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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THE GRIDIRON DINNER
Statler Hilton Hotel
SATURDAY - MARCH 22, 1975
Attire: White Tie and
 Long Dress
Departure: 6:40 P.M.

From: Terry O'Donnell ^{TOD}

BACKGROUND:

The Ninetieth Annual Dinner of the Gridiron Club will be noted for the initiation of the Club's first woman member, Helen Thomas of United Press International. This will be the third year that women have been guests at the Saturday evening dinner, but the first time in the Club's history that the First Lady has attended.

Both Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Rockefeller are slated to help initiate the Club's new members who include, in addition to Helen Thomas, Godfrey Sperling of the Christian Science Monitor, Dan Thomasson of Scripps-Howard Newspapers, and Carrol Kilpatrick of the Washington Post.

The evening will consist of a brief head table reception and six dinner courses dispersed among seven humorous skits. Club tradition prohibits press coverage of the dinner and skits. Attached at TAB A is a Gridiron prepared summary of the evening's activities that portrays very descriptively the flavor and spirit of the evening. The seating diagram and your remarks are enclosed.

SEQUENCE:

- 6:40 p.m. You and Mrs. Ford board motorcade on South Grounds and depart en route the Statler Hilton Hotel.
- 6:45 p.m. Arrive Statler Hilton Hotel where you will be met by Mr. Lucian C. Warren, President, The Gridiron Club, and Mr. Joseph Frederick, General Manager, Statler Hilton Hotel, and escorted to the Continental Room for the Head Table Reception.
- 6:48 p.m. Arrive Continental Room and informally greet head table guests.

7:00 p.m.

The Head Table Guests will form up and enter the Ballroom. You and Mrs. Ford, and the Vice President and Mrs. Rockefeller remain behind.

7:08 p.m.

"Ruffles and Flourishes"
"Hail, Columbia"

The Vice President and Mrs. Rockefeller proceed to the Head Table.

7:10 p.m.

"Ruffles and Flourishes"
"Hail to the Chief"

NOTE: Club tradition calls for honors but no announcement.

NO PRESS COVERAGE

ATTENDANCE: 547

7:10 p.m.

You and Mrs. Ford proceed to the head table and remain standing behind your seats. Seating order to the left of the podium is: Lucian Warren, the President, Mr. Henry Urban (Publisher, Buffalo Evening News), Mrs. Ford and Mr. Robert Strauss, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

7:12 p.m.

Music in the Air (lights are turned out).

7:15 p.m.

Speech in the Dark by Lucian Warren (all remain standing for Warren's speech).

7:20 p.m.

Opening skit.

NOTE: Dinner courses are served between skits

7:30 p.m.

Marine Band performs.

7:50 p.m.

Initiation of new members.

7:51 p.m.

Mrs. Ford joins Mrs. Rockefeller at podium for participation in initiation of Helen Thomas as the first woman member of the Gridiron Club.

8:00 p.m.

Mrs. Ford returns to her seat and is seated.

8:01 p.m.

Women's Liberation skit.

8:05 p.m.

Ella Grasso, Governor of Connecticut, responds for Women's Liberation Skit.

3.

8:25 p. m. Democratic skit.

8:45 p. m. Robert Strauss, Chairman, Democratic Party, responds.

9:25 p. m. Foreign Policy skit.

9:45 p. m. Foreign Policy skit response. (This was to have been Secretary Kissinger's response.)

10:05 p. m. Republican skit.

10:30 p. m. Vice President Rockefeller responds.

10:55 p. m. Toast to the President by Lucian Warren, concluding with your introduction.

10:57 p. m. PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS.

NO PRESS COVERAGE.

11:05 p. m. Remarks conclude. You return to your seat and remain standing.

11:07 p. m. Singing of Auld Lang Syne.

11:10 p. m. You and Mrs. Ford depart head table, followed by Vice President and Mrs. Rockefeller, en route motorcade for boarding.

11:15 p. m. Depart Statler Hilton Hotel en route South Grounds.

11:20 p. m. Arrive South Grounds.

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GRIDIRON DINNER

Democratic candidates were lampooned and Republicans were satirized with reminders that "Hoover Days are Here Again" as President Ford, Vice President Rockefeller and other luminaries of public and private life looked on at the 90th anniversary dinner and show of the Gridiron Club last night.

Gridiron history was made with the initiation of the club's first woman member, Helen Thomas of United Press International. Initiated along with her were Godfrey Sperling of the Christian Science Monitor, Dan Thomasson of Scripps-Howard Newspapers, Carroll Kilpatrick of the Washington Post and, as limited members, Lieut. Col. Jack T. Kline, director of the Marine Band, Lieut. John R. Bourgeois, assistant director of the band, and Prof. James Waring of the Catholic Theater Drama Department.

