

# Secchia defends GOP role in 'hornet's nest'

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Can a politician find happiness in a hornet's nest?

Yes, if he's GOP National Committeeman Peter F. Secchia defending his record as a party leader before the Birmingham Republican Women's Club.

"Leaders are supposed to lead," said the Grand Rapids politico as large parts of the audience jeered him for taking sides in the 1986 GOP gubernatorial primary and engineering the 1984 Senate run of Jack Loumsa.

"I didn't know I was comin' into a hornet's nest," Secchia grinned as the questions got sharper and sharper. "That's good, though," said the 49-year-old salesman, taking off his coat and inviting more.

ONE WOMAN, a Dick Chrysler supporter in the primary, summed up the feelings of many party workers' feelings as she told Secchia, "You have a very fine record for picking losers. You should join the Democratic Party."

"I'll match my record against yours," Secchia shot back. "You (Chrysler people) are so vindictive. Your man screwed up. Why don't you face it?"

"Do you think the Detroit News (which exposed Chrysler's tax problems with the state) would print a story I wanted?"

"I've chosen some losers, no question about it. So did you — Dick Chrysler."

AS THINGS calmed down in Tuesday's Community House luncheon, Secchia told why, despite his party position, he became so heavily involved in two primaries.

William Lucas, the Wayne County executive who won the gubernatorial nod, "wasn't recruited by the Republican Party. He was drummed out of the Democratic Party for doing Republican things," Secchia said, citing the sale of a money-losing hospital and attempts to pare down union gains.

He went through the list of other candidates:

• Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy: "It wasn't Dan's time — he had 9 percent (in polls)."

• State Rep. Colleen Engler, later the lieutenant governor candidate: "It wasn't Colleen's time — she had 8 percent."

• Chrysler: "He shot himself in



*'You (Chrysler people) are so vindictive. Your man screwed up. Why don't you face it? I've chosen some losers, no question about it. So did you — Dick Chrysler.'*

— Peter Secchia  
GOP national committeeman

the foot every time he touched the rifle. I polled the (state) Senate candidates and asked them if they thought they could win with a black man (Lucas). They said they could. I asked if they thought they could win with a businessman" who asked employees to work without pay while collecting unemployment benefits (Chrysler). They said they couldn't. "I endorsed Bill Lucas late in the (primary) campaign."

GREETED WITH a chorus of "wrong, wrong," Secchia replied that "leaders are supposed to lead," and analyzed the Lucas campaign.

"He had a bunch of amateurs. He came up with a big debt (from the primary). Another mistake: His (advertising) agency wasn't very good, but they couldn't change — Bill Lucas made a commitment."

Agreeing that the party chairman shouldn't take sides in a primary, Secchia said his case as national committeeman was different:

"I'm a volunteer. I get no pay. I have no staff. I have no budget. I'm trying to run a \$200 million business (on the side). I didn't turn over the party apparatus or the mailing lists (to Lucas)."

OF LOUSMA, the former astronaut from Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor, Secchia said they had talked "years earlier" of his getting into Michigan politics.

Meanwhile, knowledgeable people told him former U.S. Rep. Jim Dunn of East Lansing couldn't win against Democratic U.S. Sen. Carl Levin; Gen. Pete Dawkins, a one-time Royal Oak resident, didn't want to get in;

and Peace Corps Director Loret Ruppe declined.

Secchia said Loumsa made his own trip to Washington to see national leaders and made his own decision to run for the Senate.

Secchia said he took charge of the Loumsa campaign after the first campaign manager overran the budget and didn't pay the staff's workers' compensation premiums.

Loumsa survived a bitter primary fight against Dunn but lost the general election to Levin by 4 percent.

Secchia said Levin, one of the Senate's most liberal members, posted as a conservative and outspent Loumsa 3-1, meanwhile castigating Republicans as "country club rich people."

AS FOR THE 69-29 percent drubbing Lucas took from Gov. James Blanchard, Secchia took a fatalistic approach.

"This was the year of the incumbents. Jamie Blanchard had it going for him. If we had the New York Mets, Jesus of Nazareth and three NFL draft choices, we couldn't have taken him. Blanchard ran a flawless campaign."

