered fumes from the tailpipe of a motor vehicle.

As big cities go, metropolitan Detroit is not bad in the air pollution department. I almost went belly-up on the streets of London once, and a TV program Sunday suggested the ruins of ancient Rome and Greece have suffered more from auto fumes in the last century than in the previous 3,000 years.

BUT OUR tri-county region is bad enough that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had to threaten sanctions to goad the Michigan Legislature into adopting a vehicle emissions program.

Not everyone liked the idea. EPA was threatening sanctions if we failed to begin curbing vehicle emissions.

"Sanctions." An abstract, bureaucratic word. It means punishment.

One form of punishment would be for



Tim Richard

the federal government to hold back aid for highways. Another would be refusal to allow additional smokestack permits, thus keeping existing industries from expanding and prohibiting new industrial firms from building.

I WAS A little perturbed at the reaction of regional officials to this prospect. One leader called it "an economic development issue." He saw business and jobs suffering if we didn't take at least minimal steps to clean up our air.

A road official practically accused EPA of being a bunch of killers. His notion was that improved roads are safer roads, and that people get killed more quickly on bad roads than on good ones. Thus, his reasoning was that federal refusal to pass out road aid would cost lives on the roads.

Curious reasoning. It was as if dirty air didn't kill. Taken to its logical conclusion, it amounted to saying, "It's OK to let folks

get gassed by dirty air but not OK to hold back road money."

The issue is neither industrial expansion nor good roads. The issue is dirty air. It is not an either-or situation.

IT'S EASY to beat up on federal officials stationed in regional offices in Chicago by berating them as "bureaucrats."

In truth, we can have industrial expansion, federal road money and clean air.

It's going to cost a bit. It's going to cost state government \$1.5 million to set up the administrative machinery to run the program. Then it's going to cost vehicle owners \$10 for an emissions test once a year.

If your car flunks the tailpipe test, most likely it will need a tune-up for up to \$50. After that, not only will the air be cleaner, but the car will probably run better.

It will take anywhere from three to 26 months to get the program going, depending on how fast emissions testers can be licensed and trained and owners contacted for checkups.

I passed the smoky vehicle, eased my foot off the gas pedal and stroked the silky ears of the pretty dog next to me. "Daddy's little girl won't have to breathe dirty air much longer," I told her.

She licked my hand.

Michigan made a difference

LAST WEEK'S Democratic nomination of Walter Mondale came closer to home than many may realize.

Remember back to March 17, the date of the Michigan presidential caucus. Mondale came into this state after suffering stunning defeats in several primaries including New Hampshire. Momentum was on the side of Gary Hart and his "new ideas."

A few days before the election, the Detroit Free Press urged its readers to support Hart.

But when the polls closed late on March 17, Mondale had won a convincing victory over Hart. Mondale's victory in Michigan rallied his campaign and stalled Hart. After Michigan, Mondale never looked back until he accepted the nomination last week in San Francisco.

The importance of Michigan was not lost on Mondale partisans. Last week his wife, Jean, said to the Michigan delegation, "Your vote for Walter Mondale meant the world to me. We made a profound step forward with the Michigan vote."

On the evening of March 17 Gov. Jim Blanchard said simply, "The Hart snowball has melted."

Michigan made a difference

campaign was relevant to us. That is, the Chrysler \$3.5-billion loan-guarantee package.

The federal government's loan guarantee to Chrysler helped save the jobs of 600,000 Chrysler workers. They are our friends, relatives and neighbors.

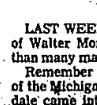
Washington Post national correspondent David Broder described the Chrysler bailout bill as a "litmus test for deciding the Democratic presidential nomination."

When approved in 1979 the bill was supported by the Carter-Mondale administration, but Gary Hart opposed it in the Senate.

The Chrysler bailout became a central part of Mondale's campaign. It corresponded in his mind of the government as a reactor — if that be of the old, students, poor or workers.

Hart argued that the bailout was "inconsistent with the principles of competitive free enterprise" including what he called "the freedom to fail."

Hart's credit, he did not back off his position on the Chrysler bailout when he campaigned in Michigan. His resounding defeat at the polls said much about what Michigan Democrats thought of his platform.



Nick Sharkey

thought it would be early enough to cast my ballot without any wait.

I saw a long line which someone told me would take about 45 minutes. I decided to return later.

I came back about 3 p.m., one hour before the voting site was to close. This time the line was even longer. I was told they were out of ballots and had to run out for more. I waited until about 4:30 p.m. to vote.

My experience was typical. Democratic leaders had expected 125,000 voters to turn out for the Michigan caucus. More than 218,000 showed up causing long lines and delays because of the shortage of ballots.

Some voting sites in southeastern Michigan did not close until about 7 p.m., three hours later. In terms of number of voters, the Michigan caucus was a success beyond anyone's hopes.

BEHIND THE IMPORTANCE of the Michigan caucus vote, a key issue in the

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