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July 1, 1976

Dear Peter

What would we ever do without you???

You are fantastic, and your help during the last two trips to Grand Rapids was much appreciated. Your patience and your savvy are always invaluable to us.

Again, Pete, thanks for all past kindnesses and for our future contact as well.

My very best wishes.

Patti
Patti Matson
Assistant Press Secretary
to Mrs. Ford

Mr. Peter Secchia
Universal Forest Products, Inc.
3153 Three Mile Road, N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

PM/saq

I mean every word in this letter...

President Ford still needs your help.

Shake

*Fig
Peter
Secchia*

He needed us in Michigan. And we stood up for him. Supporting the man who brought decency, honesty and a realistic approach back to government.

President Ford needs you again.

Because it's now come down to winning delegates one by one. In the last three primary states.

IN NEW JERSEY.

Candidate Reagan's campaign must be exposed for what it is. Misleading and impractical. Unless we get the message across, we could lose. It's that important.

CALIFORNIA.

You can be part of this people's effort to tell the truth. (Our committee is independent. Even if you've already given, you can give again. And the first \$100 is tax deductible. The new Federal limit does not restrict individual contributions and ads unauthorized by the President or his committee.)

*Passing out
of these tough
county committees
\$500
@*

*Winning this
by...
on and get money
paid also per*

AND OHIO.

Let's be sure others understand what we already know about our friend, Jerry Ford. Please support the President now. Your money may never do more.

Yes, I want President Ford to win. Here's...

- \$ *5* to help buy envelopes & stamps.
- \$ *10* to make long distance calls.
- \$ **25-\$100** toward local newspaper ads.
- \$ **500** to pay for a good-sized ad.
- \$ **1000** to sponsor Rep. VanderJagt *speaking* ^{video taped} *message* for the President on television.
- \$ **2500** to buy a full page ad in a city paper.

Required by federal law:

Your name _____

Occupation _____

Business address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make personal checks payable to "Friends of the First Family Committee" and mail today to Postoffice Box 504, Rockford, MI 49341. And pass this message along to someone else.

This message paid for by the Friends of the First Family Committee, Peter F. Secchia, chairman. It was not authorized by the candidate or the President Ford Committee. A copy of our committee's report will be filed with the Federal Election Commission and

WHITE HOUSE MAIL
RECEPTION & SECURITY
MAY 29 1976
Processed by: 1



Mrs. Sheila Weidenfeld
Mrs. Ford's Press Secretary
East Wing
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

QUOTES - Mrs. Ford

On Pete & Joan ~~and~~ Secchia

She said they have had a friendship for five or six years.

Pete is a real go-getter and a ball of fire. Joan is a lovely wife and mother and we like Pete and Joan very much.

They are a part of our young set of friends.



To MILDRED LEONARD

File
Secchia

April 8, 1976

Mr. Peter Secchia
Universal Forest Products
3153 3 Mile Rd. N.E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49505

Dear Mr Secchia,

Every time I think of the Florida campaign trip and especially the Wisconsin trip, I could never thank you enough for giving me an opportunity to participate in this worth while endeavor. It was the greatest of all honors being introduced to the First Lady, Mrs. Ford.

I don't think I could ever explain the way I feel right now after thinking about all the beautiful people on my bus that I've grown to love. Each of their zannie personalities made the Wisconsin trip unique and very enjoyable for me. I've found myself growing more and more mentally, as these trips have helped me to expand my over-all perspective.

Once again, thank you for your encouragement.

Sincerely Your Friend,

Dorothy Jacks



PLEASE PASS ON TO
SHELLA W. AND NOTE
SHE'S 16 YEARS OLD AND
NEVER BEARS "INVOLVED"
THE 5TH DISTRICT
IS ALIVE.

PP

Rusty -
do we have a file on
the Grand Rapids people
campaigning in Fla? hxc

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO: Ron Nessen
Sheila Weidenfeld ✓

FROM: MILDRED LEONARD

FOR: Information x

Appropriate Handling

Pete Secchia asked me to send this to you with following corrections: The group will now land at Tampa, go to St. Petersburg and visit a VA hosp. and participate in parade to a downtown park; then go to Ft. Lauderdale for precinct activities and be in Palm Beach on Sunday.

