

A Great Governor ...But President!?!?

Gorgeous George Romney rode into the state capitol astride a white horse slightly more than five years ago.

Since that time the growth of the man as a professional politician has been fascinating to watch.

He has been a good governor for the state.

HOWEVER, (and this is the rub) I'm not so certain that he will make a good president. It should be noted that I say this having worked as a volunteer in two of Romney's campaigns for governor and would vote for him again tomorrow for that post.

I should also add that LBJ is a particularly unappealing President and the GOP will really have to throw the election out the window to lose my vote.

But I'm still not sold on Romney for 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. This mild feeling of dismay has been building for months.

Romney charges he is "brain-washed."

He goes to farm country and comes up with the easy solution of abolishing all the farm surplus. (Granted, something must be done about the surplus problem, but you can't just abolish them.)

He becomes upset when a fur or arises after he calls LBJ a "political animal." Truman had

a saying about "if you can't stand the heat..." that the governor should examine.

All these things contributed to the general feeling.

THE LATEST issue of the Michigan GOP's newspaper arrived today. Needless to say, the lead story was on Romney's announcement that he would go after the GOP presidential nomination.

Elly Peterson, the energetic GOP state chairman, observes in an editorial that:

"In George Romney, the American people have a great leader; a man of destiny; a man who will restore the confidence of the people in themselves through a resurgence of the people's confidence in their government and in the principles upon which their government was founded."

Really! The rank and file of the GOP are too intelligent to swallow that type of rhetoric. So are the voters.

EVER SINCE Kennedy the country and the politicians have been talking about "style" in government. JFK had the style and he never talked about it. That's the difference.

Exclusive style or lack of it, Romney reminds one of a modern Don Quixote. He gets our sympathy, but not our support.

—Sue Shaughnessy

They're putting up the Christmas decorations in Plymouth and Farmington. In Livonia you can hear carols drifting out of the shops. The business districts in Westland and Garden City have sprouted with green and gold, and people in Redford are starting to put colored lights on their houses.

Although you wouldn't know it from the combination of fog, rain, sloop and slush we've been served

for weather lately, the Christmas season has come.

Feeling full of the Christmas spirit (not to mention the guilt produced by a long list of un-done seasonal buying) I went shopping over the weekend. What follows is a set of disconnected observations on the Christmas scene here in Observerland.

IT'S AN ODD feeling to be Christmas shopping with no snow

on the ground. Some people seem to like it ("Thank heavens I don't have to fight the slippery roads together with the traffic," said one elderly lady as she clutched her shopping bag) but to me it feels as uncomfortable as a baseball game without hot dogs.

Snow for Christmas, at least here in Michigan, is part of the culture. You see it in the ads; you hear about it in the carols; you know Santa's reindeer will

have hard going through mud and gravel.

Not having any snow leaves a little tinge of regret, as though the dessert you were expecting at the end of a good dinner never came.

It started to snow a little Saturday night, just as I was buying a Christmas tree over on Plymouth Road. It felt good, as though Christmas had at last decided to arrive in proper style.

By Sunday it had stopped, and I felt a little bit sorry.

WALKING THROUGH the stores, I was struck by the enormous number of teen agers.

Of course, the statisticians tell us that Observerland is a young society. Right now, over half the population of Livonia is under 21, for example.

But the numbers are too abstract to hit you where you live. You've got to see the real people before the generalization comes across.

A lot of the kids were shopping in couples. The boys generally wore blue jeans and nylon ski jackets, but they had the same tolerant and half interested air that older men wear when they are being taken around shopping by their wives.

The girls had wonderful long hair, mostly blond. I like long hair, and the girls looked great. I thought of Christmas angels for a while, and then decided that wasn't entirely accurate.

JUDGING FROM the crowds in the stores, there's nothing wrong with the economy. Despite the Ford strike and the Detroit newspaper shut-down, people were out shopping with plenty of money to spend.

The retailers report that sales this year are up around seven per cent over last year, and some say that they're doing even better.

They also say people are buying more expensive, higher quality stuff than in the past. They seem mildly surprised at this, as if they didn't know that Observerland is a darn high income area.

You bet it is. And people out here have too much good taste to put up for long with the incredible amounts of plastic garbage you see being palmed off on the public as the real stuff.

Christmas, in one sense, is the plastic season.

IT'S ALSO THE buying season. I don't want to sound the usual prudish call about let's get away from the commercial aspect of Christmas and get back to the higher things. After all, people will make what they want to out of the season, and all the high minded exhortations aren't going to do much good if people don't accept them.