For the first time in the club's history, the wife of the President and the wife of the Vice President were invited guests at the Saturday night dinner. Mrs. Betty Ford and Mrs. Margaretta Rockefeller were slated to help initiate the club's new members.

The show opened with a circus scene to remind the audience that the ancient Romans got by in hard times by giving the masses bread and circuses.

The scene switched to the Democrats who were staging a modern version of the French Revolution, with revolting Democrats executing their leaders and the modern version of Madame DeFarge, Madame Fanny DeFoxe, the French Firecracker, dropping her stitches and singing "Let Me Entertain You."

Then came the Republicans, gathered at Hoover University in the good old 1930's, and trying to find a way to keep Big Jerry from flunking his economics exam and being barred from the Big Game.

More than 500 leaders in government, politics, journalism and the diplomatic corps gathered for the annual white tie gourmet dinner at the Statler-Hilton Hotel where the long tables were arranged in the shape of a gridiron, a gridiron that traditionally sings but never burns.

(more)

The traditional "Speech in the Dark," was delivered by Lucian Warren, the Club's new president and Washington correspondent of the Buffalo Evening News.

Warren told the gathering that "we can rejoice that we have protections and safeguards" the Founding fathers "did not enjoy."

"We have the FBI and the CIA, who even now, while you are at this dinner, may be protecting you by inspecting your home, your mail and your telephone facilities."

"The CIA, I am glad to say, is represented here," Warren said. "Director Colby is at this head table and various of his aides are scattered among you. Although you might not recognize a CIA agent at your table, please note the magnificent centerpiece of roses. During your dinner conversations, Mr. Colby would appreciate it if you would speak directly into the roses."

He reminded guests that one of the rules of the club is that "ladies are always present, reporters are never present."

Following tradition, there was only one toast at the dinner -- to the President of the United States. Mr. Ford's response was off the record.

Also off the record were the remarks by Vice President Rockefeller; Gov. Ella Grasso of Connecticut and Robert Strauss, chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

The red coated United States Marine Band, conducted by Lt. Col. Kline entertained with dinner music. In charge of production was Robert Boyd, Washington Bureau Chief of Knight newspapers.

The curtain rose with a circus parade illustrating the theme that when the government doesn't know how to solve the country's problems it puts on a circus.

For the opening number the circus performers sang:

We've a prescription to save our great nation,
Cure the Recession and whip, I say whip, inflation
Put on a circus and bring on the clowns,
For a while let our antics wipe away your frowns.

Congressmen fiddle while energy's burning,
Jerry's skiing while King Faisal counts his earnings.
You're out of work and you've run out of dough,
Never mind -- we'll divert you with our three-ring show.

(more)

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was lampooned in a foreign policy skit. After wheeling and dealing with "Three Kings of Orient," and chatting on the phone with Arabs, Israelis, Brezhnev, Chou En Lai and the Pope, Kissinger sang:

A wandering merchant, I,
Who deals in confrontation,
Detente and consternation
And schemes that mystify.
Bismarck and Metternich
And me and Machiavelli!
I'm not a Nervous Nellie!
I've slippery rhetoric --
Yes, slippery rhetoric.

As I said to my friendly foe, Leonid Brezhnev:
We'll match your missile force,
Improve your trade resource,
Discourse til we are hoarse
O'er wheat and SALT!
Oh-h-h-h-h Leonid, Leonid.

In the Middle East the problem's complicated,
For peace I've flown my shuttle far and wide.
And our mercenaries must be tolerated.
Like Hessians they will fight for either side!

For Peking and Hanoi I will dissemble,
Wheel and deal just like the crafty Talleyrand.
And I'm not at all surprised that nations tremble,
For I have secrets that eluded Sally Rand!

With a number of women guests in the audience, a Club member noted that it used to be the "cradle of male chauvinism."

"Now we confess we were behind the times," a member confessed. "What was behind us is now beside us."

And in the tradition of Nelson Eddy, contrition was expressed in "Stout Hearted Hen."

Sisters mine!
We can win
By hanging tough.
Pearls
Before swine
We have been
Quite long enough!
Let our adversaries all be male --
Any female
Can call their bluff!
We're
On our way!
Give a cheer
Hip hooray!
Now our might is loosed,
We will show them who rules the roost!



Give me a hen who's a stout-hearted hen,
Who will fight for her right to the sun --
Add in some frails disenchanted with males,
And before long the war has begun -- Oh!
Bring on the masses of matrons and lasses --
The battle like that'll be won!
Then there's no one in the world won't get our message quick,
When stout-hearted hens can stick together chick to chick!

Democrats were roasted in a skit set in a French Revolutionary scene. Congressional Leader Tip "Robespierre" O'Neill called into session a "Committee on Public Safety" which tried to get the revolution organized and "chop off Republican heads."