DATE: 2/18/76



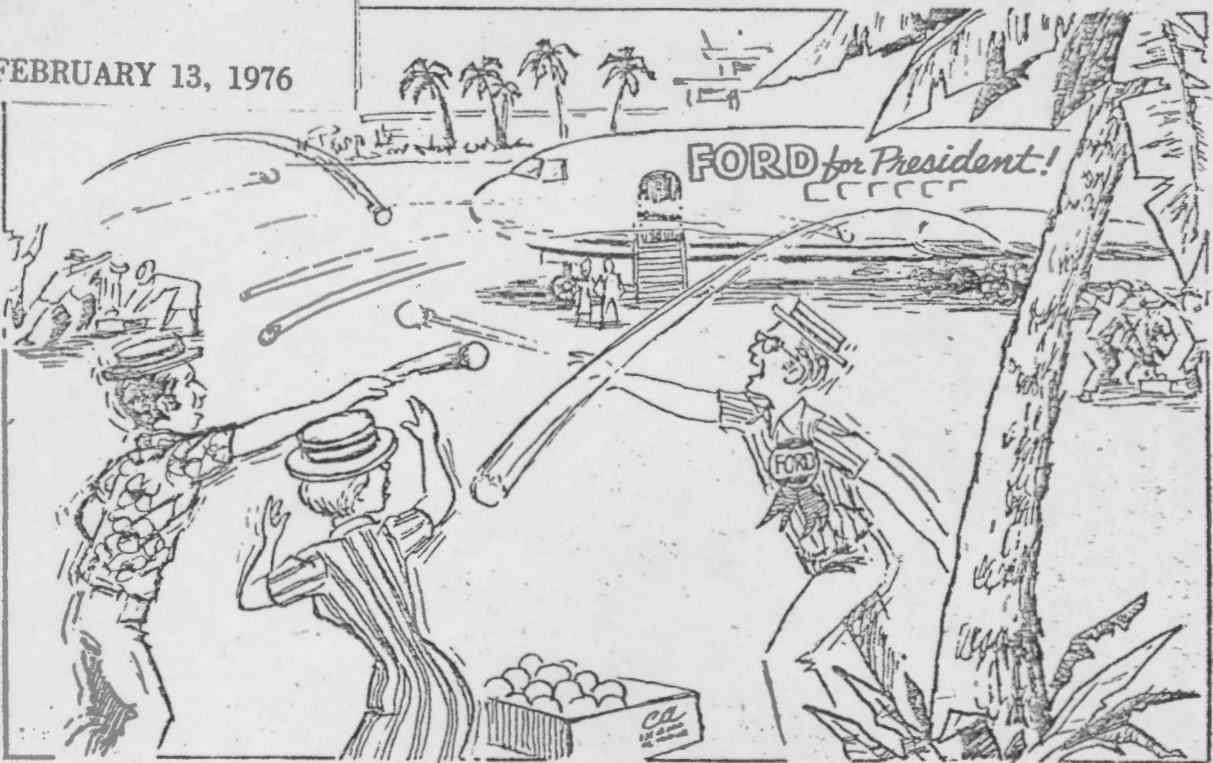
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File -
Pete Seuchia

TO MILDRED LEONARD

The Grand Rapids Press

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1976



Ford Flight Plans Snowballing

By Maury DeJonge

A snowball fight in Orlando, Fla., and the possibility of participation by President Ford's three half-brothers will highlight a visit by local residents Feb. 21-22 to the Sunshine State.

Purpose of the trip is to drum up support for the President in the crucial March 9 Florida primary.

meet the Grand Rapids delegation in Orlando.

Another special guest who has signed up for the trip is Lt. Gov. James Damman.