But somehow I was reminded of the old spoof on the Christmas carol that goes, "Hark the Herald Tribune sings, advertising glorious things."

Saw a game in one of the shopping centers, called "Acquire." It seemed to fit part of the Christmas season, although the point crossed my mind that it might better have been called "Avarice."

BUT THERE'S MORE to this season than just buying.

Children, mainly.

It was in a store in Plymouth. General goods, like a dime store. Not fancy, but nicely decorated.

And there was this man. Tall; thin; about 25 or 26. He was carrying his son in his arms in that way nervous and proud young fathers all carry their babies.

He was standing under the arch of glittering tinsel, all gold and silver and green.

And his son was looking. Craning his head from side to side, as his father held him up to get a good look.

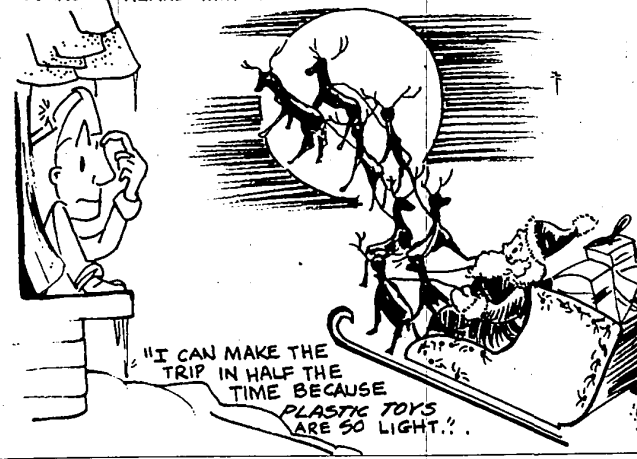
The baby's mouth was open in wonder and joy, and his eyes were as big as the whole world.

That's the Christmas season out here in Observerland... and elsewhere.

From the Publisher's Desk OBSERVATION POINT

By Philip H. Power

..AND I HEARD HIM EXCLAIM ERE HE DROVE OUT OF SIGHT...



An Executive Wonders About The 'Bad Image' of Business

With sponges in hand, let us shed copious tears for the plight of American business, as outlined by O.N. Miller, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Standard Oil of California.

It's not that business isn't making profit, or that business isn't being socially responsible. Brother Miller argues, rather, that "the image of business held by a considerable segment of the public does not flatter the genuine article."

In the November issue of Michigan Business Review, published by the University of Michigan Graduate School of Business Administration, Miller laments:

"Professionals — people earning \$10,000 a year or more — are at the forefront of criticism of business. These affluent people — government executives, educators, doctors, clergymen, social workers and others — view private enterprise with unreasoning suspicion."

He is disturbed about a Harvard University study which showed that "88 per cent of all college students would decline to go into business as a career. Business 'stifles initiative,' these young men and women told the poll takers."

Miller figures business ought to be able to show itself in the most favorable light because "American business has developed its advertising and public relations methods into high arts."

It would be sad to contemplate a nation without private enterprise, agreed. But as for business being unfairly given a bad "image," I must demur. Business has a bad "image" precisely because it is generally poor — not good — at public relations.

WHAT THE PUBLIC knows about business comes from two main sources — advertising and P.R.

Let us pass over ordinary commercial advertising since it is aimed at selling products rather than sing the public on the nobility of businessmen.

Let us begin instead with the kind of ads that young people — the kind Mr. Miller is talking about in the Harvard study — often react to.

Let us see what kinds of opportunity for initiative and creativity are offered in these ads, which are among the better offers in one day's paper:

"Controller to \$17,000. Accounting degree, C.P.A. experience helpful..."

"Are you looking for a better opportunity? If so, come in and talk to us at — Realty. We have increased our sales staff..."

"Credit specialist, \$575. For major appliance manufacturer. Degree or wholesale credit experience..."

"Inside order desk sales, \$500. Junior cost clerk, future, \$600... Junior general bookkeeping clerk, to \$600... food sales rep, \$600-plus... pharmaceutical sales trainee, \$450-plus..."

"Paint chemist..."

That is a fair sampling of some of the better offers. Anyone see any room for creativity?

If the ads are truthful, then business either "stifles creativity," at worst, or doesn't want to hire it in the first place, at best.

Maybe this is why so many apparently normal kids are trying to join the Peace Corps or hippie colonies.

IN A NEWSPAPER office, you receive hundreds of news handouts a week from business and government.

Those that are best prepared, most laden with information, most nearly like newspaper style and truest sounding are those submitted by government agencies, politicians or colleges.

