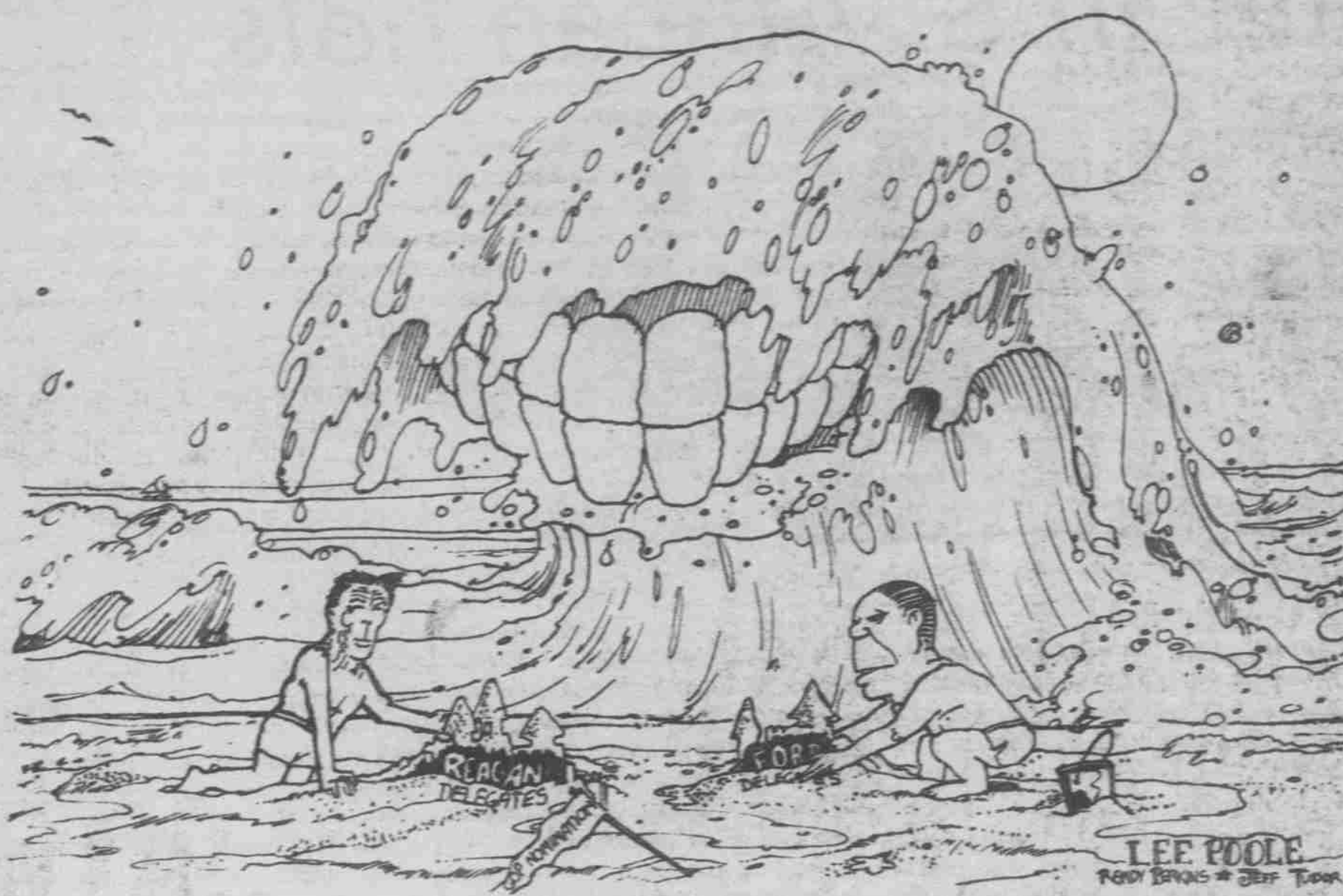


perspective



The next hundred years

When the United States embarked on its centennial year in 1876, it was a time of extreme optimism. Americans were proud of their accomplishments in the first hundred years, and they looked forward with hope and anticipation to the second hundred.

Looking back, it is evident that the hopes of the American people in 1876 were fulfilled. Advances in technology, in medicine, in the standard of living and in many other areas, mark the century from 1876 to the present as the most progressive and affluent of any in world history. Clearly, the 20th century was the American century.

Americans looking forward from 1976 are faced with a much bleaker outlook than their predecessors of a century ago. The United States seems to be turning a corner in the year of its bicentennial celebration and heading toward much leaner times.

The current economic trend of inflation and recession has defied every economic axiom and left the experts baffled. "Not since the Great Depression have so many prominent economists been so wrong so often," writes Saul Friedman, the economics reporter for Knight Newspapers.

