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People

weekly

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September 23, 1974



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Sept. 23, 1974 Vol. 2 No. 13

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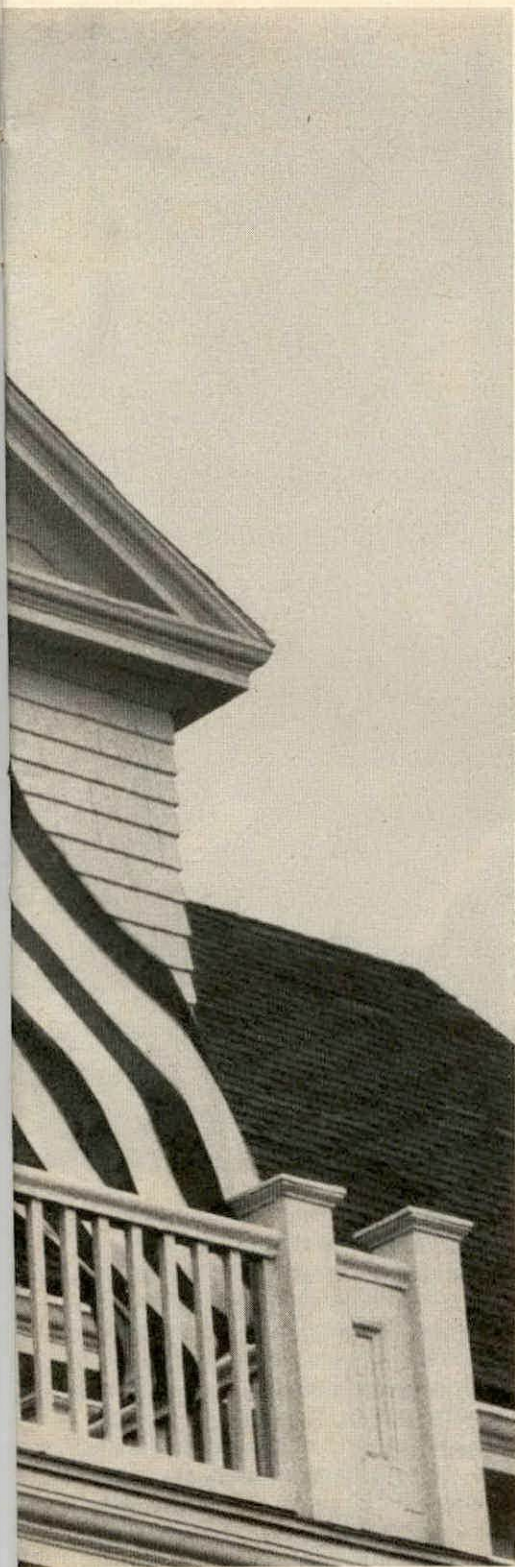
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GEORGE BUSH IS PICKED TO CARRY THE FLAG TO CHINA

On a wall of George Bush's office at Republican National Headquarters hangs a photograph of a raccoon straddling a boat and a dock. Under it the caption reads, "Hang in there, baby." Bush knows the feeling. As U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in 1971, he fought a losing battle to prevent Peking from replacing Taiwan in the U.N. (while Henry Kissinger was secret-

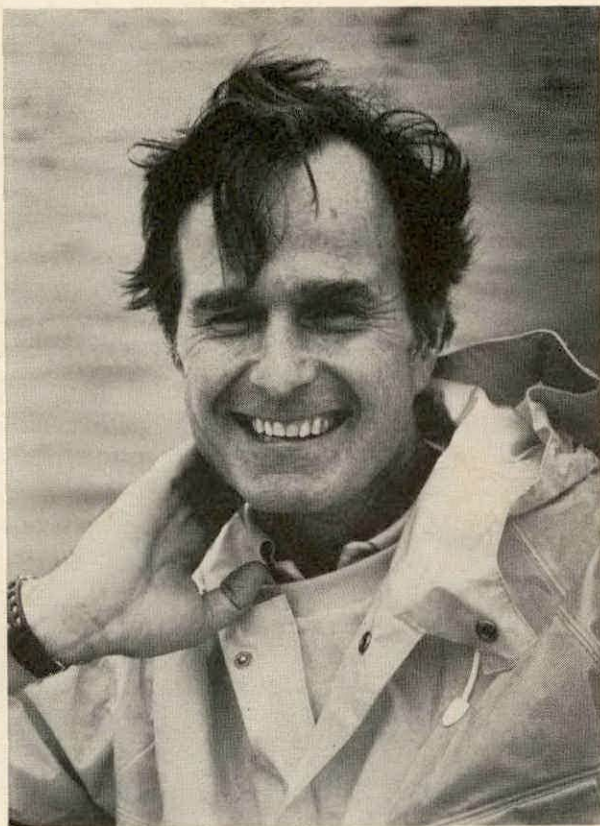
ly laying the groundwork for normalizing relations with Mao's China). Throughout his tenure as GOP Chairman, Bush found himself buffeted—and disgusted—by Watergate. And for a brief period before Nelson Rockefeller's appointment as Vice-President, Bush went through what he calls the "nerve wracking" experience of being frequently mentioned as Gerald Ford's



