

Grand Old Party? Ronna says: No way!



Ronna Romney, new Republican National Committee member from Michigan, spent many of her daytime hours raising money for Reagan-Bush and showing off Senate candidate Jack Louma (left).

DALLAS — The national convention sessions were at night, but the days were long for Ronna Romney.

The new Republican National Committee member from Michigan spent considerable time "approaching people," she said.

"Approaching people" means raising money. There are a lot of \$1,000 and \$500 per head breakfasts, brunches and luncheons in this sun-baked center of banking and insurance.

"I'm also Reagan-Bush finance chairman, John Gusa (Oakland County businessman) is my co-chair," said the 40-year-old Bloomfield Hills mother and author. "They are separate jobs, but they run concurrently."

"I HAVE two quotas \$200,000 for the national campaign and about \$300,000 for the state."

"I've raised my national quota, and I have three weeks more to go."

Also making the rounds raising funds was Jack Louma, winner of the Republican primary for U.S. Senate on Aug. 7. The party has targeted Sen. Carl Levin, a first-term Democrat, for re-election. Louma is being paraded be-

fore audiences in an effort to give him as much exposure and chances to raise contributions as possible.

Misling, 40, co-sponsor, chairman Abraham, answered the roll call vote for president by announcing that "Michigan, the state which this fall will replace the nation's most liberal senator with Jack Louma, casts."

Romney approached political action committees and even big contributors from other states. "People in one state can give to a candidate in another state. Maybe there's no major contest in their own state," Romney said.

DESPITE HER experience in the Headlee for Governor campaign of 1982, the daughter-in-law of former Gov. George Romney confesses to being new at the game.

"We're learning a lot of things on our own," she said. "We did that in the Headlee campaign. We didn't know what we were supposed to do or not do."

Headlee had run ballot-issue campaigns but never a campaign for office when he sought the GOP nomination for governor two years ago. In a tight

three-way contest, Headlee moved out former Lt. Gov. James Brickley and Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, both of whom had experience in state races.

Headlee gave much of the credit to Ronna Romney, and it helped catapult her into the post of national committeewoman from Michigan.

Although she was the host at the January state convention, Romney didn't take office until last week.

She knows the Republican National Committee meets four times a year but isn't sure exactly what else the job entails other than raising money.

"We've never had a national committeewoman from this area of the state," said Romney, who succeeds Margaret (Ramy) Hucker of Midland-Huettner, a Milliken loyalist, held the post since 1968.

"I tend to be very enthusiastic," she said. "I'll be campaigning for a lot of candidates this fall."

LIKE MANY of the new breed of

conservative Republicans, she chafes at the label "Grand Old Party" and the media image of Republicans as elderly.

State Chairman Abraham is 42, and National Committeewoman Peter Saxton of Grand Rapids is 45. The delegation is faced with people in their 20s.

"Top Republican spots in Michigan were filled with many new faces after midnight primary on 11/14/83. The party is growing and many of his supporters were excited with him."

The age difference is so great, in fact, that Romney insists "we shipped a generation."

John Gusa, 32-year-old alternate at-large delegate from Livonia, was amazed to find 3,000 young people next door to the convention center in the arena watching the deliberations on a giant closed-circuit TV screen.

"Most young people have summer jobs, but they're taking a week to come here to Dallas," said Gusa, who is third (youth) vice-chair of the Michigan Republican Party and past chairman of the MSU College Republicans.

Conventions aren't meant to be fun

By Tim Richard
staff writer

TO HEAR Republicans tell it, the Democratic National Convention was a gloom and doom gathering. To hear Democrats tell it, the Republican National Convention in Dallas was a drowsy dirge of WASPish fat cats.

To many, covering a national convention is exciting. Wrong — on all counts.

To begin with, this newsmen likes and respects the overwhelming majority of Republicans and Democrats. Their philosophies aside, they are civic workers the same as community beautification folks and PTA presidents — people trying to improve the world they live in and getting little glory and less money in return.

There are precious few paying jobs in politics. In the few jobs available, benefits are poor, and the turnover tends to be high.

POLITICIANS fret more about what the other party's policies are doing to the young generation of students and home-buyers than about what fat contracts they are going to get from a friendly administration in power.

Politicians get berated by reporters for having dull conventions. In truth, delegates go to conventions on business, not to entertain the media with brouhahas. No newperson has any call to complain that a convention is dull.

The people of both cities were amazingly nice. San Francisco, where the Democrats held forth, is one of the world's most charming cities. But sun-baked Dallas was something else. In five days, I never heard a bird sing.

commentary

I never saw a squirrel or a even mouse in this bleached, Godforsaken weedpatch. I never saw a tree that hadn't been planted by a developer.

There are no sidewalks because no one walks or jogs or bicycles. They rush from one air-conditioned cement building to another in air-conditioned cars and buses.

DEMOCRATIC conventions tend to be ill-organized and time-consuming. Democrats pack in their delegates in like sardines, make 'em sit in uncomfortable chairs and let the sessions run overtime.

Republican conventions are run by the clock. Those on the short side of a vote tend to make their fights brief and then fold their tents.

Democratic conventions are more difficult to cover because so much power is wielded in in bloc caucuses — women, labor, Hispanics and so on. Our newspapers, the 12 Observer & Eccentric papers, publish 150,000 copies twice a week. We are bigger

than 90 percent of the dailies in the nation. Nevertheless, both parties classify us with the "weekly" press.

TO GET floor passes in San Francisco, we had to stand 24 deep (by actual count) for 30 minutes (by actual clock). The pass was good for 10 minutes.

The Michigan delegation was seated diametrically opposite the Republican primary for U.S. Senate on Aug. 7. The party has targeted Sen. Carl Levin, a first-term Democrat, for re-election. Louma is being paraded be-

fore audiences in an effort to give him as much exposure and chances to raise contributions as possible.

For broadcasters, the Democrats set up eight lines and there were never more than two persons waiting. Their floor time was longer, too. It tells you which medium is favored by the Democrats.

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