

OBSERVATION POINT

We Exalt Our Heroes, Then Grind 'Em Up

By Philip H. Power

Two men walked on the moon and what's new this week? Anybody remember Dr. Jonas Salk or Barney Ross or Sergeant York? Try again: Claudette Colbert, Mark Clark, Colin Kelly, Harlow Curdick? Four out of seven gets you a free game card at your favorite gasoline station. Or send in your answers with the top off your convertible and you get a free all-expense trip to Ypsilanti. This is all by way of saying that America's most famous product is assembly-line heroes, like automobiles. And, like automobiles, they depreciate and deteriorate and are discarded. We tap our foot for the next hero to arrive in glory. We make 'em and break 'em. MAYBE THE KIDS tip us off.

Buy a boy a \$40 toy for Christmas and he plays with the box it came in. Dolls still last longer with girls, but when the nose gets broken and the left arm dangles crazily on rubber tendons they go back to a scruffy old blanket you haven't been able to take to the laundry in six months. There was an old camp meeting song about man being the captain of his fate, the master of his soul. He makes his own man-heroes, worships them and goes on to another like a fickle swinger. And there is always someone to put on the pedestal, but not for long. Heroes. Recently there has been Dr. Christian Barnard, the first heart transplant surgeon — now involved romantically with an

Italian woman and a topic of scorn at suburbia's poolside. Here in Michigan, Soapy Williams is gone and semi-forgotten. Detroit's Jerry Cavanagh, everybody's darling in 1961, felt it necessary to split the scene. George Romney, the leader of the parade out of the wilderness in 1962, withdrew from the presidential race in 1968. Dr. John Hannah left Michigan State University more in sorrow after building it than in disgrace. Same with Former Gov. John B. Swainson. We make 'em and we break 'em. THE KENNEDYS. Everybody knows what happened to Joseph P. Kennedy, Joe, John, Robert — and now Teddy.

If Teddy survives it will be a miracle for him, and a new stature for America. What is it that brings the nation to establish a hero one day, then—through a tragically irrelevant accident—discard him the next? Maybe America is too eager to acclaim a hero. One day he's a man perhaps luckier and more talented than the rest of us, able to do something we can't and with a style that brings envy. So we join him, rather than beat him. We relate, and issue empathy from every pore. Barney Ross, the premier boxer of the 1930s gets hooked on dope and we abandon him. Sergeant York, the big Congressional Medal of Honor winner in World War I dies in poverty. Capt. Colin Kelly, who dived a

bomber into a Japanese ship in World War II, is forgotten and bad-mouthed because somebody said he was stoned at the time. Heroes have got to be pristine. Whoever measures these things announced that Astronaut John Glenn — first man to orbit the earth — got more tonnage of confetti on his New York parade than Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur. Can it be that the important things in our lives are measured in confetti? WE MAKE 'EM. Rowan and Martin were national entertainment heroes last year with Laugh-In, triumphant survivors of a summer series. They even had a newspaper comic strip as a hitchhiker. The three astronauts — Arm-

strong, Aldrin and Collins — are visited by President what's-his-name on the Hornet when they come back from the moon. There will be a press conference, medals and a story in Life magazine with pictures of the wives and kids. And we break 'em. Denny McLain, the Tigers' 31-game winner last year is under fire for flying an airplane. Gov. Milliken's nice-guy posture is falling apart. There is developing a nationalistic backlash against departing Vietnam — our strongest desire just weeks ago. We need a new hero to keep the poor guy. Poor guy.



'This Is The Week That ...'