The Watergate scandal led to the first presidential resignation in U.S. history. Recent revelations of invasions of privacy, assassination attempts and character assaults by America's intelligence agencies have violated the rights of citizens to be safe from the organizations designed to protect them. Abuses of governmental power on every level have destroyed public confidence in the leadership of the country:

A 1975 Harris survey indicated that, since 1966, public confidence in Congress has fallen from 42 per cent to 14 per cent. Confidence in the White House has fallen from 41 per cent to 14 per cent, and confidence in the Supreme Court has dropped from 51 per cent to 28 per cent. Said Harris, "The gulf between the American public and its leadership has rarely been so wide or deep."

Critical shortages of natural gas in the United States have threatened to paralyze certain industries during the last five winters. Oil shortages have rendered us vulnerable to outrageous political demands and high prices from the oil producing nations. Energy experts predict that unless we develop alternative fuel sources and learn to conserve existing fuel, we will run out of energy by the middle of the next century.

Meanwhile, the drive to stop pollution and clean up the environment is no longer the national crusade that it was in the early 1970s. Experts on the ecology assert that unless we reassume our responsibility to protect the ecosystem from harsh industrial wastes and other pollutants, the earth will soon be unfit for human habitation.

There are no inevitabilities in the future. However, in the face of so many gloomy predictions, we must see to it that the future becomes a central concern to us all, to ordinary citizens as well as decision-makers. The time is past that we can afford to sit back and accept passively the events that shape our future. We must now take part. That, perhaps, is the most difficult challenge of all for the nation as it begins its next century.

Prostitutes convention: The media as news hookers

by Linda Lowe

WASHINGTON—What it was supposed to be was a congressional reception at the First World Meeting of Prostitutes.

What it turned out to be was a roomful of media people, with no practicing hookers and no congressmen. The closest thing to a politician in attendance was a candidate for the Virginia state legislature.

Even Honeysuckle Divine, a stripper from Washington, was there as a member of the news media. She was alternately taking notes for her magazine column, "Honeysuckle's Beehive," and playing with the zipper on the plunging neckline of her pink mini-dress. On each breast was a button that read, "I can type."

The blond Ms. Divine said she used to hook in Washington in the middle '60s—"just about the time before Liz Ray came and took away my business." She said she once slept with a now-deceased President from "out West somewhere," but she refused to name him. "I don't believe in rat-finking," she explained.

She apparently does not mind going to jail, however. The day before, she had been acquitted for the second time on charges of "open lewdness and criminal conspiracy" in Philadelphia.

"I'm going back on the 12th of July, and I'll probably get arrested again," she said as she distributed photos of herself in the buff to the numerous reporters who stepped up to interview her. In the wallet-sized picture, she was preparing to apply peanut butter to her crotch.



Honeysuckle Divine

The pictures were about the only items going for free. Buttons bearing the words, "My ass is mine," were on sale for a dollar apiece, and French-cut T-shirts imprinted with "'76—Year of the Tricks" were priced at \$8. The bar was doing a booming business.

Margo St. James, ex-prostitute and chairmadam of Coyote (Cast Off Your Old Tired Ethics), organized the meeting to promote legalization of prostitution. Clutching a beer, she said she was pleased with the media turn-out and was still hoping to see some congressmen or congressional staffers.

"We can't afford the stamps to get them our information," she said. "We (Coyote and the Feminist Party) did this on absolutely no dough."

Two aides to Rep. Paul N. McCloskey, R-Calif., did arrive and were immediately bombarded with reporters seeking interviews. "This is the best thing since Watergate," a White House correspondent said as she gleefully took notes.

Meanwhile, outside the Georgetown hotel, three picketers from the Washington Christian Action Council

debated with a Franciscan friar, Father DePaul Genska, who has organized a group to aid prostitutes. A flock of media people dutifully recorded every word.

Holding a sign that said, "Whore St. James gives Marxist line," the Rev. Kenneth Lee categorically stated that he does not commit adultery.

"Christ was very kind to women in this condition," Father Genska replied.

As the Reverend launched into a citation from Proverbs, Father Genska repeatedly asked him, "Have you not sinned?" "Have you not sinned?"

The Rev. Lee gave up in frustration, "Is that all you can say with alcohol on your breath?"

"Do you frequent prostitutes?" he finally demanded of the father.

The friar flushed and replied, "Only my confessor knows for sure, and he won't talk."

Back inside, Florence Kennedy, 60, a black feminist, author and attorney, was running around wearing false eyelashes and a floor-length purple cape, leading choruses of bawdy songs about legalizing prostitution.

A non-working member of the national press corps reflected from the sidelines, "The faces really aren't that different from those at any Washington cocktail party. The faces of hustlers of all kinds look alike.

"You know we're all hookers. We sell parts of our body, our mind or strength to make a living."

The sad part is the number of the nation's top journalists who have sold their abilities to cover non-events like this one.

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