The skit opened with Madame DeFuxe letting the audience in on a few secrets about Congress:

Let me entertain you,
Let me tell you how
A Congressman relaxes
From legislating taxes
And other things highbrow.

His dedication
To recreation
Is sure to brighten the day.
So let me entertain you
While the statesmen are at play -- yes sir!
Those -- boys -- sure know -- how -- to play!

Let them entertain you,
Let them show' you how
Congress does a few tricks,
Some old and then some new tricks
Like what they are up to now.

A revolution
Is their solution --
They're working ni-ight and day --
So let them entertain you
In -- the -- Dem -- Ocrat -- ic -- way -- yes sir!
The -- true -- frater -- ni -- tay!

Citizen Hubert Humphrey revealed the Democratic strategy to the tune of
"Love is Sweeping the Country":

We are running the country,
We are pulling the strings,
Swinging axes on guns and taxes,
Just having one of our mad flings.
See us pushing and shoving,
Grabbing time on TV;
Each Democrat alike picks his place to strike,
Thinking national is irrational;
We are running the country,
Yes, we are off on a spree!

(more)



We already run Congress
Now we're moving downtown;
Ford can't balk us -- we'll rule by caucus --
We're turning things all upside down.
We are running the whole show,
Jerry's running behind;
We listen for applause while we're making laws,
Playing diplomats, bossing bureaucrats;
We are running the country,
Yes, running it out of its mind!

Then Carl "Napoleon" Albert arrives with three old warriors who met their Waterloo in the Assembly -- Baron Patman, Duke Poage and le General Hebert of Louisiana, the Sixteenth.

Hebert stepped forward and said: "Citizens, they got "ay-bear" by the tail. Let me tell you what happened. "

To the tune of "The Sting, " Hebert sang:

We got hit by a deadly sting,
See that's what happens when caucus is king.
Whip-per snap-pers are full of sting,
And the freshmen no longer kiss your ring.
Must have learned it in eastern schools,
They made us look like a bunch of durn fools,
We old timers play fair-ly, yes, we always shoot square-ly,
But reformers don't go by the rules.

It was like vaudeville
That day up on the Hill
When all the Democratic freshmen came to town.
There was a dancing bear,
Even a dog act there,
And all those shouters, strutters, acrobats and clowns.
But when I came on
To do my fav-'rite song,
Reformers quickly turned my world all upside down;
They wielded their new clout,
To kick their old chairmen out,
Those durn re-form-ers.

When it came to the final crunch,
I held my nose, took a freshman to lunch;
But I found we ain't got a chance,
When the lib-'rals put on their song and dance.
So we had to ca-pit-u-late;
And when it came time to fish or cut bait,
Our immortal doorkeeper, who could yell, "Mr. Speeekuh",
He was fin-al-ly given the gate.

Suddenly a character right out of Dickens "Tale of Two Cities" showed up. "Sidney Carton" Jackson, also known as Scoop, admired himself in a mirror and sang, "I Believe In You.":



You have the cool, clear eyes of a master of wisdom and truth;
Yet there's that spring-like tread and that grin of perennial youth;
Oh I believe in you -- I believe in you.

You make those oil men sweat, yes, they tremble whenever you talk;
Com-mies and Ay-rabs dread to confront you, you high-flying hawk.
Oh, I believe in you -- I believe in you.

So, when my hopes for those pri-ma-ries, all but fall apart,
I recall Scammon and Wattenberg, and I take heart, I take heart.

Big Labor thinks you're swell, so does Boeing, you really can't lose;
And it's a great big plus to say some of your best friends are Jews;
Oh I believe in you -- I believe in you.

Senator Mondale quit, when the fire in his belly went out;
Kennedy holds back too, but with Scoop there is never a doubt.
Oh I believe in you -- I believe in you.

Soon afterward George Bourgeois Wallace entered and claimed he had been converted to the principles of "liberte and egalite," and wanted to recant in public.

"I been recantin' all over the place -- up Nawth and down South. I'll do it again, if y'all'll just let me through the school house door."

Then to the melody of "Brotherhood of Man," Wallace sang of his transformation:

There is a Brotherhood of Man,
I'm a-joinin' that Brotherhood of Man,
A lofty tent that spreads
O'er blacks and pointy-heads,
All in one Brotherhood of Man.
Yes, I believe in liberty;
Stop a-foolin' 'round with the Ku Klux Klan;
Give me equality
In that fraternity
The great big Brotherhood of Man.

I'm not the guy I was before,
Standin' all alone in the school house door;
Farewell to good ole' boys
And all such southren joys,
Those days are gone for evermore.
I don't mind bussin', no not me;
It's a-fittin' in with my master plan;
So tem-por-ar-i-lee
"Til that first pri-mar-eee,
I'll try your Brotherhood of Man.

