

What was achieved at Geneva?

NOW THAT the summit at Geneva is over, and the media have turned our attention to other events, a cynic could argue that very little was accomplished at the summit beyond creating an appearance of cordiality.

President Reagan and Secretary General Gorbachev shook hands, exchanged smiles, expressed sentiments of good will, and offered vague declarations of improvement in United States-Soviet relationships.

WAS IT really necessary for Reagan, Gorbachev and their staffs to travel thousands of miles and meet for three days in order to provide for a cultural exchange, namely that we could see the Bolshoi Ballet and they could see the "Beach Boys"?

Indeed, on the critical issues of nuclear disarmament, the regional conflicts supported by the Soviet Union and human rights, one did not find substantive progress.

I reject this view, for something indeed has changed as a result of the summit. The achievement of the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting was its affirmation of hope. Let us not gloss over the differences between the United States and the Soviet Union. These are more than diversities in political organi-



moral
 perspectives
 Rabbi Irwin
 Groner

zation but include diametrically opposed views of man and society, of human rights, of truth and justice.

But despite these differences and despite the strength and conviction of each leader that his national policies are correct and despite the continued tensions of the cold war, something was born at Geneva that, I believe, will have a life of its own.

I REFER to that spirit of confidence that the superpowers and their leaders will find a way to negotiate their conflicts, to resolve their differences and to engage in compromise in order to advance the welfare of their respective countries and, of far greater importance, to help assure the survival of mankind.

Do we have any guarantee that the Soviet Union

and the United States will reach understanding in arms control? Can we be assured that the superpowers will de-escalate the violence in the Near East, Africa, and Latin America?

Can we expect that the Soviet Union will lift its policy of repression against Jewish dissidents and Soviet Jews generally? The answer to all of the above is "No." We have no guarantees, assurances, or commitments; nor should we raise the level of expectations, we should not be deluded by the smiles presented to the photographers and by the bland rhetoric of the Geneva statements.

BUT THE key to redemption is hope — hope for a more stable world, a world in which the cause of peace can be advanced. Hope produces a vision of the future, and that vision has the power to generate thought, effort and planning.

The fact that Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev have promised to meet twice more in the United States and the Soviet Union is a demonstration of the depth of their ability to resolve world conflicts, their will to find the proper means to achieve this goal. The world before Geneva lived with a sense of pessimism and despair. The world after Geneva can dare to hope for a better future.

60th birthday is a real doozy

By Margaret Miller
 special writer

Margaret Miller was Suburban Life editor for Observer Newspapers for 16 years. She and her husband Joe, former night news editor of the Detroit Free Press, have retired and live in Florida.

IT'S A GOOD thing my husband doesn't turn 60 every day. Once was almost too much for our almost-retired gray cells.

I remember making it through a 50th birthday with half-dollars taped everywhere I looked, and a 60th that brought a singing and dancing birthday cake to my desk at this newspaper. But that was before I retired.

And Joe's 60th natal day celebration last month started in a fairly untaxing manner. About mid-afternoon a messenger appeared at the door holding a dozen balloons tied with bright ribbons.

"I'm told these came from Anchorage," he said. We marveled at how they had made it across the Rockies, what with the snow storms and all, and we took some pictures to show daughter Ann that her remembrance had arrived.

THE HELIUM-FILLED balloons were gracing our ceiling when, before dinner, we tackled boxes that had arrived from daughters Barb and Kathy in Michigan. With them had come strict orders that neither box was to be opened until both were on hand.

First we found three refrigerator boxes of homemade cookies. They'd be delicious, we were sure. But after that all was puzzlement as we started on an assortment of small packages.

Joe opened first a package of small paper plates. Then a box of six flashlight batteries. Then a bag of balloons.

"They're sending a birthday party," we decided.

BUT THEN came a notebook. And a pad of paper. A small jigsaw puzzle. A card of bobby pins, a light bulb. Packages of baggies and freezer bags. And a couple of real brain-twisters, a box of Smurf vitamins and a bottle of cod liver oil capsules. Health advice, maybe?

A cassette tape surfaced and we were sure it would provide an explanation. But we played it and it turned out to be an exercise tape.

Still in the dark, we turned to the presents I had wrapped for Joe. One was a small mortar set. "I didn't know whether you'd like it," I told him, "but I had seen you look at them in the stores."

INDEED HE liked it, he said, and added: "It's certainly as useful as a 60-watt light bulb." And as he spoke we both realized what the odd assortment was all about. Sixty paper plates, 60 balloons, a 60-page notebook, 60-piece puzzle, 60 bobby pins, 60 vitamins, 60 cod liver oil capsules, a 60-minute tape. Sixty cookies, we assumed, but didn't count.

The light had dawned just in time. The telephone rang, and granddaughter Katie was ready to sing "Happy Birthday" and Barb wanted to know how we liked the 60s. "We decided not to put in any explanation," she said. "We thought we'd let you figure it out." Later Kathy was to note in another call that "you have no idea how few things are packaged in 60s."

We told Barb we supposed the flashlight batteries each represented 10 years. "No," she said, "they're six D batteries."

OK, kids, it was a great birthday party. We love the cookies and we'll use the bags and notebook and pad. But what will we ever do with all that cod liver oil?

Watch out for holiday dangers

It may be the season to be jolly, but remember to be especially careful while you're decking the halls. If you kids under the mistletoe, make sure that's as close as you get to it. The leaves and the berries are poisonous and should be hung out of the reach of children and pets.

Plants account for about nine percent of the estimated five million poisonings each year in this country. And it's particularly important to be wary of the colorful plants brought indoors this time of year.

MISTLETOE BERRIES can easily fall off the plant and be picked up and eaten by a curious child. Just one or two berries can cause death.

Twenty to thirty holly berries can be fatal to a child. Jerusalem cherry, a plant bearing yellow or red fruit, can cause abdominal pain, circulatory

and breathing problems, shock, coma and death. If eaten, poinsettia and Christmas rose plants can cause nausea, diarrhea, and, in large amounts, even death.

Experiencing more than your share of holiday stress? When you're under the tension of last-minute shopping, holiday entertaining and errands, it's especially important to surround yourself with loved ones. Why?

A NEW study shows that if your lifestyle is stressful and low on contacts with other people, your risk of death following a heart attack may be up to four times greater than that of a more re-

laxed and social person.

The study found that heart attack victims at highest risk did not belong to social groups, and spent little time with family and friends. Researchers speculate that stress increases the likelihood of heart rhythm disorders that could lead to death.

Other studies have found that people with strong social ties are less likely than isolated people to die of cancer and digestive diseases.

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