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Last Word

Ear To The Ground

This mid-December afternoon, the Ear detects the rumble of Old Man '76 gasping through his last lap, and the first stirrings of Childe '77.

Here are some optimistic predictions for the twelvemonth ahead—disregarding the doomsday projections of Malthusian midwives who expect 1977 to be stillborn:

* The Labor Party in Britain will label Margaret "Thatcher the Vote Snatcher".

* The million-dollar woman, Barbara Walters, will be interviewed on the 'ABC Evening News' by agents of the IRS.

* Three extraordinary movies will be made in India—one based on the Time story on Indian movies, the other based on the Newsweek story on Indian movies, and the third based on the The New York Times Sunday Magazine story on Indian movies. The star of the last one will be a topless Sardarji.

* Princess Anne will file for separation—from her horse.

* The civil war in Lebanon will end—because there are no buildings left to bomb.

* India's Constitutional Amendments will be amended.

* Lillian Carter will publicly disown the Peace Corps, dysentery, and Vikhroli, Bombay.

* Henry Kissinger will exit from office in early '77. He couldn't have foreseen, when Nix Nixon appointed him Secretary of State, that he was in the Class of '77.

* The international air corridors will be quite quiet, with no Shuttle zooming through them.

* The Arabs will genuflect toward Mecca in relief.

* Nixon's memoirs' sales will be affected by Kissinger's memoirs' sales.

* Jimmy Carter, early on in his Presidency, will be involved in a scandal—his dentures'.

* No one will notice the Emergency in India entering its third year.

* Woodward and Bernstein will publish a new book titled Aftermath. It will contain All The President's Undoers' bank balances.

* All painted fireplugs in America

will be repainted red by livid Fire Departments.

* Arthur C. Clarke ('2001—A Space Odyssey') will have to wait for another 24 years.

* Bicentennial emblems will be symbolically consigned to the flames on Thanksgiving Day.

* Hua Kuo-Feng will order a new coat of whitewash for the Great Wall.

* The dole lines in Sweden will lengthen.

* Takeo Miki will board a Bullet train to oblivion.

* The Beatles will regroup—to deny all rumors of their regrouping.

* Calder Stables will remain rooted to the ground.

* Leonid Brezhnev will contest Krushchev's Last Testament.

* The Wall Street Journal will drop by six points.

* Ian Smith will seek political asylum in Salisbury.

* Buddhism will renounce Thanom Kittikachorn.

* British Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey will jump into the Thames with a Pound Sterling tied to his neck.

* Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands will suffer a recession—in pocket money.

* President d'Estaing of France will write a second book—a guide book on the Elysee Palace.

* The Right Honorable Enoch Powell will threaten to counter continuing Asian immigration into Britain by himself emigrating to Asia.

* Idi Amin will celebrate his Nth wedding by expelling Ugandans from Kampala.

* President Carter will have a new section laid out in the White House garden—a peanut plot.

* The first Martian Earth Probe will touch down at the Kennedy Space Center.

* Faced by supersonic protest, the Concorde will be used to ferry passengers between Dover and Calais.

* CIA and FBI agents will be employed to bug each other.

* The Ear will remain glued to the ground.

CHAITANYA KALBAG