

Gridiron Provides a Bipartisan Roast

CPYRGHT

Democrats and Republicans alike were crisply grilled last night at the Gridiron Club's annual dinner and satirical revue of the national political scene.

Attended by more than 500 guests, some of them targets of the playful gibes, the newspaper organization's frolic at the Statler Hilton Hotel impartially lampooned the administration's far-reaching ambitions and the sometimes futile countermoves of the opposition.

In the all-male audience were President Johnson, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, cabinet officers, Supreme Court justices and other high-ranking personalities.

On the serious side, the membership inaugurated James Russell Wiggins, editor of the Washington Post, as the new Gridiron president.

The club also welcomed as new members Clark R. Mollenhoff of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Philip Potter of the Baltimore Sun, John R. Cauley of the Kansas City Star, David Wise of the New York Herald Tribune, Henry Gemmill of the Wall Street Journal and Warren Rogers of the Hearst Newspapers.

Furnishing music for the dinner and the revue was the United States Marine Band Orchestra led by Lt. Col. Albert Schoepper. The skits were produced under the direction of Walter Ridder, Washington bureau chief of the Ridder Publications.

Off-the-record speeches were made during the evening by Senator Russell B. Long, D-La., and Mayor John V. Lindsay of New York.

Snarling Opener

The curtain-raiser was a melee of snarling demonstrators, whose theme song, set to the music of "Collegiate," was:

Picket! Picket!
Protest is the ticket!
If it's square, man, kick it!
PRO-TEST!

Demonstrating!
Much more fun than dating!
Why waste time debating?
PRO-TEST!

Sit-ins! Lie-ins!
Frequent nights in jail!
Save us from subjection to the power structure!

Antic!
Frantic!
We are so romantic! The army is pedantic!
Dissenters all are we!

The Republican party felt the sear of the giddie next. The scene was a tawdry carnival set up in the mythical town of Sock Center, Minn. Standing on a soda pop case and spilling for all he was worth was a character described as "Phineas T. Dirksen," a takeoff on Senate Republican Leader Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois.

A Sock Center tube said Dirksen was a "wizard with words," which led into a song to the tune of "The Wizard of Oz."

We're here to see the wizard,
The wonderful wizard of ooze.
For he's a whiz with words, he is.
He knows how to make the news.
We follow old Ev and we seldom lose.
There isn't an issue he can't confuse.
Confuse, confuse, confuse, confuse,
confuse—
Oh, he is the kind of leader to choose.

We're here to see the wizard,
The wonderful wizard of ooze.

A stage version of former Vice President Richard M. Nixon was dragged in by a couple of roustabouts—taken, it was said, off the Merry-Go-Round where he had been "going 'round and 'round ever since 1960." The Dirksen character asked the Nixon character his plans for 1968 and "Nixon" sang, to the tune of "Taking a Chance on Love":

Let me go again.
I hear the trumpet blow again.
Don't say no again,
Taking a chance on me.

Rocky's slid again.
And Romney's lost his bid again.
I'm your kid again.
So take a chance on me.

Things are mending now.
I feel my star's ascending now.
Let's have a happy ending now,
Taking a chance on me.

An incredibly funereal character entered and introduced himself as Ray C. Bliss, chairman of the Republican National Committee. In an ensuing discussion about the farm vote and the city vote, a stage Gov. George Romney of Michigan broke into song with "Downtown":

When you're behind, you must be ready to find
The place where voters grow—
DOWNTOWN!
Farm votes are nice, but they will never suffice.
To win, we need to go DOWNTOWN!
For research seems to indicate more folks live in the city.
Voters there are thick as campaign promises are pretty.
How can we lose?
The total's much bigger there.
We can forget all our troubles,
forget all our care.
Let's go DOWNTOWN!
Majorities are great DOWNTOWN!
Let's run our state for sure DOWNTOWN!
Romney's waiting at the door.

The GOP is lonely as it can be.
Let's go and find a mob DOWNTOWN!
We've been too rural. Now we need to get plural.

We can do a job DOWNTOWN!
Computers show less voters grow in suburbs than in the city.
We can sweep those urban creeps and win with Walter Mitty.
How can we lose?
The lights are brighter there, and Mitty is a Republican,
In case you care.
We'll go DOWNTOWN!
We'll have a ball when we're DOWNTOWN!
We'll win it all for sure DOWNTOWN!
Everything's waiting us there.

The stage was then lit up with the entrance of a spectacularly clad Hollywood cowboy who took a bow as Ronald Reagan, the movie and television actor seeking the Republican nomination for governor of California. Asked if he was doing all right in his campaign, "Reagan" shuddered at the word "right" and, to the tune of "People Will Say We're in Love," appealed to the John Birch Society:

Don't throw bouquets at me.
Don't push me right too much.
With Brown don't fight too much.
People will say we're in love.
Don't call me guv-nor yet.
Don't serve Birch beer for me.
Speak soft when you cheer for me.
People will say we're in love.
Don't praise my speeches so.
Don't let old ladies scream.
Please don't make me too extreme.
People will say we're in love.

New York's "Mayor Lindsay" entered. Asked how he was getting along, "Lindsay" sang a tear-jerking rendition of "Everything Happens to Me":

I got elected mayor; it's a job I thought I'd like.
They couldn't wait to swear me in to start the subway strike.
I promised better transit and the voters have to hike.
Everything happens to me.
I cleaned up on the Democrats; they cleaned out City Hall.
I asked the state for money; Rocky never heard my call.
I made a pitch for Harlem; Adam Powell owns it all.
Everything happens to me.
And I suppose next spring when all the filthy snow is through
The power will go off again, the drought will start anew.
I feel my White House chances I had better not pursue.
Everything happens to me.

Continued