

The year was...

1981

Although New Year's Day of 1981 fell, as it always does, on January 1, hindsight tells us that the curtain rose on this dramatic year on January 20. On that day, former movie actor Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President, and Americans held hostage for over a year in the US embassy in Iran were finally released.

Two months later, the second act commenced as Reagan nearly died at the hands of would-be assassin John Hinckley—a close call that was eerily replayed in the May attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II, and carried to tragic conclusion with the

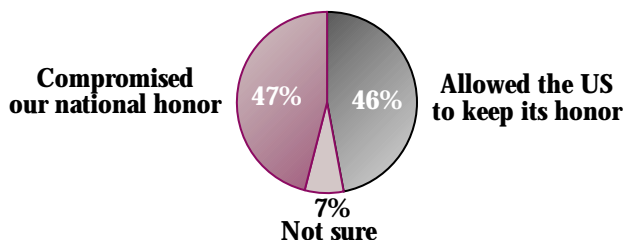
October killing of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Interspersed among these events were other developments of perhaps even greater import for the future: the launching of the PC by IBM; the identification by scientists of the AIDS virus; the successful first flight of a space shuttle; the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court.

In historical terms, 1981 was no more than an eye-blink ago. But by the time the act was rung down in December, the world had changed in ways no one could yet imagine.

—Lisa Ferraro Parmelee

The Price Was High...

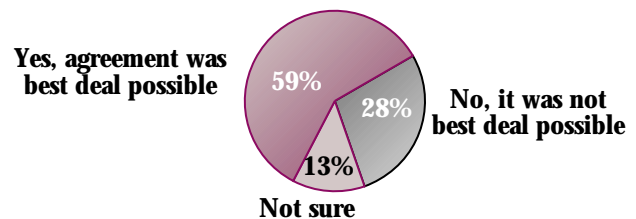
Question: All in all, do you feel the deal made by the United States with Iran to get the hostages back allowed the US to keep its national honor, or do you think the deal compromised our national honor?



Source: Survey by Louis Harris & Associates, January 22-25, 1981.

...But It Had To Be Paid

Question: Do you feel that the agreement reached with Iran to free the American hostages was the best deal possible for the US, or don't you think so?

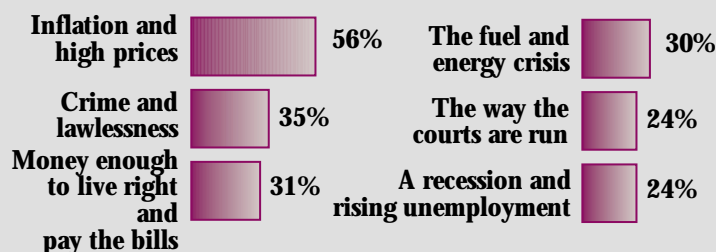


Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, January 21-23, 1981.

None of It's Small Stuff

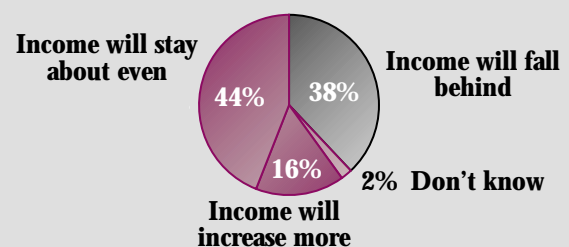
Question: Here is a list of things people have told us they are concerned about today... [W]hich two or three [are] you personally... most concerned about...?

Top mentions



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, January 10-24, 1981.

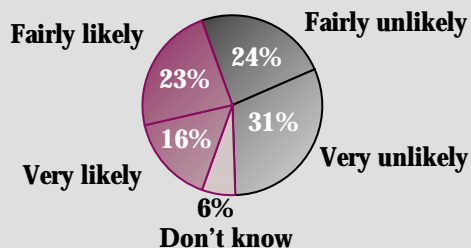
Question: A year from now, do you expect that your family income will have increased more than prices, stayed about even, or will it have fallen behind?



Source: Survey by Opinion Research Corporation, August 7-16, 1981.

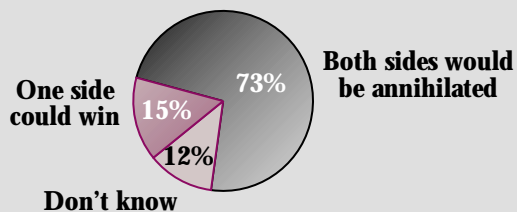
We're Still Here

Question: How likely do you think it is that the US and Russia will become involved in a nuclear war some time in the next five to ten years—very likely, fairly likely, fairly unlikely, or very unlikely?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, December 5-12, 1981.

Question: Do you think it would be possible for one side to win a nuclear war, that is, come out of it as a functioning country with a reasonable size population, or do you think both sides would be annihilated?



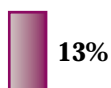
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, December 5-12, 1981.

Going Too Far

Question: There are a number of things that have changed rather drastically over the past 20 years.... [T]ell me whether you'd like to see continued advances and developments on...[item] in the future, or whether you think we've gone as far as we should on it now, or whether we've already gone too far on it now?...

Percent saying gone as far as should or gone too far now

Biological and medical engineering to improve or correct defects in human beings



Advanced weaponry (missiles, etc.)



Compact computers for home use



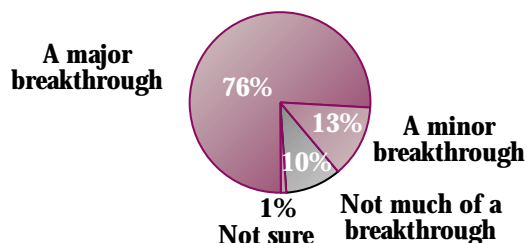
Automated and self-service shopping facilities (self-service food markets, gas stations, automated banking, etc.)



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, August 15-22, 1981.

NASA Still Riding High

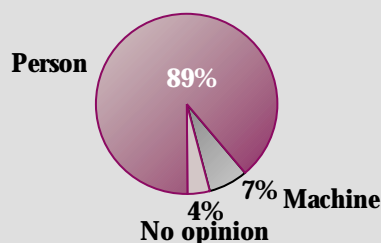
Question: Do you feel the recent success of launching the US space shuttle and then getting it back to a safe landing on earth was a major breakthrough for US technology and know-how, a minor breakthrough, or not much of a breakthrough?



Source: Survey by Louis Harris & Associates, May 5-10, 1981.

Get Over It

Question: If you had a choice between doing business with a teller in a bank or a computerized machine that does the teller's job, would you prefer to do business with the person or the machine?



Source: Survey by Audits & Surveys for Merit, December 27-30, 1981.