To keep the cost down, some travelers will take sleeping bags and sleep on the beach or in a public park in the Pompano Beach-Ft. Lauderdale area. For those who aren't making

Ford Backers Head For Sunshine, Votes

By Maury DeJonge

President Gerald R. Ford's primary campaign in Florida will take on a home town flavor Feb. 21-22 as his supporters plug for votes in what is considered a crucial state.

Peter Secchia, local business executive and close friend of the President, said a charter flight of campaign volunteers will leave Kent County Airport the morning of Feb. 21 and fly directly to Orlando. The trip is being arranged by Friends of the First Family.

"We are getting great response from persons who want to go," Secchia said. "At this point we don't know exactly how many persons will make the trip, and the type of aircraft will depend on the number who participate."

AUG 21 1975

SEND TO SHEILA

File Peter Secchia

MALVINA STEPHENSON

2111 JEFF DAVIS HWY. ARLINGTON, VA. 22202
1117-S CRYSTAL PLAZA (703) 979-1357

STEPHENSON NEWS BUREAU

Aug. 20, 1975

Mr. Peter Secchia, President
Universal Forest Products, Inc.
3153 3-Mile Rd., NE
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Mr. Secchia:

I am a Washington press & radio correspondent. I have a connection with WTOP, all-news radio station here, and formerly did a syndicated column with Vera Glaser, in Knight newspapers. We still work together on radio, and my stories are circulated through United Features.

I expect to be in Grand Rapids, Sept. 1-4, and would like to interview you, at least briefly. I am acquainted with the President, and know a number of his friends. Mr. Buchen has been giving me some pointers about Grand Rapids. And, I look forward to meeting you.

In preparation for my trip, and to get background, I subscribe to the Grand Rapids Press, and have enjoyed reading about the Mayor's race.

I will call your office when I arrive.

Sincerely,

Malvina Stephenson

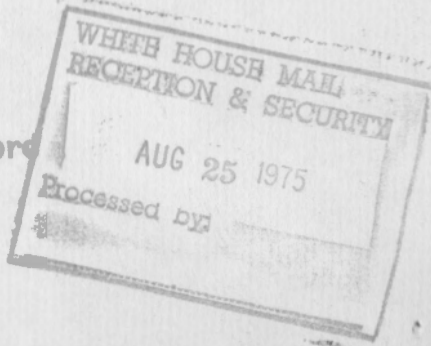
Malvina Stephenson

IS SHE FRIEND OR FOE?





Ms. Sheila Weidenfella
Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500



PERSONAL



2833 BONNELL AVE., S.E. GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506



Shirley Eder



It's Burt and Dinah Again! ^{JUST HERE}

I'M SURE Burt Reynolds has had dates with Lorna Luft. However, friends of mine who live in the Malibu area happened to see Reynolds on the beach several days in a row with Dinah Shore!

Dinah went off on a month's vacation, telling no one except members of her family where she was going. Some of her friends assumed she was in Europe; others thought maybe New York or others points east. Well, Dinah simply rented a beach house 80 or 40 miles from home.

I'm not saying that Dinah and Burt are permanently back together. But they have made up and are definitely seeing each other. And I can't think of a nicer story to report about two really nice people.

SHIRLEBRITIES: A constant twosome making the scene in Rome is Bianca Jag-

from President Jean-Claude Duvalier to visit Haiti next month. Liz, who once received threats from Duvalier's father, Papa Doc, because she was in an unflattering movie about Papa Doc and the island, called "The Comedians," has accepted Jean-Claude's invite and will visit there with her feller, Henry Wynberg.

Diana Ross was given her entire wardrobe (worth more than \$50,000) as a gift when she finished shooting "Mahogany." Diana probably weighed 90 pounds when she made the film. Since she weighs a whole lot more than that now, she won't get to wear any of those "marvy" things until after her baby arrives in October.

Lunched with Pete Secchia and Dick Purtan after the "AM Detroit" show Tuesday and I don't blame President Ford for being

The president's buddy explained the reason we never see papers on the president's desk in the Oval Office. He said the office is used for the meeting and greeting of official visitors. President Ford actually does his work at a document-covered desk in a small office off of the Oval Office.