Vacationing at the family's summer home in Kennebunkport, Me., Bush engages in the morning ritual of raising the flag.

possible choice for Number Two.

The lanky, articulate administration troubleshooter now faces what may turn out to be his toughest job, as the next U.S. envoy to Peking. "It's as challenging a diplomatic assignment as there is," Bush says.

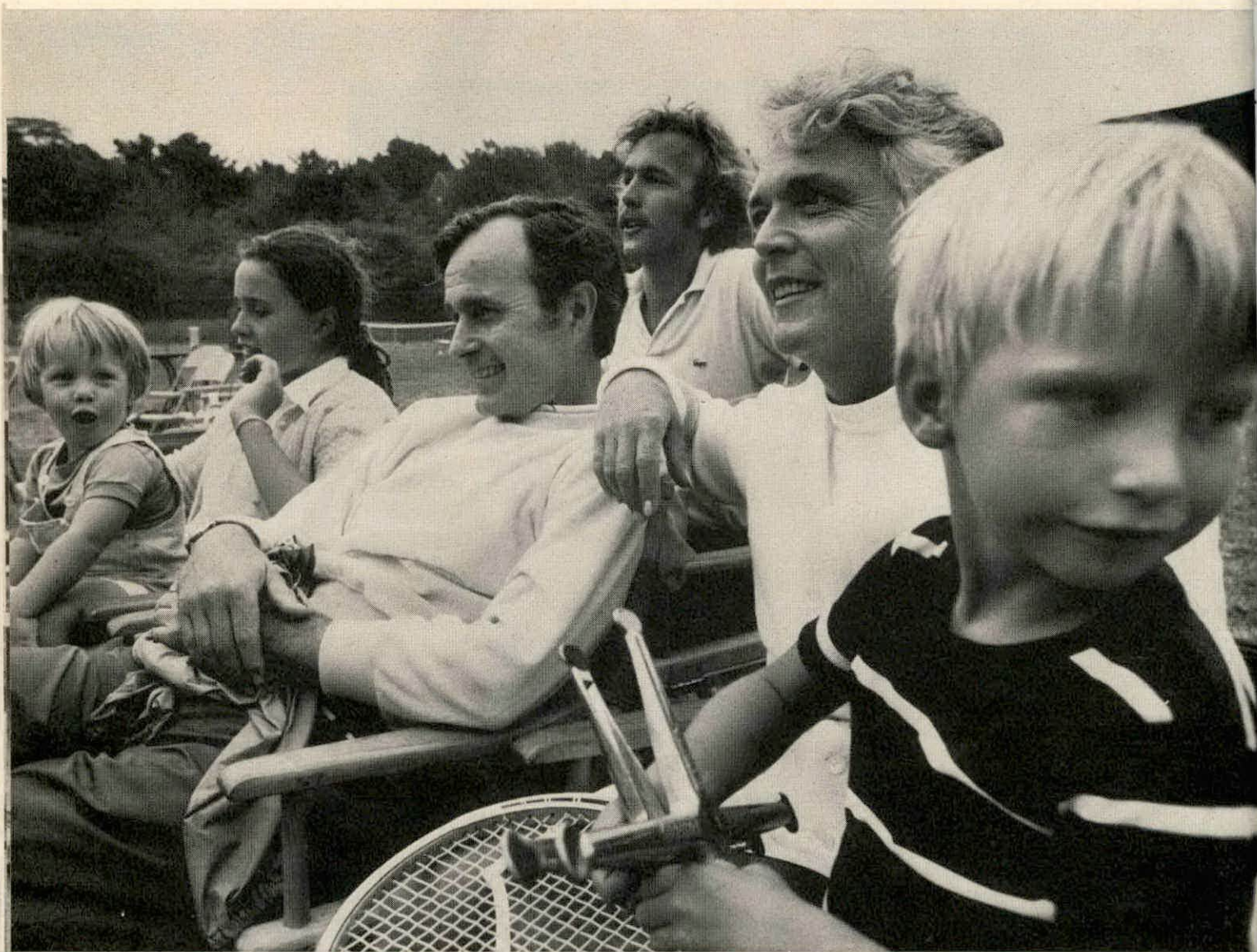


After a day of sailing, a tousled George Bush looks rested and ready to take over as America's new envoy to China.



