### GM, U.S. travel odd, parallel paths



Presidential gadfly Ross Perot got his 30 minutes of fame the atherminutes of fame the other night and I have to confess that he had my attention, but not for the rea-son you might suess.

DAN
MCGON
MCGON
MCGON
MCGON
MCGON
MCGON
Mainly, he
had the instincts of a good reporter, which
is to say he had a sharp focus on
the problems, but not much in
the way of a solution.
This is, of course, the same
kind of flurry he made during
his short stay at GM, harping
about quality and efficiency,
then leaving them with a phone
system that still doesn't work.
Still, there is an add parallel
between GM todey and the U.S.
government, in the sense that
they both are mammoth buresucracies with loads of upproductive overhead, stymied by
entrenched interests that defend

their turf with the ferocity of a

their turf with the ferocity of a Los Angeles street gang. Perot pointed out that currently there is only one American farmer for each federal employe in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

At GM today, for every guy actually bolting a car together there are six or seven milling about on breaks, in executive suites, laid off or retired. Perot's story about the Department of Agriculture leads up to a tale about a guy alone in his office, crying. How come? Wy farmer tided, he says.

At GM these days, sometimes it seems like they find the one guy left still working, and fire him.

It seems like they find the one guy left still working, and fire him.

It seems like they find the one you will, eventually, get hetter. Then they close another air force base.

At GM, they have the new E-

At GM, they have the new E-team, hot new executives fresh from Europe where they sliced

market share away from the likes of Fiat, Volkswagen and Renault in a market protected against the Japanese.
Frankly, I think competing with Toyota in the U.S. is a little tougher.
Both the government and GM are plagued with excess capacity. In the case of the government, this has resulted from the unexpected demise of the Soviet Union, plus the sudden substitution of fax machines for the U.S. Post Office.
In the auto business, 'excess capacity' is mainly a polite way of saying nobody is buying your cars.

of saying nobody is buying your cars.

There is, of course, a fundamental difference here, since in the auto business cutting so-called 'excess capacity' is another way of saying you are giving up, whereas having a problem with excess capacity in the military means you won.

A key issue in the campaign is health care. Likewise at GM, where they are just as confused as the government about what

to do about it.
Having no control over the
price, GM tries to cut its cost,
slicing benefits to reduce its
own payroll costs.
Curiously, GM cut the benefits for future employes the
most, who will eventually find
themselves working to pay for
retirement benefits current GM
management voted themselves
and those currently employed.
This, of course, is modeled af-

This, of course, is modeled af-ter the U.S. social security sys-

the the U.S. social security system.

The main hope for GM is that despite its problems it still is one of the largest repositories of industrial and technological capabilities in the world. The sheer size of the place makes in an economic entity all by itself, and its healthy revival could well be the spark that leads to much broader based recovery.

That, of course, would be good for both GM and good for the country. I don't think it was Perot that said that, but somebody did.

#### **BATHTUB REFINISHING**

80% LESS than replacement

Tried & true quality materials field tested for 20 years. DOP QUALITY

\$ 179 Written 10 yr. Warranty Appliances - Sinks Tile - Refinishing Tile



Right now at Montgomery Ward Optical you can get a new complete pair of cycglasses at the amazing low price of \$591 Choose from a special selection of frame syles for men, women and culduren, their add studge risken plastic lenses with scratch reast to coating—all for only \$591 Multi-focal and other lens options available at additional cost. Hurry to Montgomery Ward Optical today.

roding of cycewca requires a valid persoription. Offer may not be combined with any other and, coupon, insurance, vision care program or prior orders. One coupon per purchase. A histopating Kontgomery Ward retail stores except where probabiled by taw. Cash value 1/



DEARBORN 13551 Michigan Ave 584-0500 Summit Mall 682-4940

SOUTHGAT 13665 Euroka I 285-4400 WARREN

28800 Doquinda 761-7500

SOUTHFIELD Tel-Twelve Mail 358-1200 LIVONIA 29501 Plymouth Rd. 427-1600 MT. CLEMENS

Montgomery Ward OPTICAL

## Pick Your Pet





### Five Hundred Years Ago, Columbus Discovered The New World. Now He's Helping Us Furnish It.



from \$ 99 from \$199 Sofas from \$249

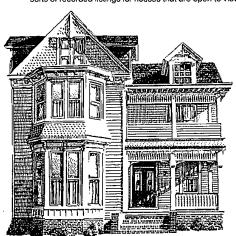
FURNITURE RENTAL CLEARANCE CENTER

28720 Nonlinestern Highway, Southfield, 388-4303 tentra 3921 Rochester Road, Troy, 524-1022 Store Hours: Mon. 9 ant-8 pm; Ties.-Fri. 9 ant-6 pm;

COLUMBUS DAY SALE-OCTOBER 9TH, 10TH & 12TH

# Here's an easy way to house-hunt.

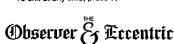
You'll find a lot of Open Houses listed right in our Classified Real Estate Section. There are also dozens of Open Houses listed on our electronic HomeLine directory. Be sure to check both. When using HomeLine, call 953-2020. You can listen to all sorts of recorded listings for houses that are open to view.





following directions for using our voice telephone directory:

- 2. Press the number of the city you are interested in (see directory at right).
- 3. Choose your price range and listen to the listings for the city you've chosen.
- 4. Additional information:
  - •To back up, press 1
  - To pause, press 2
  - To jump ahead, press 3
  - To exit at any time, press \*







Birmingham Bloomfield Milford 4286 Rochester Royal Oak 4287 Southfield 4283 South Lyon Troy Walled Lake

nty Listings, Press 2

4264 4260 4263 4262 Garden City Livonia Nonhville Plymouth Redford 4265