Attached to the real office is a butler's pantry where such items as juices, milk, coffee, tea and cottage cheese are kept for the president's quick lunches.

An interesting fact I learned while talking with Secchia is that President Ford collects the original political put-down cartoons about himself and has them framed and hanging on the walls of his working office. That's one sure way of keeping one's head from getting too big.

DIDYA KNOW DEPT.: That Connie Ste-

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weekly

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MAIL

Muhammad Ali

I don't think that even Ali (PEOPLE, July 7, 1975) is aware of the magnitude of his effect on people of all races, creeds and religions. It's a shame that Ali had to rewin the world heavyweight title to gain the respect and admiration of people other than blacks. Even after he hangs up his gloves, his position as an international personality with an important message will be strongly felt. I'm glad that I can point to Ali's picture and say to my young son, "That's the kind of man I want you to be!"

Karen Johnson
Washington, D.C.

Don't be surprised to see Ali in the White House, right there in Chocolate City with its vanilla suburbs.

Melvin Samuel Foster
New Orleans

John Kenneth Galbraith

You had Professor Galbraith quoting Gene McCarthy, "In the last 200 years we went from George Washington to Richard Nixon, from John Adams to Spiro Agnew, etc." It's only fair to point out that during the same period, we went from Adam Smith to John Kenneth Galbraith.

Vincent D. Larson
Ft. Smith, Ark.

John Kenneth Galbraith stated that our greatest failure has been the deterioration in the quality of leadership. How then can he support the ultimate in deteriorated leadership, that being the candidacy and possible presidency of Senator Ted Kennedy?

John W. Alvey
Kansas City, Kans.

Peter Secchia

It's reassuring to know that President Ford regularly consults a lumber salesman from Grand Rapids on matters of national interest. Could it have been Peter (Petey Pooh) Secchia who advised the president to use the old tearing-the-pages-from-the-calendar trick at his recent TV speech? That looked like something out of my kids' nursery school. Where Nixon surround-

...abel Field at 10:30 a.m., followed by an 11:30 a.m. tour at Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute.

Udall is scheduled to arrive at Wausau Municipal Airport at 1:50 p.m., and tour the farm of Ervin Baumann Jr. between Merrill and Wausau at 2 p.m. He then goes to Duluth for several radio interviews.

He will meet supporters at the Superior VFW Hall at 7 p.m.

Appleton Art Sale

Appleton, Wis. — More than

involved and fired up and let them know we need them, because we do," said Phil Wise, Carter's state co-ordinator.

"We just don't ever stop," he said. "Because if you stop, you lose."

Ford Backers To Campaign Here

About 250 persons from Grand Rapids, Mich., President Ford's hometown, will campaign in Wisconsin over the weekend for Ford.



Model EU355

The Head Blitzers Got Blitzed

By Maury DeJonge

The President Ford "Scatter Blitzers" struck again, but this time the targets were their leaders.

"Petey Pooh," "The Shepherd," "The Golden Eagle," and "The Shutter Bug" were honored by nearly 100 Republicans at a surprise party Thursday night at Kent County Republican Headquarters, 250 Michigan St. NE.

For the record, and in the order of their "handles," the blitzers paid tribute to Peter Secchia, Donald Wieringa, John Damstra and Clarence Blakeslee.

The ruse to get the four together was
See Blitzers, page 3B



HONORED by Ford blitzers Thursday night were Clarence Blakeslee, kneeling left, John Damstra, Peter Secchia (in wheelchair) and Don Wieringa, right.

By Jim Mencarelli

At the end of February, a chartered Boeing 737 touched down at the airport in Orlando, Fla., and 92 Grand Raptians spilled into the sunshine.

For the next two days, this shirt-sleeved contingent calling themselves Friends of the First Family crisscrossed the state. They threw snowballs at Florida Republicans, passed out Michigan apples and spread goodwill via litter bags reading "Keep It Clean With Jerry" and word-of-mouth testimonials extolling the virtues of President Gerald R. Ford.