Citizen Bob Strauss, Chairman of the Democratic Committee Nationale, looked over the field of Democratic candidates needed to charge the Bastille, and saw they "all had got the itch." He sang:

(more)

We've got a lovely bunch of cocoanuts,
 There they are a-standin' in a row,
 Small ones, smaller ones, smaller ones than that;
 Some of 'em dumb, and some of 'em numb,
 Who don't know where they're at;
 We've got a lovely bunch of cocoanuts,
 And frankly, friends, they all have got the itch,
 Please take a chance,
 Step up and take a chance,
 On our candidates for just a penny a pitch:

Bumpers, Bentsen, Bobby Byrd -- a penny a pitch,
 Scoop and Mo and Adlai Third -- a penny a pitch,
 Humphrey, Muskie, Bayh!
 Carter, Wallace, aye!
 Any cocoanut you want, a penny a pitch.

Harris, Hartke, Hart and Church -- a penny a pitch,
 Reubin, Terry, Hugh and Birch -- a penny a pitch,
 Lawton, William, Joe,
 Larry, Curly, Mo --
 Any cocoanut you want, a penny a pitch.

Tunney, Cranston, Bond and Brown -- a penny a pitch,
 Any Democrat in town -- a penny a pitch,
 Grasso, Glenn and Strauss,
 (Had you thought of Strauss?)
 Any cocoanut you want, a penny a pitch.

For the Republican ribbing, the scene shifted to the nostalgic setting of Hoover University, where a portrait of Herbert Hoover loomed large and a banner read "Beat Roosevelt."

The introducer told the audience "Folks are yearning for the good old days of the 1930's -- of five-cent cigars, 10-cent gasoline and 25 per cent unemployment."

But Hoover U. was not a happy place. Big Jerry, the star center and the captain of the football team was flunking economics -- and might not be able to play in the Big Game against Roosevelt Academy.

The Chairman of the Hoover Pep Club, John Rhodes, had organized a rally on campus. The rally was just beginning. As the curtain opened the entire Gridiron chorus burst into the song "Hoover Days are Here Again."

Hoover days are here again,
 Millionaires are drinking beer again,
 Fear is all we have to fear again
 Hoover days are here again.

(more)



Hard luck times are back again,
The economy is slack again,
The country's out of whack again,
Hoover days are here again.

Gloom and doom are all about,
The Statler's serving sauerkraut.
Where's the RFC to bail us out?
Hoover days are here again.

Detroit has layoffs galore
And Ford will lay off some more.
Brother, show you care again,
Do you have a dime to spare again?
Laissez faire is in the air again,
Hoover days are here again.

Cheer leader Ron Nessen whipped up the crowd with a declaration "Oh,
Jerry'll do all right ... He's gonna buckle down and W-I-N, WIN!"

The cheerleaders explained the theory of Republican economics with the words:

Trickle down, Winsocki, trickle down,
You can win, Winsocki, if you trickle down;
Give a tax rebate
To the highest rate,
Let it gravitate
And trickle down.

Trickle down, Winsocki, trickle down,
You can win, Winsocki, if you trickle down;
When the market's lax
Cut the corp' rate tax,
Give it forty whacks
And let the profits trickle down.

You can lick this pickle that you're in --
The old trickle trick'll surely win... sure as sin!

Tough it out, Bill Simon, tough it out,
You can win, Bill Simon, if you tough it out;
Let your fatter cats
Eat in Automats
With the Democrats;
They've got to learn to tough it out.

Play it cool, Bill Seidman, play it cool,
You can win, Bill Seidman, if you play it cool;
On the burning deck
Of a fiscal wreck,
Write a rubber check,
And play it cool.

Bottom out, Al Greenspan, bottom out,
You can win, Al Greenspan, if you bottom out;
When the voters grump
At this dismal slump,
Let 'em take their lumps
And show 'em how to bottom out.

(more)



When you hit the bottom of the chart,
That is when you've gott'em, so take heart... so take heart!

Give 'em hell, Winsocki, give 'em hell,
You can win, Winsocki, if you give 'em hell;
When the pump won't prime
And the Dow won't climb
And it's panic time,
It's Congress' fault, so give 'em hell!

Song and dance man Arthur Burns led the White House Council of Economic
Advisers in a dance illustrating the principle of "Hoover economics" to the tune of
"Side by Side."

All the poor folks are talking 'bout money,
But we think the future's quite sunny.
We keep our cool, 'cause we know the rule
Is TURN AROUND.

(radio voice: "THE TURN AROUND" - dancers do Turn Around Step)

Oh, the stock market's deep in a chasm
But that's just an energy spasm;
Though brokers jump, we'll soon prime the pump
And END THE SLUMP.

(radio voice: "The Slump" - dancers do the Slump Step)

Well, it's no time for any great nation
To fold from a little stag-flation.
These are the days to waffle sideways
'Cause WAFFLING PAYS.

