



The Eagle Has Landed

The only corpse successfully revived in recorded history was that of Lazarus, who was said to have lived for several years afterward. Jesus Christ is reported to have arisen from the dead, but even the most ardent supporters of his resurrection admit he was on earth only forty days; and Jonah was still alive when the whale spit him ashore. Countless other claims of resurrection or rebirth have been made, not least among them Count Dracula and Richard Nixon. With such inspired precedent, the North Coast Times Eagle is born again.

It is born again because First Amendment newspapers have become as rare as the nation's symbol, the Bald Eagle. The independent press has virtually disappeared, homogenized into the huge corporations that also control the country, and probably the world.

In this age of the great systems devotion to any principle other than perpetuation of the status quo seems quaint and naive, and faintly dangerous. Yet even the most random demographic survey of this wild and stormy coast would show that loyalty to the metallic demands of the corporate structure is not a prime aspiration of its inhabitants. To the contrary, this rare splinter of sand and spruce between mountains and ocean has traditionally served as a refuge for those seeking the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Men and women of all ages and preoccupations who were raised here and stayed or who have emigrated here demand personal responsibility for their own lives.

But even that has come into conflict. The enormous pressures of population and economics threaten the way we live. The great contradictions between freedom and property have finally reached us.

Like everything else the role of the press is in question. There should be no doubt. The press should represent no other special interest than the First Amendment. This becomes patently impossible when the press is controlled by corporations whose interests are often in conflict with the Constitution. A. J. Leibling, a renegade to the news establishment, once said that the press was free only to those who owned one.

Exactly ten years ago a space capsule named the Eagle landed on the moon, and for the first time in history a human being stepped onto a planet other than earth. It was history's most spectacular moment. Our expectations since then have followed the course of Skylab which fell out of the sky.

We live in an increasingly nasty time. The petroleum age races to its end. Inflation and recession tumble over each other. The country crawls with greed and corruption while its leaders impose bitter controls over the liberties of its citizens. Preadolescents are thieves and murderers. Perhaps the war to end wars will occur soon. Even the world's weather is getting colder.

Twice out of the egg and once out of the cypt, the reborn Times Eagle will attempt lighting matches against a darkening wind.

— Lead article, Times Eagle, Vol. I, No. I, 20 July, 1979

TODAY IS TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY

We should start with the future. If we have one, it is all we have left. What will it be like? Will our children survive us, and will there be an earth for their children? Will civilization continue to grow or will it put out its own light and sink the human race once more into the bogs of ignorance and barbarity?

We seem so helpless. As the man said, we are going to live in the future the rest of our lives, and yet we tremble in fearful anticipation, numb from too much change too quickly. Not too long ago tomorrow hardly changed from yesterday. A human being did not expect things to change very much, and at death, which came early in those days, not much had changed from birth. It was that way for centuries. There was time for adjustment within the great epochs. In less time than a century we seem to have lost all resemblance to our predecessors. Our lives seem so removed from them that they might only have been characters in fairy tales, which is all most of us know about them.

Recently we buried ourselves in earlier times, though we have never been certain how we remember them. We bent the direction of our culture, taking almost desperate refuge in the already occurred. Modern life had become too complicated. Everything was confusing and threatening, and every life, rich and poor, had become a gordian knot. Time was running short. So was everything else. To relieve the pain we folded into the past.

Exactly at the moment great inspiration and energy were necessary to restructure and guide the civilization through a rapidly approaching period of crisis, the society leaned into other times, to the good old days, though it was never clear which ones were good, and many eras were indiscriminately blended into others.

We treasured old movies, old records, old clothes, cars, posters; old anything — if it was old it enchanted and comforted us, and we dreamed of the times the artifacts had survived. Most of us never cared to learn about history so we were more quickly seduced by the temptations of nostalgia and yearned for a nebulous past of no shape or form, its real hold on our imaginations the fact it had already passed and was no longer in doubt.