At the U.N. in 1971, Bush greeted Chiao Kuan-hua, head of Peking's delegation, under the watchful eye of a security man.

WIDE WORLD



At the Kennebunkport tennis courts, Bush and his wife Barbara watch the action, surrounded by nephew Bill Bush, 3, the Bushes' daughter Dorothy, 15, son Neil, 19, and nephew Johnny Bush, 5.

Part of the challenge may be trying to penetrate the State Department bureaucracy. Henry Kissinger will undoubtedly continue to hammer out U.S.-China relations directly with Bush's counterpart in Washington, Chinese liaison chief Huang Chen. Reports have it that veteran diplomat David Bruce, whom Bush is replacing, felt unused and ineffectual during his China stay. Yet Bush is confident he will not be confined to a strictly ceremonial role. At the U.N., he says, he made friendships that should serve him well in Peking. Shortly after his appointment as Republican Party Chairman, then-Ambassador Bush was approached by Peking's U.N. Ambassador Huang Hua, a powerful mainland figure. "I see you are now Chairman Bush," Huang smiled. Bush hastened to explain that Chairman Bush was hardly at the same level of power as Chairman Mao.

On home turf, New England-bred Bush, a Texan by choice, has never concealed his lofty ambitions. "I want to score and then be captain," he once declared, "to get promoted and then be boss, to get elected and achieve something and then to get elected to something else."

Bush's credo has its roots in Yankee soil—Milton, Mass., specifically, where he was born 50 years ago. His father was Prescott Bush, U.S. Senator from Connecticut from 1952 to 1962. Young George attended Phillips Academy and at 18 enlisted in the navy—just in time for Pearl Harbor. At that time, he was supposedly the youngest pilot in the navy. Later he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross after being shot down in the western Pacific. (He was rescued by a submarine.) After the war, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in economics at Yale, "the white-shoed



At breakfast, envoy Bush chats with nephew Johnny, whose father Jonathan Bush is George's younger brother.

Crown Prince of the 'Greenwich conspiracy,' " recalls a classmate.

The Crown Prince soon abdicated, turning down a job with his father's banking firm because he "didn't want to live in the suburbs and be Pres Bush's boy." Instead, he struck out for the oil fields of West Texas and set up the Zapata Off-Shore Company in Houston. It boomed along with the city, and was soon a multimillion-dollar enterprise with operations on five continents.

Bush's first real taste of national politics came in Texas in 1964, when he ran against Democratic incumbent Ralph Yarborough for the Senate. Bush did not survive the Johnson landslide over Barry Goldwater. But two years later he was elected to Congress, where he won admirers on both sides of the aisle. Prodded by then-President Nixon, Bush tried for the Senate again in 1970 and again lost, this time to Democrat Lloyd Bentsen Jr.

At the U.N., non-career diplomat Bush surprised critics by conveying his boyish enthusiasm to the whole U.S. delegation. But as Watergate and the fortunes of Spiro Agnew began to unravel, Bush was again called upon by Nixon, this time for the thankless role of party chairman. Denouncing Watergate as "grubby business," Bush later admitted, "It was hard to move things forward, but I was glad I had at least enough support within the

committee to keep things together."

The details of Bush's new job are, as he puts it, "kind of vague." For now George is busy preparing for the 10,000-mile move. The Bush's five children will remain behind, but 49-year-old Barbara, his wife of 29 years, will join Bush after Christmas. The first business at hand, of course, is packing the right clothes for Peking's hot-summer, cold-winter climate. There are, as well, some obligatory phrases in the official Mandarin to be mastered. Happily, Bush will feel at home with the cuisine. "Thank God," he says with undiplomatic fervor, "I do like Chinese food."

JOHN B. LOFTON JR.

Off the Maine coast, Bush and his son Neil roar along in the family speedboat, which Bush sadly acknowledges he will have to leave behind.



Photographs by Arthur Schatz