(radio voice: "The Sideways Waffle" - Dancers do Waffle Step)

So you can't buy a house on the prairie,
You can't buy a car and it's scary.
But we won't pout -- folks needn't doubt,
We'll BOTTOM OUT.

Back in the study hall, Big Jerry's pals worried that some second stringers
were figuring to grab Jerry's spot in the line up. They spotted Ronnie Reagan,
Howie Baker and Chuck Percy -- all raring to go. The trio sang:

Standing on the corner, watching Jerry Ford go by,
Standing on the corner, knowing I'm the better guy.
I've got the right-wingers solidly behind me,
And they love me like apple pie --

(So I'm) Standing on the corner,
Cherishing my dreams,
Polishing my schemes,
Watching Jerry Ford go by.

(more)



Sitting in the Senate, watching Jerry Ford go by,
Sitting in the Senate, knowing I'm the better guy.
So if you're hoping to capture votes in Dixie,
Reagan and Ford needn't apply.

(So I'm) Sitting in the Senate,
Waiting for my chance
Sitting out the dance,
Watching Jerry Ford go by.

Looking at the White House, I see Jerry Ford and sigh,
Looking at the White House hurts so much I want to cry,
Reagan and Baker are terribly old-fashioned
Not even Ford's modern as I.

(So I'm) Standing on the sidelines
Trying hard to smile,
Knowing all the while
Jerry Ford will pass me by.

Big Jerry's friends sought help from John Dean, dean of the Speech Department. Dean had a simple solution: "Just get a couple of fraternity boys to slip into the professor's office and steal the exam questions." He suggested they call on FBI's Clarence Kelley and the CIA's Bill Colby who are "pretty good at inside jobs."

To the tune of "Siboney," Colby sang:

If you've been demonstrating
Then we've got a file on you!
If you've been congregating
You are in our records, too!
If you go to Havana
We'll catch you in the network
We spread for those who stray.
Night and day
We are filing entries in your dos-si-er!

C-I-A!
All our spies keep their eyes on you while you work and play.
C-I-A!
First we pry, then we lie the C-I-way.
Privacee!
You may not have a lot, but you've got securitee.
As they say:
C-I-A, ev'ry bug still has his day.
Infiltrating,
Machinating
C-I-A.

F-B-I!
We've got files by the miles that Congressmen can't deny.
F-B-I!
Evidence presidents just love to eye.
Civil rights,
Just a few left to you -- must have been an oversight.
Don't know why FBI feels the need to alibi
Key-hole sighting
Memo-writing
F-B-I!
CIA-s okay, and we say hooray, FBI! ... Ole!



Coach Mel Laird then came up with his answer to the problem. He reported that "our richest alumnus, " Nelson Rockefeller, "has just agreed to give the economics department a billion-dollar endowment and a year-long sabbatical for every faculty member provided they let Jerry pass the course. "

But Rockefeller wondered aloud if he was loved for his money "or for myself alone?"

"Being rich can really be a drag, " he lamented, and then sang, to the tune of

"If I Were a Rich Man":

If I were a poor man,
Daidle, deedle, daidle, digguh, digguh, deedle, daidle dum.
I'd sit on my bid-dy- bid-dy bum,
If I were a poor-ish man.

Wouldn't have to work hard,
Daidle, deedle, daidle, digguh, digguh, deedle, daidle dum.
If I were a-biddy, biddy-poor - digguh, digguh, deedle - man.
I'd drive a beat-up Ford with low gas consumption,
No Jerry Ford a-driving me.

Quite grabbing folks to say, "Hi-ya, fe-ell-ah!"
That no-rent Naval shack would suit me just fine and
With food stamps we'd eat almost free.
Fill up on fat-back, turnips and jell-ah.

I'd never have to smile at jokes about dimes,
Or friends at the Chase Manhattan bank.
Any one jokes, I sp-it in his eye.
I'd finance no Gold-berg books; to Kissinger I would give a
stare so cold and blank,
That he'd know I'm an impecunious guy... (sigh)

I see my Happy wearing a Republican cloth coat,
Plastic curlers in her hair.
Thawing casseroles for me ev'ry night.
I see her pushing her own cart in the super-market,
Playing a game of solitaire.
That would be a poor man's wife's delight!

And I would fire my experts, say just what occurs to-o-o me.
Sociologists will test me, like Solomon the Wise,
"If you please, dear Rocky; pardon me, Dear Rocky. "
Asking questions that would cross an egg-head's eyes.
Boi boi boi, boi boi boi, boi boi boi.
And it won't make one bit of diff'rence
If I answer yes or no;
When you're poor they think you really know.

