

OUR CENTURY

1962

AT A GLANCE

Missile crisis sends fear into every home

Solemn Clevelanders sat glued to their television sets the evening of Oct. 22. President John F. Kennedy told them that Soviet ships were carrying missiles to Cuban missile sites and the Armed Forces had orders not to let them through.

As Defense Secretary Robert McNamara put it, America and the Soviets were “eyeball to eyeball.” One of the TV sets was atop the council president’s desk at City Hall, where council had assembled for its regular meeting. When Kennedy finished, Councilwoman Mercedes Cotner arose. In a quavering voice, she proposed a resolution that “we back him all the way, even if it is with sorrow in our hearts and tears in our eyes.” It passed unanimously. Mayor Ralph Locher quickly conferred with Civil Defense Director John Pokorny about the city’s preparedness for nuclear war.

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Wreckers were tearing down the flophouses and cheap bars that lined lower E. Ninth St. John Galbreath started construction of the key Erieview building, a 40-story green tower at E. 12th St. and St. Clair Ave., and the city approved a 32-story Federal Office Building where the county morgue and old Armory stood on Lakeside Ave. I.M. Pei’s urban renewal plan was already being changed. The Erieview Tower was moved west to avoid utility lines. Pei had proposed a six-story federal building occupying the whole block to St. Clair. University Circle institutions were proceeding with their plans, but the other part of the University-Euclid Urban Renewal project — Hough — was dragging. Meanwhile, council investigated inaction in the St. Vincent renewal area east of E. 22nd St., where hundreds of tenements had been torn down, and the Gladstone renewal area southwest of E. 55th St. and Woodland Ave.

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Nearly 1.5 million people — more than 90 percent of Greater Clevelanders — lined up for sugar cubes as Northeastern Ohio marked a series of Sabin Oral Sundays in July. “This is really extraordinary,” said Dr. Albert Sabin, creator of the oral polio vaccine. “There probably is no other place in the country that could turn out such a large portion of its population.”

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The 1960-61 recession was officially over, but Cleveland was slow in recovering. Cuyahoga County threatened to stop administering the city’s relief program unless the city paid more than \$1.5 million in overdue bills, mostly for hospital care. In October, U.S. Rep. Charles Vanik succeeded in having the county added to the pilot federal food stamp program. Nearly all the 47,000 eligible families lived in Cleveland.

The Census Bureau reported that 1959 family income averaged \$5,935 in Cleveland \$6,932 in Cuyahoga County, including the suburbs. Eighteen census tracts — 17 of them on the East Side of Cleveland — were below \$3,000. Only the section of Shaker Heights around Fairmount Blvd. made the highest echelon — \$25,000 and up.

Cleveland ranked sixth in the nation in manufacturing. But, Edwin Higbee of the Commerce Department warned, it was only 12th in capital expenditures. “Unless more is spent by existing manufacturers to modernize and expand their plants and unless new plants are brought into this area, we shall lose rank as other geographical areas move ahead,” he said.

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Gabe Paul was Indians general manager with Mel McGaha as field manager. Led by Dick Donovan, the first 20-game winner since 1956, the team surged into first place in July. Then it collapsed, falling to last before recovering to finish sixth. When the season ended, Paul hired George “Birdie” Tebbetts to manage in 1963.

Browns owner Arthur Modell helped the NFL negotiate a network television contract that promised each club \$320,000 a year. His team, with Frank Ryan at quarterback, had a 7-6-1 season, missing the title game for the fifth straight year. Modell was miffed that General Manager Paul Brown still acted as though the Browns were his team.

Earlier, the Barons had won the Western Division as Fred Glover became the first to score 400 goals in the American Hockey League. He also won his second MVP award, but the Barons lost to the Springfield Indians in the playoffs.

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The Plain Dealer of Nov. 30 carried a Page One bulletin: “Pickets of Newspaper and Magazine Drivers Union Local 473 appeared unexpectedly last night at entrances of The Plain Dealer Building.” Clevelanders didn’t read the bulletin. Nor did they read anything else in the Plain Dealer or Press for the next 129 days.

Shake-up at City Hall

Celebrezze gets Washington job, party brawls over his replacement

By Fred McGunagle

On a July day, Mayor Anthony Celebrezze was doing what he loved best — cooking a fish over a campfire in Canada, hundreds of miles from the problems of City Hall — when a guide caught up with him with an urgent message: Call the White House.

It was a message that would shake the city.

John F. Kennedy told Celebrezze he was about to name him secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. It was as much a shock to Celebrezze as to everybody else: His name hadn’t been mentioned in speculation about the job.

It was a shock, too, to Law Director Ralph Locher, a prodigy of Sen. Frank Lausche, who had been Celebrezze’s loyal No. 2 man for nine years. Locher, who had never run for office, found himself acting mayor.

He quickly announced he would be a candidate in the special election to fill the remaining year of the term. Locher won backing from Celebrezze, Lausche and Celebrezze’s cabinet, especially Utilities Director Bronis J. Klementowicz, a key political adviser to the mayor.

Jack Russell, the most powerful council president in history, had other ideas. Reached by The Plain Dealer on vacation in Budapest, he said, “Mark McElroy is the best qualified.” McElroy, a former councilman, had been elected Ohio attorney general in the Democratic “right-to-work” landslide of 1958. He had unsuccessfully challenged Gov. Michael DiSalle in the primary two months earlier.