Oh, What A Beautiful Goof

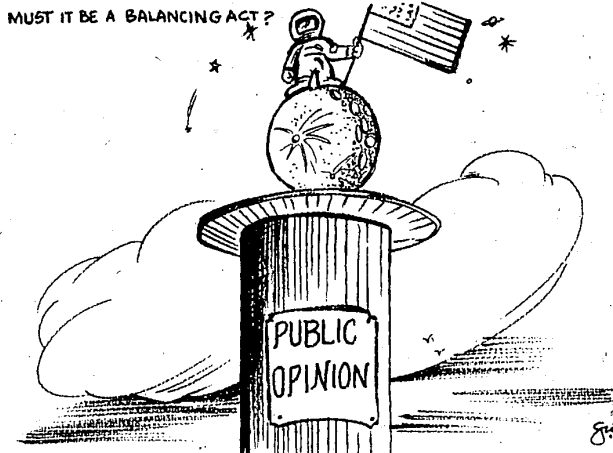
By Don Hoenshell

Sometimes the best thing that can happen to a political public relations man is an earthquake. A no-hitter sometimes helps but not as much, and it is mentioned only because most PR guys will take anything they can get. In the absence of such a kindly fortune, it is proper to develop a convincing fainting spell. It all came back with the episode that some feel has dimmed the luster of Edward Moore Kennedy and has tarnished his sword. It is proof that even earthquakes have limited utility. He was reduced to a neck brace, the premature announcement that his wife was pregnant and to 10 minutes standing in a corner before 80 million television critics.

THE STORY BROKE as man walked on the moon, and you can't get many earthquakes like that. The papers and television channels were jammed with moon copy. Nobody cared much about an automobile accident off Martha's Vineyard. But Kennedy managed to get it on Page 1. He still hasn't satisfactorily explained the details. Every city desk in the world — and maybe now, the moon — can pick out holes the size of the Grand Canyon in his story. By Kennedy's own account, he first contacted a couple of lawyer friends at the party he attended. Lawyers prefer to try cases in court. PR guys try cases in the newspapers and Teddy was in

much more danger from the voting folks than from the law. "We feel that the greatest damage to Teddy Kennedy has been done by his own self-imposed silence," said a pair of the best political seers in Washington. "TOP POLITICAL hands close to JFK and RFK—who were not called in by EMK in this crisis—feel that this has been a major political mistake—and we agree." Kennedy neutralized the earthquake. There is evidence he called some people during the 10-hour delay in reporting the accident—but they were the wrong people. And if he fainted—it was at the wrong time.

MUST IT BE A BALANCING ACT?



Leonard Poger writes

Everybody's Playing Catch-Up To Brown

POLITICS REQUIRES rectitude while enjoying the public gaze and it is a goof to let down the image. Beyond that, it is a very bad policy to get caught. If caught, cupping a plea is proper. This ain't cynicism, folks. It's the way we play the game. Why must we always get back to Paul W. Weber, the only political public relations man to have a book written about him? It's because Weber was — and is — one of the savviest guys on the premises. Here's a Weberian: "When you have a skeleton in the closet, you haul it out pronto for everyone to see—then blame it on the opposition." Former Gov. C. Mennen Williams went to Africa as JFK's representative and engaged the multitudes with his "Africa for the Africans" comment at an airport. Returning to the United States with governments threatening to topple, he called Weber. "What should I have done, Paul?"

Westland's mayoralty primary campaign this summer may serve as a reflection of what may be called "the suburban crisis." Mayor Thomas Brown has been the community's chief executive for the past five years as Nankin Township supervisor and Westland mayor. Brown was in the driver's seat during a rapid growth in the city's population and industrial-commercial growth, thanks mainly to Chevrolet and Westland Shopping Center. HE IS BEING challenged in the Democratic Party primary election by Councilman Gene McKinney, who obviously feels that Brown hasn't done enough and things could be better with a new man in the mayor's office. But underneath the Westland campaign are factors which really plague most suburbs who need more funds to solve local problems but face considerable resistance from residents who

are fed up with rising property taxes. Some of the factors are identical to those in the large urban centers — conservative social philosophies which buck racial integration and a fear that such integration will lower property values on homes tied up in large mortgages. In addition, a candidate who continually repeats a "law and order" slogan will continually remind residents of the racial problem in the large urban centers and that maybe, just maybe, it could happen in their own town.