If I were poor I would stop talking about such guff
As the Brotherhood of Man.
I could cut corners on my-y income tax.
And I'd discuss the racing form with the boys out back,
Checking how my horses ran;
If I were on welfare I'd relax.

If I were a poor man,

Daidle, deedle, daidle, digguh, digguh, deedle, daidle, dum.
I'd sit on my biddy, biddy bum,

If I were a poor-ish man...

Wouldn't have to work hard,

Daidle, deedle, daidle, digguh, digguh, deedle, daidle, dum.

Lord, who made the vulture and the bat,

You decreed my wallet should be fat.

Would it spoil some vast eternal plan,

If I were a poor, poor man?

For the closing number the entire Gridiron cast joined hands in singing "You'll Never Walk Alone".

We can walk through the storm with our heads held high,
And not be afraid of the night.
For the stars we have followed
Still ride the sky
And still show us the way back to light.

The times may be hard, the road may be long
But our destiny's our own.
We'll join hands with the rest of the world
And we'll never walk alone
We'll never walk alone.

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file



The Gridiron Club
Washington, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

LUCIAN C. WARREN
1286 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20045

202/737-3188

March 24, 1975

Mrs. Gerald R. Ford
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mrs. Ford:

We did so much enjoy your presence at our Saturday night's Gridiron Club dinner and your very major contribution to the fun of the evening. Because of your participation and that of Mrs. Rockefeller in the initiation skit, I am convinced it will go down in our history as the best initiation skit we ever had.

I hope your medical problem was not aggravated by your presence at the dinner and I want you to know your keen interest in wanting to come and participate in our activities was very much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Lucian C. Warren



March 28, 1975

Dear Mr. Wilson,

How much I appreciated your gracious invitation on behalf of yourself and your colleagues, Clark Mollenhoff and Charles Bailey. Although I was unable to join you for the post-Gridiron Dinner reception, I wanted to convey my gratitude for your special thoughtfulness.

With warmest regards,

Sincerely,

/s/ Betty Ford

Mr. Richard Wilson
The Des Moines Register
Washington Bureau
952 National Press Building
Washington, D. C. 20045

SP/sr

c: Ronald Nessen
Sheila Weidenfeld



(GRIDIRON)

(RELEASE AT 6 PM, EDT)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- PRESIDENT FORD GRITTED HIS TEETH AND PRACTICED GRINNING AT SUCH SONG LINES AS "JERRY'S SKIING WHILE KING FAISAL COUNTS HIS EARNINGS" FOR THE GRIDIRON CLUB'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND ROASTING OF WASHINGTON CELEBRITIES TONIGHT.

THE EVENT MARKED TWO FIRSTS FOR THE CLUB: THE FIRST WOMAN MEMBER -- WHITE HOUSE REPORTER HELEN THOMAS OF UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL -- WAS INITIATED, AND THE WIVES OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT WERE AMONG THE GUESTS AT THE ONCE ALL-MALE WHITE TIE AFFAIR.

BETTY FORD AND HAPPY ROCKEFELLER WERE SLATED TO HELP INITIATE NEW MEMBERS WHO, IN ADDITION TO MISS THOMAS, INCLUDED GODFREY SPERLING OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, DAN THOMASSON OF SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPERS, AND CARROLL KILPATRICK OF THE WASHINGTON POST.

IN A SCHOOL GYMNASIUM ACROSS TOWN, THE JOURNALISTS FOR PROFESSIONAL EQUALITY HELD THEIR SECOND "COUNTER-GRIDIRON," WITH SOME 500 GUESTS WHO WERE TOLD "BLUE JEANS OPTIONAL", AND WHO PAID \$12.50 EACH FOR HOTDOGS AND BEER, BINGO CALLED BY LORNE GREEN AND SEVERAL SENATORS, DART GAMES WITH PICTURES OF VARIOUS VILLAINS, TELEPHONE CALLS WITH MARTHA MITCHELL, AND A NEW ENERGY GAME CALLED CANDLEPOWER PLAYED WITH TREASURY SECRETARY WILLIAM SIMON.

THE COUNTER-GRIDIRON WAS BEGUN LAST YEAR AS A PROTEST AGAINST THE GRIDIRON'S EXCLUSION OF WOMAN MEMBERS. WHEN MISS THOMAS WAS VOTED IN, THE JPE INVITATIONS HAD ALREADY BEEN MAILED SO THE PARTY WAS CONVERTED TO A CELEBRATION AND WENT ON AS SCHEDULED. PROCEEDS OF THE PARTY GO TO THE REPORTERS COMMITTEE FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

AT THE GRIDIRON DINNER IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL, CLUB PRESIDENT LUCIEN WARREN OF THE BUFFALO EVENING NEWS MADE THE TRADITIONAL "SPEECH IN THE DARK" AND REMINDED THE GUESTS "WE CAN REJOICE THAT WE HAVE PROTECTIONS AND SAFEGUARDS" WHICH THE FOUNDING FATHERS DID NOT ENJOY: "WE HAVE THE FBI AND THE CIA, WHO EVEN NOW, WHILE YOU ARE AT THIS DINNER, MAY BE PROTECTING YOU BY INSPECTING YOUR HOME, YOUR MAIL AND YOUR TELEPHONE FACILITIES."

