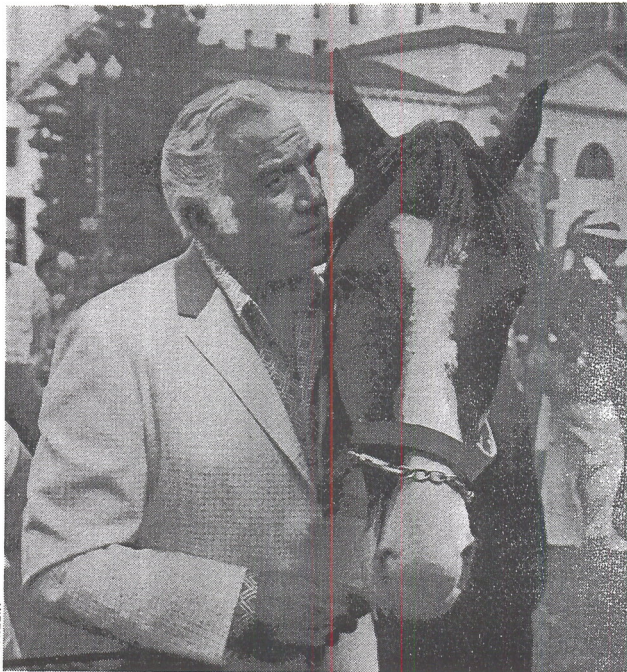




FIRST LADY MEETS THE PRESS

Betty Ford faced her own credibility gap last week: how to be a President's wife and a thinking human being. Courageously establishing a precedent—the first full-scale, open-admission press conference to be given by a First Lady—Mrs. Ford tried hard to avoid ideological traps. Wearing a mustard shirt-dress, she gracefully fielded the mandatory housekeeping questions. Inflation had hit the Fords, she acknowledged: "We don't eat as much steak or roast beef as the boys would like." And she spoke to Moms everywhere: "I'm dumbfounded the children have adjusted so well to the change." But after she nailed her colors to the Equal Rights Amendment, she slipped. She indicated support for Vice President-designate Rockefeller's controversial stand pro liberalized abortion laws. Next day her press secretary Helen Smith issued an equivocation. Mrs. Ford believes abortion is justified, she backpedaled, but it should not be given on demand.

Musing on the qualifications necessary for a President last week, Eugene McCarthy opined, "The question should be: Do you want this man to go to bat for you?" The former semipro ballplayer in Minnesota's Great Soo League was fresh from a personal success on the playing fields of East Hampton, L.I. Invited to join George Plimpton, Peter Mathiessen and Wilfrid Sheed on the writers' team in an annual charity softball game between writers and artists, Poet McCarthy went three for three against strong opposition that included Fabric Designer Boris Kroll and Painters Syd Solomon and Jimmy Ernst. One line drive could have been a home run if McCarthy had not stumbled at first base. His team went down 10-1, but Gene did not finish. When a pinch



LORNE GREENE & FRIEND



FIRST BASEMAN GENE MCCARTHY SLAMS A SINGLE AT EAST HAMPTON

runner replaced him in the fifth inning, everyone laughed at the public address announcement: "McCarthy has chosen not to run."

*Bonanza* may no longer be filling prime time on TV, but the spirit of the Ponderosa gallops on. Big Ben Cartwright rode into Washington last week to lobby for some of the constituents of Ponderosa ranch: horses. Along with Papa Charcoal, the American Horse Protection Association's mascot, Actor Lorne Greene gave a press conference opposite the White House, asking for legislation to curb the cruelties inflicted on horses in the U.S. Greene, who has his own ranch in California's San Fernando Valley, has joined the board of the A.H.P.A. Said one fan who had gathered round to give Papa Charcoal a pat, "and he isn't hossing around."

J. Fred Muggs, where are you? TV Host Mike Douglas, in *Planet of the Apes* makeup, strode onstage last week at Philadelphia's KYW-TV studios to tape his daily talk show. His first guest was Trainer Bill Hampton with Marvin the Magnificent, a 100-lb. chimp. To the delight of the audience, Marvin recognized a pal right away. He stroked Mike's unusually pale paw considerably, then sat back on his haunches and let out a few friendly howls. "The volume could have parted your hair," said Mike later. When Douglas mimicked him and let out a few howls of his own, Marvin stared stonily at his host, then wandered off into the audience. Next thing, he began swinging from the balcony. When Mike remonstrated with him, Marvin merely picked up a TV camera and shook it in Douglas' face as if it were a Brownie. Following a producer wielding a lolly-