Secchia said Blanchard's advertising portrayed Lucas in Grand Rapids as a "Coleman Young-type, big city, sleazy politician" and in Detroit as an "Uncle Tom to Reagan."

"We kept the state Senate — the first time in 20 years we won either house of the Legislature. We got Bob Griffin on the Supreme Court. We re-elected all our congressmen (in Michigan)."

"We got wiped out on the education boards. In a political setting, you lose some."

"We have a young, vibrant party."

● O&E Classifieds work! ● O&E Classifieds work! ● O&E Classifieds work! ●

## The Trousers That Make a Difference Are Now at Special Purchase.



- The classic wool trouser. Special purchase: \$50.
- Clean lines, uncluttered details and, always, excellent fabric, texture, and a whole range of color choices!
- The pleat-front wool flannel trouser with slash pockets, in cream, navy, black, charcoal, oatmeal, camel and light grey.
- For misses' sizes 4 to 16, and for the petite silhouette as well, sizes 2 to 12.
- In Updated Sportswear

\*Not all colors and sizes available at all SFA stores.

### Saks Fifth Avenue

Troy, Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge • Open Monday thru Friday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn • Open Monday thru Friday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 12 to 6 p.m.



CERTAIN YOUR NEXT ACQUISITION WILL BE A SUIT OF PURE WOOL, INSIST ON THE QUALITY OF GRAHAM & GUNN

As tradition breeds familiarity, time engenders the classic. For it is the traditional man who is immediately known by the clothing he wears—suits that have earned acclaim for their timelessness thanks to styling that is truly classic. Featuring the soft shoulder that is itself a hallmark of tradition, the Graham & Gunn suit is an investment in quality and a testament to longevity. Made of the finest pure wool to ensure comfort and performance, it will by all predictions, serve you as admirably as the experienced sales associate who awaits your visit. The Graham & Gunn Suit Collection, \$425-\$475.

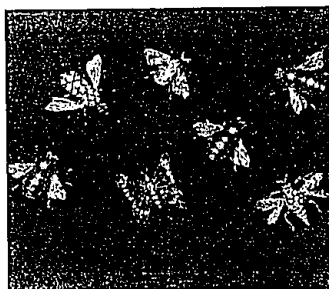
*Copper & Copper*

Chicago: Wabash at Madison (312) 236-3800 / Old Orchard / Oakbrook  
Troy Michigan: Somerset Mall (313) 643-6700  
Copper & Copper Charge, American Express, Visa, Mastercard

## GREENSTONE'S

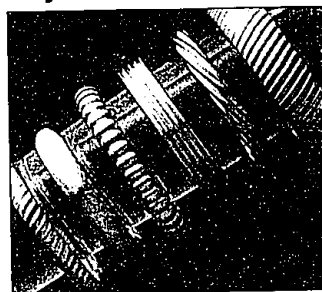
Creators of fine jewelry for over 60 years

### Classic Holiday Gifts!



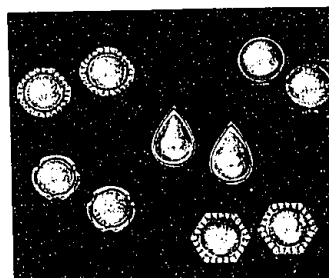
**Bejeweled Bugs**

Our bejeweled gold bugs set with diamonds and other precious stones are priced from \$315.



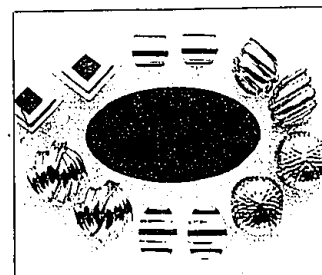
**Gold Bangle Bracelets**

Our 14k gold bangles for any occasion in a wide array of styles and sizes. Pictured styles begin at \$410.



**Dramatic Mabe Pearls**

Our collection of Mabe Pearl earrings feature over 15 styles, many set with diamonds. Prices begin at \$260.



**Elegant Gold Earrings**

Our gold earring selection, over 100 styles, are priced from \$55. Styles pictured above begin at \$220.

\*all items subject to prior sale

528 North Woodward • Birmingham • 4 Blocks North of Maple • 642-6050  
Monday-Friday 9:30-6:00, Saturday 9:30-5:00 • Major Credit Cards Welcome