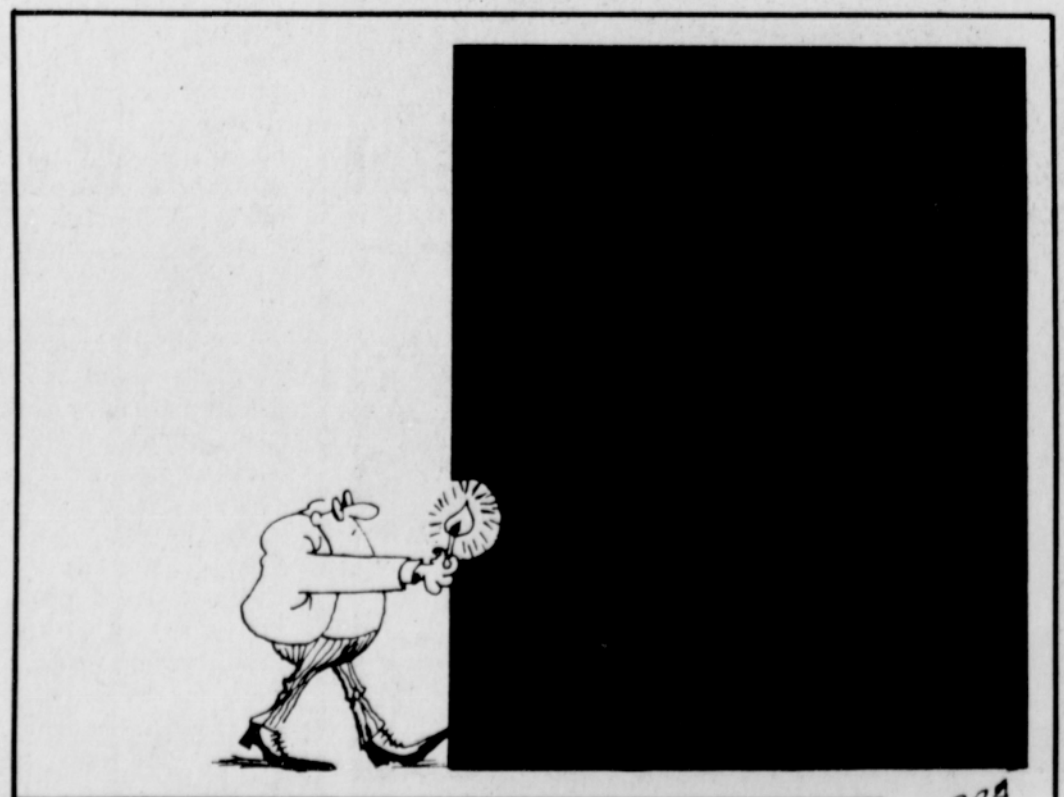
For the first time in our history the great majority of us fear the future. We have squandered our options because of that fear, and have imperiled the future because of our loss of faith in it. The paradox should be evident, but if it is, why do we continue to sacrifice our descendants for the impossible attempt to finish our frightened lives in the vanished worlds of our ancestors.

Just as no single human can avoid death by retreating into the personal past, a society cannot survive in empty ritual of a fancied simpler or more glorious age. Romanticizing the past inhibits the real insights history provides as we converge with the future, and it dissolves a certain necessary will. It is also a great disservice to minimize the awesome hardships our predecessors were forced to overcome as they slowly produced our civilization.

There are signs of awakening. Voices tell us that increasing numbers are preparing to meet the expected adversity with renewed principle, that all we lack is direction.

If that is so, then perhaps all we have done is stop and smell the roses on our way to the twenty-first century. We have armored ourselves with the familiar and we have traced our bloodlines. We have spent some time dissecting our souls. If now we can put aside our fears and bury our excesses, we might retrieve the future from the darkness we anticipate.

— Editorial, Times Eagle, Vol. I, No. I, 20 July, 1979



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