

2001 to Be Year Worth Staying Up For

YOUNGER folks may stay up tomorrow night to greet the new year, but here is one person who expects to turn in early as usual. The coming of 1981 may be important, but the year we are looking forward to seeing is 2001 when a new century begins.

Contradictory forecasts of what that year might be like shouldn't disturb us too much. An aging rustic philosopher once said he had spent half his life worrying about things that never happened. Speculative predictions often turn out to be in error.

A panel of experts in 1490 examined Columbus' plan for his voyage and said it was impossible. When the railroad was invented, critics said it would kill its passengers because they wouldn't be able to breathe traveling that fast. In 1902, the New York Times advised the Wright Brothers to turn to "more useful employment."

In 1940 Scientific Americans declared that a rocket bomb was "too far-fetched to be considered." A Harvard professor called television a curiosity that would never catch

on.

Modern forecasters have predicted colonies in space or at the bottoms of lakes and farming the ocean floors for food.

Decentralization has been predicted, with people working at home, communicating through computers and voice mail. Robots will take over many factory jobs. Mankind is pictured as becoming electronically omniscient, with all the information one ever needs available on call from specialized computer libraries.

Some of the forecasts are pessimistic. A presidential commission last summer came up with a picture of a filthy, unstable planet, with billions of poor people scrambling for scarce, high-priced resources.

What has already happened should give our best picture of the future. This century has seen the transition from horses and mules traveling 5 mph to orbiting devices moving 18,000 mph. Before World War II the idea of daily jet plane service between major cities was unthought of and the notion of men

walking on the moon was no more than science fiction. Are we to expect such wonders to cease?

In 1949 a dying writer named George Orwell created a literary sensation with his book, "1984." Based upon his anti-conservative leanings, the book predicted a world divided into three totalitarian communist states. Censorship by "Big Brother" would destroy individual liberty and privacy.

Some of Orwell's predictions have materialized and all of them might become reality if certain groups had their way. However, the recent election reflected a declaration by voters that we have too much government already and they are to take steps to cut it down.

Only those who lack faith in God, relying solely upon their own intelligence, anticipate self-destruction of the Earth.

The coming year may be a good one if we can avoid economic collapse. The year 2001 could be a better one if our nation can restore its moral fiber, its spiritual strength and patriotic integrity well enough to survive until it arrives.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
Office of the Dean and Director



January 5, 1981

Mr. Ferdie Deering, Editor
The Daily Oklahoman
Post Office Box 25125
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 93125

Dear Ferdie:

While in Marlow over the holidays, I picked up a copy of the Daily Oklahoman and noted your interesting editorial on the "Year 2001 Worth Staying up For." It was an interesting appraisal of how short-sighted we can be and, of course, agriculture is a perfect example.

An interesting case in point is "genetic engineering" of plants and animals. Your early and continuing interest in weather modification is another.

It also reminded me of the many contributions you have made to southwest agriculture. Come and visit us sometime in the "Land of Enchantment."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bill'.

L. S. Pope
Dean and Chief
Administrative Officer

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Replied
JAN 21 1981