Those that are most blatantly self-serving, most poorly written and phonest come from business. Not all business P.R. is bad, but a lot of it is.

There are reasons. First, business doesn't always hire good P.R. people. Businesses tend to pick up persons either with no news gathering experience, or the less competent people who had gone no place in journalism and weren't likely to. The politicians had a greater tendency to hire top-notch reporters.

Second, once they've hired P.R. men, politicians will have the sense to respect their judgment and let them use it. The ordinary

business P.R. release, however, has been edited and re-edited — you can tell it a mile away — by a horde of executives who have no idea what a good news story is.

The businessman wants a news story written to sound like advertising, and he wants a lot of personal "puff" in his releases. He doesn't listen when the P.R. man tries to tell him the stuff won't be printed or, if printed, won't be read.

IF YOU COVER a strike for a newspaper — and this observer has covered an uncounted number — you quickly discover that a third to half of businessmen are real dopes in the P.R. game. That's not a majority, but it's a frightening minority.

Typical case: A picket line appears in front of a plant employing 600 people. Call the union. The union says its contract ended at midnight, it has been negotiating fifteen days, it has 500 members in the plant, and they want such-and-such benefits.

Call the plant manager. His secretary says he's in conference. Leave a message for the manager to call you. He doesn't call. Call him back. His secretary says he's in conference and she isn't sure he'll want to make a statement.

Tell her his plant is one of the biggest in town, it's closed down, the union has told its side, and you're sure the manager won't be foolish enough not to give his fellow townsmen a reasonable explanation of the situation.

But you're wrong. The plant manager IS foolish. He won't make himself available to a reporter. So you go to press telling the union's side of the story and adding: "The plant manager could not be reached for comment."

That's a lack of courtesy. And that's business. —Tim Richard

This Is The Week That

... By Don Hoenshell

Republicans have come back from the ideological blabs to the point they're ready to legitimately challenge Democrats nationally and restore past glories in Michigan.

It is a sort of political flu that afflicts the overconfident and the dreamers who think they can do it themselves...

Without little people like you and me who go to the polls on election day.

Republicans learned after the Goldwater debacle that the major purpose of a political party is to win elections, and it is the duty of those they elect to indulge in philosophy.

It is a lesson Michigan Democrats are re-learning in agonizing steps. The fellows back in PHC Corner in 1958 preached at Gov. Williams he couldn't be touched, that re-election would be unanimous.

There was the governor on election night thanking his slate for "pulling me in with them."

GOV. ROMNEY'S first campaign for governor was outside the party. In some outstate towns there were separate headquarters — Romney headquarters and Republican headquarters.

There is the recollection of a series of conversations with former State Senator Edward Hutchinson, now in Congress from the Chicago Tribune Belt of southwestern Michigan. The theme:

"Republicans out of office are cannibalistic; they destroy anyone with a yen for the executive office. So, the next Republican governor has to be bigger in public acclaim than his party."

"Before you can afford to be a statesman, you've got to be a politician. Then, after you're governor, you can indulge in philosophy."

THE REPUBLICANS, of course, were taken over by Romney after his 1962 win. He IS the party in Michigan and, should lightning strike for him nationally in 1968, the whoosh of a collapsing balloon will be heard as far north as Lake Superior.

He will leave behind him a very good man, Lt. Gov. William

G. Milliken whose political future may be stunted by years in the shadow. Aside from him, Republican choices other than Romney are zero.

Democrats, out of office since Romney came on the scene as governor Jan. 1, 1963, are beset with internal problems, some of them philosophical.

They need a new state chairman now that Zolton Ferency has quit, and the only name in sight is Sander Levin. He maybe won't win every election, but nobody will sleep much until he does.

Nationally, Republicans are coming back under the chairmanship of Ray Bliss, who would trade the philosophers for one doorbell puncher any day of the week.

And give change, and maybe green stamps.

Nationally, the seers say this Republican development is a contribution to a continuing two-party system, a resurgence of the warp and woof of the political system.

In Michigan, the Democrats have got to come back, too, sublimating if possible the internal issues and winning elections again. Politics, it is said, is a game of cat and mouse.

And nobody likes to be a mouse.

'Grass Roots' Now, Anyone?

Hot off the press is a thing called "Developing Urban Detroit Area Study," sponsored by Detroit Edison and Wayne State University.

The area studied is the region in which Detroit exerts "the major urban influence." This means:

- 24 counties in southeastern Michigan.
- Nine counties in Ohio.
- Three counties in Ontario.
- And it covers:
- 23,000 square miles.
- 7.5 million people.
- 1,112 local government units.

"Grass-roots" government, anyone?

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