FOLLOWING TRADITION, THERE WAS ONLY ONE TOAST -- TO THE PRESIDENT. FORD'S RESPONSE WAS OFF THE RECORD, AS WERE THE REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER, CONNECTICUT GOV. ELLA GRASSO, AND CHAIRMAN ROBERT STRAUSS OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

THE SHOW HAD A CIRCUS MOTIF, WHICH WARREN SAID REPRESENTED THE THEME THAT WHEN THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO SOLVE THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS IT PUTS ON A CIRCUS.

SKITS LAMPOONED FORD, ROCKEFELLER ("IF I WERE A POOR MAN"), SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER ("WHEELING AND DEALING WITH THREE KINGS OF ORIENT"), WOMEN LIBERATIONISTS ("GIVE ME A HEN WHO'S A STOUT-HEARTED HEN"), CONGRESS ("FORD CAN'T BALK US, WE'LL RULE BY CAUCUS"), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ("WE'VE GOT A LOVELY BUNCH OF COCONUTS), THE ECONOMY ("HOOVER DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN" AND "TRICKLE DOWN, WINSOCKI, TRICKLE DOWN"), AND OTHERS.

UPI 03-22 12:43 PED



(BETTY)

WASHINGTON (UPI) --FIRST LADY BETTY FORD WAS EXPECTED TO SWEAR IN THE SEVEN NEW MEMBERS OF THE GRIDIRON CLUB AT THE CLUB'S ANNUAL DINNER AT THE STATLER HILTON HOTEL SATURDAY EVENING.

MRS. FORD WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. NELSON ROCKEFELLER, WIFE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, TO THE INITIATION CEREMONY.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE WIFE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT AT THE GRIDIRON DINNER IS UNPRECEDENTED IN THE CLUB'S HISTORY. INDUCTED INTO THE CLUB WILL BE THE FIRST WOMAN MEMBER, HELEN THOMAS, UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, ALONG WITH GODFREY SPERLING OF THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR, DAN THOMASON OF SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPER, AND CARROLL KILPATRICK OF THE WASHINGTON POST.

ALSO INITIATED AS LIMITED MEMBERS WERE LT. COL. JACK KLINE, DIRECTOR OF THE MARINE BAND, LT. JOHN BOURGEOIS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR THE BAND, AND PROF. JAMES WARING OF THE CATHOLIC THEATER, DRAMA DEPARTMENT.

UP-121

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UPI 03-21 04:06 PED

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE 90TH ANNUAL GRIDIRON CLUB DINNER HAD A CIRCUS MOTIF BECAUSE, SAID CLUB PRESIDENT LUCIAN WARREN OF THE BUFFALO EVENING NEWS, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO SOLVE THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS IT PUTS ON A CIRCUS.

THE HIGH AND MIGHTY IN GOVERNMENT AND JOURNALISM WERE THERE SATURDAY AND SAW A COUPLE OF HISTORIC FIRSTS ALONG WITH THE USUAL POLITICAL SPOOFERY.

THERE WERE ALMOST AS MANY BIG NAMES ACROSS TOWN AT THE 2ND ANNUAL "COUNTER-GRIDIRON," HELD FOR THE FIRST TIME LAST YEAR TO PROTEST THE GRIDIRON'S EXCLUSION OF WOMEN.

BUT THE VENERABLE ESTABLISHMENT GROUP OF 52 TOP ECHELON JOURNALISTS INDUCTED ITS FIRST WOMAN MEMBER -- HELEN THOMAS OF UPI -- SO THE INFORMAL, DUNGAREE-OPTIONAL COUNTER-AFFAIR WAS BILLED AS A CELEBRATION.

THERE WERE, HOWEVER, LAPEL BUTTONS AT THE COUNTER-GRIDIRON READING: "ONE IS NOT ENOUGH" AND "TOKENS ARE FOR SUBWAYS."

