

Whitman still in party spotlight

Observers think she'll accept Dole's VP offer if he presses her

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Tired of being pegged as a wannabe running mate for Bob Dole, New Jersey Gov. Christie Whitman tried to stamp out speculation about her intentions by telling Dole she didn't want to change jobs.

Much of the "what-if" wondering about Whitman was quelled, but a curious thing happened: The media spotlight on Whitman didn't dim — it increased.

"I'll make this promise, I won't run for any higher office — for the rest of this millennium."

— CHRISTIE WHITMAN
New Jersey Governor

Republicans offered her a high-profile job at their August convention, her opinions are sought out as a moderate voice in the party and she landed on the cover of The New York Times Magazine, which hinted about her potential as a presidential candidate in 2000.

"I'll make this promise," Whitman joked later. "I won't run for any higher office — for the rest of this millennium."

Whitman, 49, has consistently said she wants to remain in New Jersey, where she faces reelection in 1997. But some observers still think she'd answer the call if Dole asked her to join the ticket.

"If Bob Dole in San Diego said to her: 'I really need you, your party needs you,' she might accept," said Steve Salmore, a Rutgers University professor who has consulted for Republicans. "Al Gore once said he wouldn't be a vice presidential candidate, and so did Lyndon Johnson."

As the nation's lone female governor, Whitman has been named a "temporary co-chair" of the Republican National Convention. The post is only the lat-

est showcase position for Whitman, who also gave the Republican response to President Clinton's State of the Union speech in 1995.

What would she bring to a Dole ticket?

Whitman's backers believe she could very well attract female voters who deserted the GOP in 1992. She is a moderate who comes from a populous state that is considered a crucial battleground in this year's election.

She has crafted a reputation as a tax-cutter. And Whitman sells well: She is calm and friendly in front of television cameras, at ease with voters.

But Whitman's social moderation has angered the right wing of the Republican Party. She heads a political action committee for moderate Republicans and has frequently criticized conservatives, saying the party must accept different points of view. She supports affirmative action and abortion rights.

Whitman sided with President Clinton's decision to veto a bill to outlaw a controversial late-term abortion procedure. She believes abortion should not be a cornerstone campaign issue, and welcomes Dole's efforts to add a "declaration of tolerance" to the party platform that says those with differing views are welcome.

Leading social conservatives have warned there would be a war at the convention if Dole picked a running mate who supports abortion rights.

Whitman says her insistence that she's not interested in the vice presidential slot has nothing to do with conservative opposition.

"I don't think my positions on issues are the kind that would keep people from the ticket," she said. "I believe it's best to be representative of a broad base of this country, and I hope we see someone on the ticket who will reflect those views."

people in the news

Ryan's shoes provide creative leaps

NEW YORK (AP) — Truly great acting, according to Meg Ryan, comes from ... the feet?

"It's the shoes," she told Elle magazine for its July edition. "It's all in the shoes."

The star of "When Harry Met Sally" and "Sleepless in Seattle" explained how her footwear gives her — well, a jumping-off place for creating characters.

In those films, she wore "the ultimate sensible flats and white loafers — real virgin shoes." But for her role in the soon-to-be-released "Courage Under Fire," as a military helicopter ambulance pilot who dies in the line of duty, Ryan was shod in Army combat boots.

"You put on those boots," she says, "and it was 'Hello!' You feel like this solid force because you've got these incredibly attached-to-the-ground shoes on."

"They gave me an entry point into a woman who was flawed and nervous and behaved incredibly courageously — a woman who was heroic and fully human at the same time."

Alexander won't let son see Hunchback

NEW YORK (AP) — Disney's version of *The Hunchback of*

Notre Dame may have been brightened up a bit for youthful viewers, but one of its stars says he still won't take his son to the show.

"Disney would have us believe this movie's like the Ringling Bros. (circus), for children of all ages," says Jason Alexander, star of *Seinfeld* and the voice of a talking gargoyle in *Hunchback*.

"But I won't be taking my 4-year-old," Alexander told Entertainment Weekly magazine. "I wouldn't expose him to it, not for another year."

Tyler's parents tone down movie's script

NEW YORK (AP) — As the daughter of a rock star and his model-Playmate ex-girlfriend, you might expect Liv Tyler to be a wild child.

Not if her parents can help it. The 18-year-old budding actress first caught the attention of MTV viewers when she

frolicked with Alicia Silverstone in the risqué video for "Crazy," by Aerosmith, her dad's band.

But parents Steve Tyler and Bebe Buell insisted the script be toned down from its original, even sexier version.

"Omigod, it had some racy stuff in there," Buell told "Entertainment Weekly" magazine. "It had a KISS between Liv and Alicia."

"Steven and I just looked at each other and went: 'Uh-huh, sure. When hell freezes over!'"

For her new movie, Bernardo Bertolucci's *Stealing Beauty*, Liv was herself a bit anxious about the scene in which her character, a young American who finds love in Italy, is deflowered.

"The Italians were incredibly sweet about it. They didn't look. They would turn their heads away in respect," she told the magazine. "Except for the cameraman. And Bernardo."

Lewis offers advice to delightful Carrey

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Jerry Lewis says he's delighted when people compared Jim Carrey to him. But he says

Carrey should be careful when it comes to the off-camera Rat Pack antics.

"He's the best visual comic to come down the pike in 100 years. He's brilliant," Lewis said Tuesday while visiting the city on tour with "Damn Yankees."

"I just hope that he stays on the right track and doesn't cruise Sunset Boulevard with Brad Pitt and those guys," Lewis said. "Be smart and get a room. I had a great time when I was his age, but I didn't get caught."

Carrey's new movie (with costar Matthew Broderick) *Cable Guy* debuted at No. 1 at the box office last week, grossing an estimated \$20.2 million.



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