The occasion for this political excursion, propitiously dubbed Victory Trip One, was the 1976 Florida presidential primary.

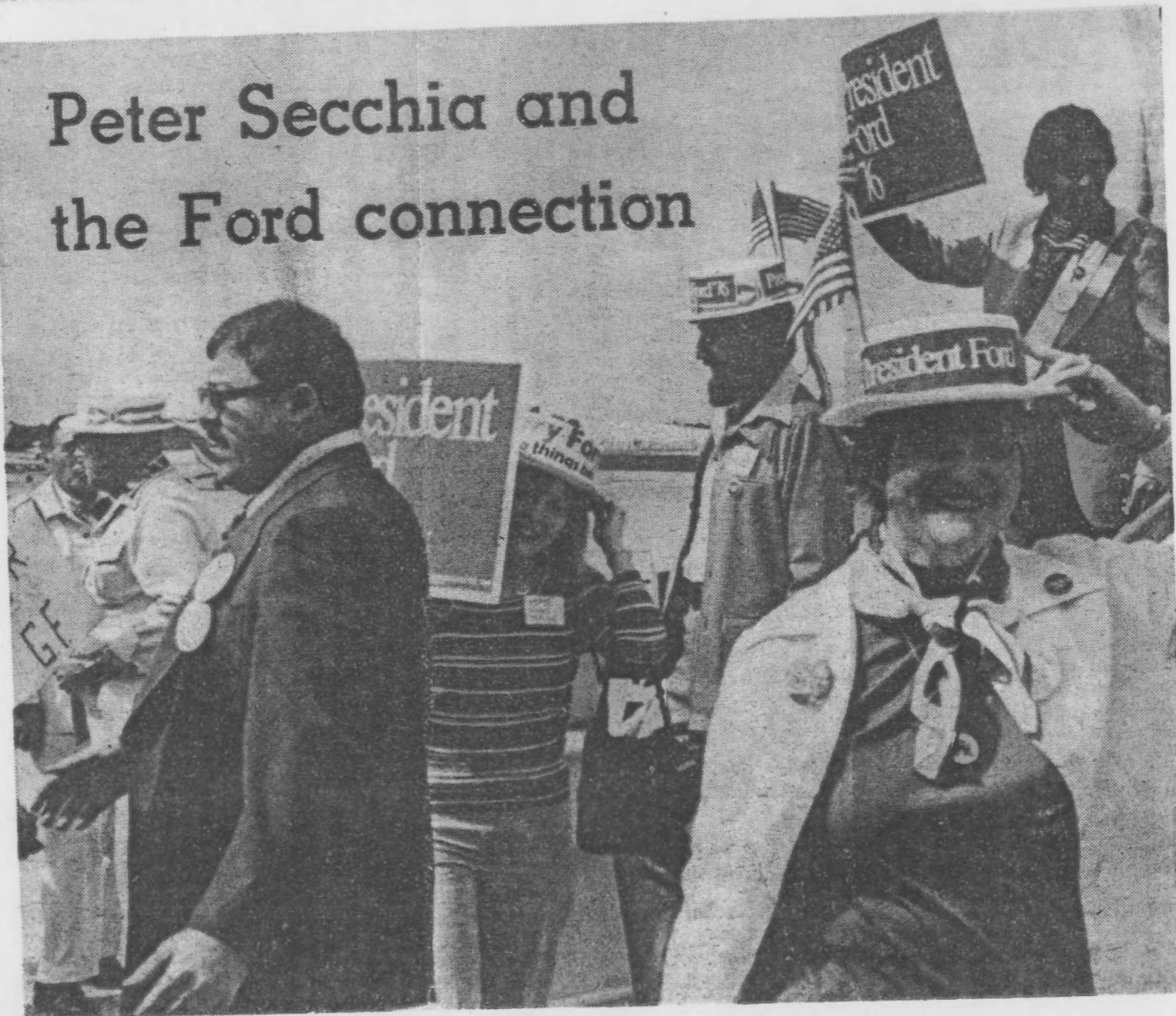
"We want Florida and the nation to know that Grand Rapids and West Michigan back Jerry Ford," said one group member. Another added, "The media fail to show Jerry as a friend of the working man, and we're out to prove he is."

