

Press Pool #36October 27, 1976  
(WDPV through Valley Forge and back)

The pool was excluded from the television taping. Elizabeth Drew of the New Yorker was admitted, but she was not a pooler. The pool was even excluded from listening or watching the taping on the monitor.

Here are the settings for the three media events of the evening:

The President arrived at the Philadelphia Civic Center after the folks had finished eating their \$100 breast of capon. It was cavernous building, usually used for sporting evenings and conventions; also for car and flower shows. It was decorated tonight with red, white, and blue pennants stretched across the breadth of the arena. The President entered with Dr. Ethel Allen, the Republican member of the City Council, black and Chairman of the local PFC. Among those at the heat table were Sen. Scott, Sen. Schweiker, Secretary of the Treasury, Bill Simon; John Heinz, Republican candidate for the Senate; and former All-American basketball and City Comptroller, Tom Gola.

Mr. Ford spoke briefly over an inadequate sound system and was thereafter mobbed by a very enthusiastic crowd. Officials said there were 3500 at the dinner.

The President then went to the Plymouth Meeting shopping mall. His limousine stopped at the edge of the Mall so that he could be standing and talking from the limo over his sound system, when the motorcade passed through two rows of spectators. The Mall is located in Montgomery County, is overwhelmingly Republican, and the home district of Schweiker.

The President proceeded to the indoor, two story court of the Mall, which is decorated with the usual tropical potted trees and balconies and neon-fronted stores. There were at least six high school bands on hand, and the President treated the crowd to a new gesture. He raised his right arm over his head and wound it in a fashion tending to suggest that he was spinning a New Years Eve noisemaker. The center was jammed, and the crowd was difficult to estimate although the Plymouth Township Police Chief, Vito J. Fusco, figured it at 10,000. The people talked or shouted through most of the President's speech, but he plunged on undaunted.

Then it was off to Valley Forge Music Fair in Devon. This was probably the most extraordinary tour de force of the day. There were 2700 people who each paid \$35 to support the Delaware County Republicans. Various candidates were introduced, and they came down a runway much as performers would arrive at a theatre in the round. The theatre is essentially a bowl, about 150 feet in diameter, with the stage a white, shiny circle, brightly lit, about 20 feet in diameter, in the center. The roof is a shallow, white inverted dish. The President came down the aisle with his arm around Faith Whittlesey, who wore a green fully-length gown. She gave a rousing introduction, and then left the stage, leaving the President alone with a hand-held microphone. The theatre was darkened which enhanced the one-man performance. He moved about the stage much as a professional actor in that sort of theatre would. He slowly revolved as he spoke changing direction so that he covered the entire audience during the 15 minute talk. He had asked that the audience remain so quiet that he could hear a pin drop, and as he talked, often in hush tones. They did for about one third of the speech. After that, they applauded frequently, as he mentioned his program for defense, crime, budget control, tax cutting, and jobs, all of which are in the transcribed speech. Besides Ford, the audience got, for its \$35, an assortment of stars from the Lawrence Welk shop. At every occasion today, Ford had plunged into the crowds and worked them vigorously on exit. At the theatre, the audience was more decorous and older, and he merely shook hands when he went up the aisle and out.

When he returned to the Sheraton for the night, a crowd jammed the lobby to greet him as he pushed his way to the elevator. He personally thanked a number of volunteer typists and others who had helped with the intensive campaign preparations in this area.

Bill Ringle - Gannett

Larry O'Rourke - Philadelphia Bulletin