

## Facelifts voted in

# It's nip 'n' tuck on campaign trail

By Karen Feld

**W**ASHINGTON—There's one subject on which liberal Wisconsin Sen. William Proxmire and his conservative South Carolina colleague, Strom Thurmond, agree—the benefits of cosmetic surgery. Although worlds apart politically, both had hair transplants to improve their images for today's expensive electronic campaigns.

Gubernatorial, senatorial and congressional candidates are spending more than a quarter of a billion dollars to produce and purchase television spots for campaigns this year. There are more political spots on television than ever before, and costs are up 25 percent since the last national election two years ago.

When Abraham Lincoln ran for president, only a handful of people ever saw him. Today, however, TV plays a crucial role in political campaigns, and jet aircraft shuttle candidates to several cities in a single day, allowing them to personally greet masses of voters.

A candidate's looks do influence voters. And in a youth-oriented culture, people want—for themselves and their elected representatives—to look as young as they can for as long as they can.

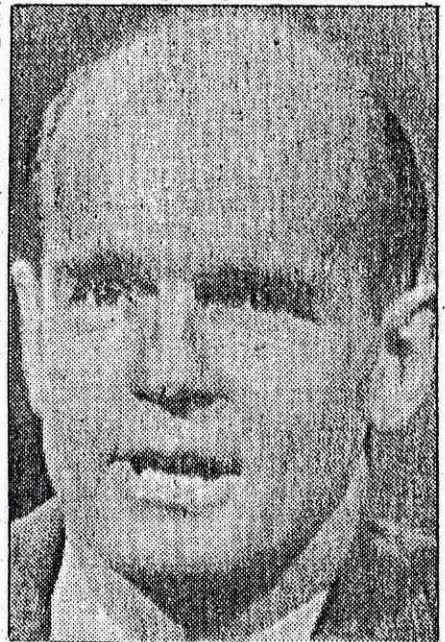
**REGARDLESS OF** what a politician has to say, if he is physically unattractive, he has to sell a little bit harder. Campaigning is no longer just a matter of stumping.

"Politicians are really actors," said Washington plastic surgeon Dr. Clyde Litton. "They are on a big stage up there on the Hill, and they have to look good."

Evidently many politicians agree. Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson [D., Wash.], Sen. Joseph Biden [D., Del.],



AP Laserphoto



UPI Telephoto

Democratic Sen. William Proxmire after and before his hair transplant, intended to give him a more youthful, vigorous appearance.

Rep. Andrew Jacobs [D., Ind.], former Secretary of Transportation and Washington Rep. Brock Adams, Rep. John Rhodes [R., Ariz.], Rep. Tom RAILSBACK [R., Ill.], Nebraska Gov. Charles Thone and many of their colleagues of varying ages and political persuasion have turned to cosmetic surgery—hair transplants, eye lifts or face lifts to improve their image.

"Cosmetic surgery helps if it enables people to come across looking more attractive on TV, where physical abnormalities, such as windblown hair, bags under the eyes or other prominent or unusual features are clearly on display," says ARC-TV

Capitol Hill correspondent Brit Hume. "It keeps the viewer from being distracted by a physical countenance, such as Jimmy Carter's teeth. Instead they listen to what you're saying."

**THE WAY** A candidate looks to the voters is important. "One evening I looked in the mirror, and I realized I looked like I did when I woke up that morning. Then I knew it was time," said Rep. Barry Goldwater Jr. [R., Calif.]. Shortly after his 40th birthday, Goldwater had his eyelids lifted surgically.

Another congressman, Rep. G.V.

Continued on page 2

Continued from first Tempo page

"Sonny" Montgomery [D., Miss.], chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, also had an eye lift. "I feel more comfortable now," Montgomery said. "It makes me look younger and more attractive. I want to look neat for the people I represent in Washington."

"Cosmetic surgery is something that art and medicine have combined to help people improve the quality of their lives. For the politician to improve his life means to be re-elected," says Dr. Harry C. Stein, a Washington cosmetic facial surgeon, whose patients have included high government officials.

Says Litton, who has nipped and tucked many politicians and their wives before they face cameras, "We form our impressions of what we think of people by just looking at them. Somebody who is unattractive has to overcome a barrier before we like him."

POLITICAL TELEVISION consultants who were questioned say they never have recommended cosmetic surgery as the only panacea to a fledging political

career.

His own aides urged Jackson to have eyelid surgery a decade ago. In other cases, it is the candidate himself or his family who recognize the need.

"I had terribly baggy eyes. At the suggestion of my wife and mirror, I had an eye lift," says Rep. Robert Badham [R., Calif.].

BADHAM'S EYE LIFT was so subtle, however, that it went generally unnoticed by his constituents from the Newport Beach area of California. He had the surgery performed in Washington during a congressional recess, and then wore dark glasses on the House floor for two weeks to cover his black eyes until they healed. The scar is almost invisible—just a thin line across the fold of the upper lid and another under the lash line.

The results of all this are not just physical, notes plastic surgeon Dr. Diane Colgan, a former Navy commander now in private practice in suburban Washington. "It's a great mental uplift, an ego builder, to come in and say, 'Look, I don't like these jowls. I don't like this

turkey neck. I don't feel as old as I look and I'd rather not look that way. I want to look better.'"

"Considering the cost of plastic surgery, it probably is a luxury," admits Dr. Ronald Cameron, who did Proxmire's hair transplants and then crossed the aisle to do Thurmond's. Male cosmetic surgery candidates seek blepharoplasty [removal of skin that droops over the eyelid] at a cost ranging from \$750 to \$2,500, and hair transplants costing from \$15 a plug.

COLGAN SAYS many candidates for plastic surgery—particularly vote-needy politicians—consider good appearance essential to professional survival. "I've got four young children," says the 80-year-old Thurmond. "I'm older, [getting] along in life—but actually I'm pretty young, so hair transplants add to my physical appearance."

"I think most politicians do it for personal reasons," Cameron says. "They want to look their best. They don't want to look tired; they don't want to look aged. They feel good; they feel competitive, and they want to

project that image."

Aided by the news media and such public figures as Betty Ford who have gone public with their face lifts, attitudes are changing. Cosmetic surgery is becoming more acceptable to the public, whereas previously, it had been restricted to the rich and to the famous—politicians included—because they could afford it and were always being caught by the camera.

JUST HOW MUCH cosmetic surgery actually helps politician on the campaign trail still is to be determined.

"Cosmetic surgery is not the fountain of youth," Stein says. "But it reduces the effects of time."

"Most people find it's a tremendous advantage even if it just makes them feel better about themselves," Cameron says.

"If that happens, then they're going to project a better image to other people. If the individual himself feels good, then he's going to get the results he wants."

And the result of that cosmetic effort might be a tick to Washington.