Ford won Florida's Republican primary.

Less than two months later, the President Ford Committee landed at Milwaukee's Mitchell Field and about 150 Friends of the First Family, a horde of political evangelists, poured westward, besieging such towns as Racine, Jefferson and Fort Atkinson. They carried signs proclaiming "West Michigan for President Ford" and distributed 12,000 pine seedlings.

Ford won the Wisconsin primary, too.

Peter Secchia and the Ford connection



The man who organized these junkets, and participated in a third in Indiana recently, is Peter Secchia, 38, a large, teddy bear of a man affectionately known as Petey Pooh by First Lady Betty Ford.

Rising from comparative anonymity last year when People magazine labeled him President Ford's version of Bebe Rebozo, Secchia is a grapping 5-foot-11, 215-pounder who's amassed a fortune in lumber and is widely known for his friendship with the First Family.

He has been an unofficial adviser to the President, organizer of the "Welcome Home, Jerry" rally in the fall of 1974, and the only person outside the immediate family to be admitted to Betty Ford's hospital room following her mastectomy.

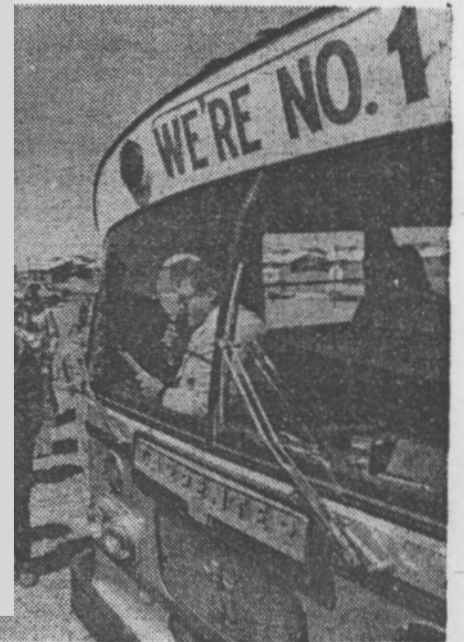
He was also charged with guiding the President's oldest son, Michael, and his wife Gayle on a skiing trip last year.

Today, Secchia remains a frequent visitor at the White House, and admittedly would like nothing more than to see his old friend Jerry Ford re-elected this November.

However, he prefers to downplay the publicity he's received about his friendship with the Ford family.

"When the first article came out in the Detroit Free Press, and then People magazine did its spread, I was naturally excited," he says.

"It was the 'small-town boy makes good' kind of thing. If anything, this type of article shows that in this country the opportunity exists for a man to rise from nothing to a



continued next page

Detroit

MARCH 23, 1975

Ford's pal Pete Secchia (who?): an unknown quantity from Grand Rapids

by ALEX TAYLOR

The closest friends and advisers of President Gerald Ford were gathered in the Ford family home in Alexandria following the new President's first speech to a joint session of Congress. It was a scant three days after Ford ascended to the White House in the whirlwind of events that swept Richard Nixon from office. With the President now were the men who would be closest to him in the early days of the Ford administration: Alexander Haig, Philip Buchen, William Seidman, Bryce Harlow, Melvin Laird, William Whyte of U.S. Steel, and Peter Secchia.



Secchia in for Damstra in GOP Race

*Grand Rapids
Press-11/19
pg. 3-B*

By Maury DeJonge

It's still a two-man race, but there's been a substitute for one of the announced contenders for chairman of the Kent County Republican Committee.

Peter Secchia, 39, president of Universal Forest Products, Inc., 3153 Three Mile Rd. NE, and chief financial officer for Great Lakes Steak Co., announced Friday he is...



my kids grow up in a community that has a sound financial and political system which the Republican party espouses."

Secchia said he would like to continue the party programs started under retiring Chairman Paul Henry, who will move up to chairman of the 5th District Republican Organization.