

Mercy grads work for their candidate; grab ringside seat to party politics

At an age when others may be putting up posters of their favorite rock stars, Ellen Horvath, 17, and Grace Vernava, 18, devote their time to gathering votes for Ted Kennedy's bid for the presidency.

The two Mercy High School graduates and best friends since the seventh grade backed their families' Republican leanings and became active in the Young Democrats two years ago.

Last year with a presidential election on the horizon, they studied the candidates and decided to lend their active support to the Kennedy campaign.

Their decision to join the party and work for Kennedy stem from their concern that the country has become lax over helping those who can't help themselves.

"I think the Republicans are unwilling to spend money where it's needed," said Ms. Horvath, who plans to major in political science at Central Michigan University. "The Democrats are willing to spend money where it's needed."

Her support for Kennedy came from a belief that he is "concerned about the people."

"He seemed to be the candidate who really cared. Others were just skirting the issues."



ELLEN HORVATH

GRACE VERNARA

His support of a national health plan attracted Ms. Vernava's support.

"I'M DISSATISFIED with Carter. He wants to be a hero abroad. He's not paying attention to domestic problems," said Ms. Vernava, who plans to become an ophthalmologist.

Instead of giving lip service to their support, the duo have worked in the local Kennedy campaign office filing, answering the phones and running errands.

Their strategies to keep the Kennedy campaign before the voters have taken some surprising turns. At Halloween

they gave out candy plastered with Kennedy stickers.

At school, they spent an hour sticking up 100 pro-Kennedy posters.

"The nuts made us take them all down. It took us about three hours," laughs Ms. Horvath.

Along the way they learned about the political system. They attended the Democratic caucus and earned a firsthand look at the local political process.

"I got a lot of self-satisfaction and a sense of achievement," Ms. Vernava said.

"I would like to be involved in government in later years," she said.

Although she's working for Kennedy's campaign, Ms. Vernava doesn't think he'll manage to upset Carter at this late date.

BUT MS. Horvath, a self-described optimist thinks that there might be a slim chance left.

"I still hold out hope. In the past year so many unbelievable things have happened. Something has to be done to change the situation. I don't like the Republican candidates. Kennedy is the best man for the job. I hope everyone sees it that way."

WDIV-TV fills post

Steven A. Hacker has been named audience promotion manager for WDIV, Channel 4.

Prior to his new position, Hacker served as the station's production manager. He joined WDIV in August, 1979 as a producer/director involved with WDIV's packaging concept, a combination of programming and promotion.

As audience promotion manager, Hacker will be a senior producer involved in long-form promotion projects and will further develop the station's on-air look.

Before joining WDIV-TV, he worked for five years as producer/director with WJKW-TV, Cleveland. Previously, he had been an audio engineer for ABC Network newscasts, which originated in New York. He later joined ABC's Wide World of Sports.

Hacker is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati's division of broadcasting, where he majored in cinematography.

Hacker lives with his wife, Ellen, in Farmington Hills.

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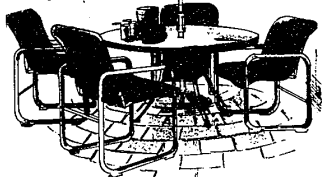
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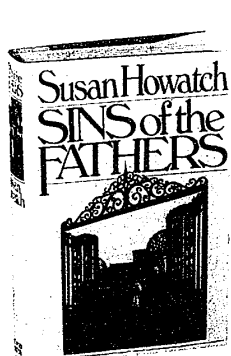
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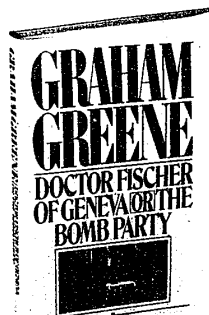
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