Russell had built a fiefdom in his Buckeye Rd. ward by keeping track of all the favors he had done for constituents. After the Republicans ceased to be a force in council, he built a fiefdom in the Democratic caucus the same way.

The council president realized members were re-elected on what they did for their wards, not for the city. He promised them that if they went along with the caucus, the caucus would take care of them. In return, they owed Russell their vote on matters important to him — especially legislation favoring developers. He quickly became “the man to see at City Hall.”

The Elections Board was in confusion. Kennedy let Celebrezze delay his resignation a week to avoid a special election a week before the November general election. But, in an effort to end the string of independent-minded mayors, the two parties had pushed through a charter amendment calling for partisan elections. It conflicted with the section on special elections. The Citizens League sued to get a ruling.

Meanwhile, Locher had a more immediate challenge. Defeat of a 1.9-mill levy in May had plunged the city into a financial crisis. Celebrezze, denouncing suburban owners of city property who opposed it, had it resubmitted at a special election on Aug. 14.

Locher threw himself into the campaign, traveling the city to urge a “yes” vote. The vote was “no” by an even bigger margin than in May. Then the Supreme Court ruled the mayoral election would be partisan, meaning independents could not vote. That helped McElroy, who had the support of Ray T. Miller’s Democratic organization. Things looked bad for Locher.

In September, Cleveland Press editor Louis B. Seltzer wrote a Page One editorial. The first paragraph said, “Ralph Locher is a good man.” The second said, “And, what is even more important, he is his own man.” The Plain Dealer also vigorously supported Locher.

Jan. 17: Charles Van Doren pleads guilty to perjury charges stemming from the television quiz show fixing scandal.

Feb. 26: Astronaut John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit Earth.

Feb. 28: Attorney General Robert



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Former Mayor Anthony Celebrezze gives the key to his office to Ralph S. Locher. Below, Celebrezze and his wife wave farewell to Cleveland.

Locher campaigned against “bosses” Miller and Russell. McElroy campaigned against the newspapers. “Mark this well,” he told a cheering audience of organization Democrats, “the newspapers are our major adversary in this crusade for a better Cleveland.”

On the eve of the primary, Plain Dealer political editor Ray Dorsey wrote that the election would be close: If the turnout was below 100,000, McElroy would win. But “the greater the turnout at the polls, the greater the influence of the two daily newspapers.”

It was a blowout. The turnout was 137,000, and Locher received 75,000 to 46,000 for McElroy and 17,000 for County Prosecutor John T. Corrigan. It was the coup de grace for the Democratic Party. Miller, who had been chairman since 1938, resigned the next year.

Republican candidate Willard Brown, a business executive, remained, but Locher, now sporting a Democratic donkey pin in his lapel, campaigned confidently. Voter attention turned to other issues. One was the state constitutional amendment to change Sunday closing laws, called the “Lawson Amendment” after its main backer, the Lawson Milk Co. Business and church leaders urged its defeat. Another was a city charter amendment pushed by Councilman Ralph Perk, who was also running for county auditor. It would allow senior citizens to ride the Cleveland Transit system for half-fare in non-rush hours.

The most bitter battle was between Gov. Michael DiSalle and his Republican challenger, State Auditor James Rhodes. DiSalle had alienated voters by his strong stand against the death penalty. His sharp tongue didn’t help. Talking about his chances at a City Council Democratic dinner caucus, DiSalle cracked, “At least I wasn’t endorsed from Budapest.” The audience roared. Russell glowered.

The gubernatorial debate at the City Club was described by The Plain Dealer as “one of the roughest in the club’s long series of confrontations of political candidates.” DiSalle said Rhodes was using “front organiza-

Kennedy says American troops will remain in Vietnam until the Viet Cong are defeated.

May 31: Israel hangs Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann.

Sept. 10: Rod Laver becomes the first person in 24 years to win the Grand Slam of tennis.



tions” to make vicious personal attacks. Rhodes told DiSalle he was willing to match morals and integrity with him “and they can start with your home life first.”

Rhodes swept the election, even carrying Cuyahoga County. The “Lawson Amendment” was soundly defeated. Voters approved senior citizen bus fares, and Perk rode the issue to become auditor — the first Republican county office holder in 28 years. Locher defeated Brown with 74

percent of the vote, topping the record of 73 percent set by Celebrezze the year before. He settled into office, only to find a relief crisis, a half-million-dollar deficit, complaints about inaction on urban renewal and growing restlessness among blacks.

Cleveland was about to discover the “turbulent Sixties.”

McGunagle is a Cleveland freelance writer.

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Oct. 11: Pope John XXIII convenes Vatican II.

Oct. 28: An 11th-hour deal between President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev ends the Cuban missile crisis, which had pushed both nations to the brink of nuclear war.

Nov. 6: Richard Nixon loses a bid to

be elected governor of California and bitterly announces, “You won’t have Nixon to kick around anymore.”

Born: Jodie Foster, Garth Brooks, Tom Cruise, Jackie Joyner-Kersey.

Died: Marilyn Monroe, American writer William Faulkner, Eleanor Roosevelt, actor Charles Laughton, comic Ernie Kovacs.