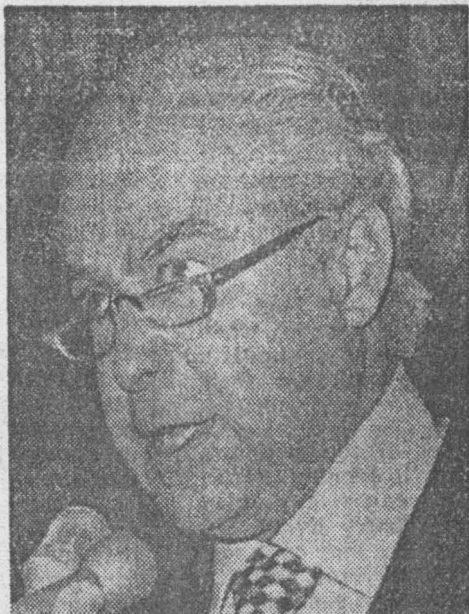
IN ADDITION TO MISS THOMAS' INDUCTION, THE OTHER GRIDIRON FIRST WAS THE APPEARANCE OF BETTY FORD AND HAPPY ROCKEFELLER, THE FIRST OFFICIALS' WIVES TO ATTEND THE ONCE-STAG WHITE-TIE MERRYMAKING.

UPI 03-24 10:29 AED

BETTY BEALE

A Boost For George

Poor George III. His spirit must be fretfully stalking the halls of St. James's Palace and Windsor Castle as the approaching celebration of our Bicentennial brings back the American colonies' grievances against him. There was a moment of hope when Prince Charles recently spoke out and said George III was a much maligned monarch. But, as Pauline Innis, an English-born Washington writer, observed, Americans have been brought up to believe in the tyranny of our colonial ruler and tyrant he shall re-





At the Gridiron Club dinner, Marie Louise Smith, Republican National Committee chairwoman, left; President and Mrs. Helen Thomas, first woman admitted to the club, with David Roc

Counter-Gridiron: Bingo!

By Don Shirley

Why have another counter-Gridiron party? After all, the Gridiron Club finally inducted a woman.

JPE crowd for a framed, original "Doonesbury" comic strip.

Actually people went to this year's counter-Gridiron carnival for the same reason that others went to the Gridi-





Photos by Harry Naltchayan—The Washington Post

Gerald R. Ford; Vice President and Mrs. Nelson Rockefeller and Rockefeller, right.

Mixed Media At the Gridiron

By Henry Mitchell

At good old Hoover U. the question was how to cram Big Jerry with a few answers so he wouldn't flunk economics and thereby miss the Big Game.

President Gerald Ford sat through this cornball dramatic sketch Saturday night at the Statler-Hilton Hotel where the flower of American journalism was blooming forth in its annual spring rite of the Gridiron Club dinner.

The traditionally male club invited a few women to the dinner, including Mrs. Ford and Happy Rockefeller, wife of the Vice President. It was the first time a First Lady has ever attended.

Mr. Ford, as expected, took the ribbing in good nature and answered with a bit of similar levity, winding up with the observation that poking fun at ourselves and our institutions is one of

Ladies Night

By Judy Flander

Washington Star Staff Writer

Helen Thomas pushed a gooey cream pie in Newbold Noyes' face, but other than that, the 90th annual Gridiron dinner was rela-



at the Gridiron



cause I figured I'd better for a white tie event," and was thoughtfully provided with a dressing room of her own to make three costume changes for the skits "because the men will be running around in skivvies."

She is clearly delighted to



cently spoke out and said George III was a much maligned monarch. But, as Pauline Innis, an English-born Washington writer, observed. Americans have been brought up to believe in the tyranny of our colonial ruler and tyrant he shall remain.



Robert Strauss.

or deceitful. You deserve more and indeed the Nation demands more."

Said the First Lady afterwards: "Jerry and I both agree he is really first class. It just sticks out all over him."

ATTORNEY GENERAL ED LEVI'S reaction to the Kissinger skit was an even more surprising outcome of the journalistic banquet. Considered by

That sounds nothing like the fellow we learned about in school.

ROBERT STRAUSS, the Democratic

EMBASSY ROW

From Job to Job to Job

By Joy Billington
Washington Star Staff Writer

Helen Smith, who once served as Mrs. Nixon's White House press secretary, leaves Washington shortly for a post at the U.S. Embassy in London. She and Lucy Winchester, who was Mrs. Nixon's social secretary and now is an assistant chief of Protocol at the State Department,

After an initial announcement that Mrs. Winchester and Mrs. Smith would remain on in the Ford White House, Nancy Lammerding and Sheila Weidenfeld were named to their jobs.

Then for a while, Mrs. Winchester and Mrs. Smith were in limbo.

While Helen Smith wanted a long rest after a hectic last year in the Nixon White House, she was asked by Mrs.



DOHERTY-CAMERAS

SIMON & GREENSPAN FACE OFF IN FRONT OF THE ENERGY BOOTH



Five dollars plus expenses bought a prank phone call from **Martha Mitchell** to the victim of your choice. ("Did you know the CIA is investigating you?" she asked one startled Montana resident.) *Ms.* Editor **Gloria Steinem** turned taxidancer for one \$65 song; off to the side, Washington *Post* Watergate Reporters **Carl Bernstein** and **Bob Woodward** sold