

Editorial

America: monument to all that's good

Tomorrow our nation will be 208 years old. Happy birthday to us.

To much of the world, the image of most Americans, is that of the Ugly American. And it's true: Almost anyone who has traveled overseas has seen examples of American tourists berating the local customs, the local food, the local yokels.

It's not a pretty sight. Too many Americans have the attitude that if it's not done our way, it's not the right way.

But enough of that. I've come here not to bury America, but to praise her.

And there is a lot to praise. If we're honest we all know the ugliness that America has brought to the world, but there's been a lot of beauty too.

When George McGovern ran for president in 1972, he said America could become a monument to all that is good in the human race. He was right about that, just as he was right about a lot of other things that year.

President Reagan campaigned in 1980 with the promise to make America great again. What Reagan fails to understand is that a nation is made great not by the size of its gross national product but by its ability to recognize and work to eliminate injustices.

Only a fool would contend that our society is free from discrimination. But only a fool would say that nothing has been done to eliminate discrimination.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson ran for the Democratic nomination for presi-

dent this year. A black man running for president 20 years ago would have been inconceivable. Jackson actually got more delegates out of South Carolina than any other candidate. It's hard to imagine that happening 20 or even 10 years ago.

Currently, a great public debate is raging over this country's policy in Central America. Public opinion polls seem to show that most people are against further involvement in that region.

None of that may have an effect on Reagan, but history shows that those who ignore public opinion do so at their own peril.

The point is that we have a right to speak out on issues even if it seems — as it does at times — that no one listens. And they don't always listen. But sometimes they do. And if

they don't, well, just keep yelling.

The system doesn't always work. Sometimes it even fails miserably. And from time to time corrections are needed. Still, it seems to rise to the occasion.

When former President Nixon tried to put himself above the law he was brought down. Of course, he still has his government pension and Secret Service protection. Who's going to kill him now? The Secret Service agents should have been guarding John Lennon. Like I said, sometimes corrections do have to be made.

The point is that we aren't perfect. We, as a nation, have done some awful things. But we've also tried to correct some of those things. And we keep trying.

Geoff Goodwin



OK, OK... GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS, BUT GET HIM OUT OF HERE!!!

Insidious sexism keeps capable women on political sidelines

The other day I said the word "Negro." From time to time that happens to me. I blush, sometimes try to take it back, sometimes even try to explain that "Negro" was the polite word for blacks when I was growing up. Like many Americans, I was fed my vocabulary, if not my prejudices, along with my mashed carrots — in infancy.

The same holds for my views about women. I sometimes joke that my generation of men, like the Biblical Israelites, ought to be forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until we have all died out. Our sexism is implanted, is almost genetic — the product of an upbringing and schooling over which we had no control. As for myself, I often go to sleep a feminist and wake up a male chauvinist pig. None of my feminism is instinctive.

I bring this up now because the question of whether a woman should be chosen as the Democratic vice-presidential nominee is on the national agenda — at least on the covers of the news magazines. The arguments for it are by now well-known: A woman would help defeat Ronald Reagan; would be a wonderful role model for other women; and would, not incidentally, show that America is finally ready to renounce its sexist past.

The arguments against a woman — at least the ones being mentioned — are also well-known: None of them is qualified enough for the number two job, not to mention the number one job in the event the President dies or is incapacitated. They lack both foreign policy experience and — since they are either mayors or members of the House of Representatives — the politically educating experience of running for a statewide office. I have made those arguments myself.

But then something happened. Henry Cisneros, the mayor of San Antonio (and a Hispanic), was mentioned as a possible vice-presidential nominee and no one yelled and screamed about his qualifications. No columnist like myself noted that Cisneros was a mere mayor, that he had never run for statewide office, that he, too, lacked foreign-policy experience. None of that seemed to matter and not just because Cisneros is a Hispanic, but because he is a man.

It's too easy to say that this is raw sexism of the kind that would reject any woman for any high political office. It is sexism of a lesser, more insidious, variety. It doesn't hold that no woman is ever qualified than a man for the same post.

All things being equal, men and women are never equal. The woman must be better than the man — which helps explain why Jeane Kirkpatrick, who has as good a foreign-policy mind as anyone in the Reagan administration, spends her time in the backwater of the United Nations.

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Press treats Jackson unfairly

Jesse Jackson is popular with the nation's newspaper columnists, including writers from the L.A.

Times, the New York Times and everywhere in between (even Lincoln). The Jackson columns range from mild disapprovals to diatribes.

Of course, television commentators weren't left out of the act. Neither were TV reporters; considering the manner in which they "objectively" report the news, they may as well be editorial commentators.

Why does the majority press have such a fascination with Jackson, albeit negatively based? Why do they insist upon a deeper analysis of his actions relative to the actions of others in the political arena? Quite simply, because he is black.

Some people of all races will insist that the media treats all public figures in the way it treats Jackson, whether they consider the treatment fair or not. But the media does not treat Jackson in the same way it treats white figures. At its simplest, the media doesn't call a white leader a "white leader" while Jackson is a "black leader."

Consider the coverage of Jackson's recent trip to Central America. Congressmen, human rights organizers and others have made so-called "fact-finding" missions like this, and the press considers them humanitarians. Jackson, however, is on a "personal diplomacy mission," setting up a "government-in-exile," and possibly violating the Logan Act, although he does not claim to be negotiating in the name of anyone.

Columnist Max Lerner of the L.A. Times had the audacity to say Jackson's progenitors were the founders of the Black Power movement. He ended his column by saying, "Whatever you think of his views, you must first understand what he is about."

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