BESIDES THE social issues involved, the Westland mayoralty race will also share another key factor with its large metropolitan centers, where recent voting results indicated dissatisfaction with the incumbent mayor, and Detroit, where the urban problems apparently proved to be too much for Jerry Cavanagh. That factor is the qualities of leadership owned by the mayor and his challenger. In City Hall, there are a continuing number of complaints by some department heads and residents alike that it takes eternity

and a day to get simple tasks accomplished. In addition, there are grumblings about the attitudes of a number of city employees in their dealings with the general public. Obviously, a city official cannot please everyone, considering he handles up to thousands of personal contacts a year. But the challenger to the mayor can certainly find out if there is a pattern of dissatisfaction with City Hall and relay his thoughts to the voters in the current campaign. Mayor Brown, of course, will try to convince one and all that

progress is being made under his administration and he is providing needed services to the community. BOTH CANDIDATES should keep in mind what the first U.S. defense secretary, James Forrestal, said shortly before his suicide in the late 1940's: "It's not enough to do a good job—you must convince the country of it." The Westland campaign, like most others, will boil down to whether Brown or McKinney can convince the voters that he is the best man for the job.

Moon Shot Skills Needed On Earth

Editorial & Opinion

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Serving the communities of: Livonia, Plymouth, Farmington, Westland, Canton Township, Farmington, Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland. Don Hoenshell, Editor

Critics of government spending have raised the argument that "we," meaning the government, should be placing more emphasis and more money on solving the problems on earth before "we" go to the moon. The critics bemoan the American dollars it has taken to put man on the moon and claim the money could have been more appropriately used for the advancement of civil rights, or improving the medicare, social security, and welfare programs. However, these people are being overly critical and haven't struck the most vulnerable cord

of the government's fiscal neck. OBVIOUSLY, the government is going to go ahead with its space program, no matter what, but we, the people, have the right to demand the same skill in managing, administering and accounting of other government programs as has been performed in the space program. It has taken \$24 billion (an unimaginable figure) to put our two astronauts on the moon and one statistician calculated that amounted to about \$180 from every taxpayer.

It has taken \$24 billion (an unimaginable figure) to put our two astronauts on the moon and one statistician calculated that amounted to about \$180 from every taxpayer. That \$184 million Saturn rocket burns out in 12 minutes. It is easier to understand if you send your wife to Sak Fifth Avenue with a charge plate. Senator Robert Huber says in Lansing sex education guidelines should be established for districts. More passports and language barriers.

The total is staggering but the smaller amount doesn't sound like very much money for each person to have contributed. IT SEEMS SAFE to assume that all the "space money" has been accounted for and that no one is surprised at any waste that may occur. The waste of money comes in terms of the astronauts having to leave valuable equipment behind when they left the moon. In other words, the "space money" is being watched closely, and although you can quarrel with the amounts you cannot quarrel with how it has been guarded. Therefore, since the same government is managing the space program, and has been so successful in guarding the money in that budget, it seems ironical that the government has been so dismally unsuccessful with other programs whose budgets are not even one quarter the amount of the space budget. IMAGINE THAT the United States is in competition with another country to have the best

social security or medicare program rather than the best space program. Would the same result occur—namely no one would be suffering because of mismanagement, poor accounting and corruption. No one would be surprised at the money that would be wasted because it would have been planned that way. If our military spending had been watched as closely as our space spending, the Senate might not now be debating the ABM question because the Pentagon could easily justify what it proposed to do. IT WILL DO NO GOOD to criticize the government for shuffling its priorities because it appears that the one thing it has been able to do without a hitch is put a man on the moon. But, it would do well to criticize the government for not being as careful with its money and management in other programs when it has so clearly demonstrated how capable it is of success when it puts its mind to it.

HENRY J. TEUTSCH