

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Inauguration spells time for new hope

You don't have to be a liberal or even a Democrat to be proud of your country this week.

Our new president embodies everything that this nation stands for: hard work, independence, human rights for all.

Go ahead and disagree with his policies if you like. This newspaper has and probably will again. No president is perfect.

Barack Obama takes office amidst a euphoric time of high expectations and good will.

He faced crises foreign and domestic as he stepped up to take the oath. It was most of a year before Sept. 11 befell George W. Bush.

The new president does not face the worst of times: Terrorism is less of a threat today than it was eight years ago, the nation's two wars seem mostly won and the economy, while down, is nowhere near a depression.

That doesn't mean the country does not face tough choices. All the billions for bailouts meant to keep big corporations afloat will have to be paid for by someone. So will social programs and the continuing wars.

Soon, the threat will be inflation, not stagnation. But you'd imagine we can deal with that.

President Obama brings an aura of leadership and likability to office that his predecessor lacked. His engaging personality lights up the room when he arrives, and he's able to project that on stage or on television.

Whether he can translate that to true leadership, we'll find out. It won't be easy. John Kennedy found that out; his programs mostly stalled in Congress until after his death. It was only years later that the world really appreciated how he had faced down the Russians over Cuba.

Still, Mr. Obama has fulfilled the dream that sparked our bloody Civil War, (nearly half a million dead), the long years of reconstruction and segregation, the civil rights movement and the dawn of American acceptance for human diversity.

It may be ironic that he grew up largely outside what we think of as the "black experience" in America, but there is no doubt that his skin color and heritage represent a true shift in this nation. We will not go back to the way things were before.

That does not mean that the battle for human rights is over or that Dr. Martin Luther King's dream has been realized. Many battles will be fought in the days and years ahead. Many people would like to take our rights — not just those of minorities, but of all Americans — in the name of security, progress or peace.

But it does mean that those soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice in a string of battles from Charleston Harbor to Normandy and beyond, did not die in vain.

The American dream is alive and well. After 230 years, the foresight of the Founding Fathers, particularly in the Bill of Rights, never seemed greater. The promise of the future never seemed brighter.

We wish Mr. Obama good luck and Godspeed. The arena has a way of tarnishing even the brightest star, but we can only hope — all of us — that he lives up to his promise.

— Steve Haynes

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Righty, Lefty short on conversation

"You should sew eyes on them," Sherry said.

Vicky just giggled at my sock-covered hands.

Hey guys, this is serious medicine. I'm taking care of my winter-chapped, wind-burned, sore fingers.

OK, they're right. My hands, covered with a pair of Steve's tan socks, do look a little like sock puppets without any adornment.

I knew I had to do something when I got the crack in my finger and I couldn't get it healed. I put bandages on it, but they'd get wet and I'd toss them and pretty soon I'd notice a bloody fingerprint on something. The crack was bleeding again.

I'm sort of a slow learner. It took more than a week before I decided that just covering up the wounds and putting on hand lotions were not going to work.

I remembered an old pharmacist's trick. Slather your hands with petroleum jelly and put an old pair of cotton gloves or socks on before you go to bed. Do this for several days, and your hands will be nice and soft — and hopefully — healed.

So, I dug around until I found the jar of petroleum jelly I had gotten a year or so ago to



Cynthia Haynes

- Open Season

medicate one of the cats.

That's an old veterinarian's trick. You put some petroleum jelly on the end of a cotton swab and touch the pill, which then sticks to the petroleum jelly. You pry open the cat's mouth and shove the pill down as far as you can. Hopefully, you live through the experience and the pill gets far enough down that it stays.

I tried this a couple of times. The cat won, so I pried her jaws open and shoved the dang pill down her throat with my finger. She swallowed, and the bites healed in a couple of weeks.

Anyway, after getting the petroleum jelly, I rummaged around in Steve's sock drawer for the oldest, crummiest socks he had. I should have gone down to the laundry and picked up a couple of mismatches, but that's hindsight.

What I got was a somewhat worn pair of tan fuzzies.

The only problem was it was 8:30 a.m. and I was going to Concordia to see my mother. Since it takes three hours to get there, I figured, I might as well give my hands their first application of "medicine" while I was driving. After all, who would know or care.

I forgot about the stop in Norton. That's where I got tripped up. I couldn't take off the socks since my hands were as slippery and messy as greased pigs.

The girls got a good laugh out of the deal and it wasn't such a bad thing for me either. I named my hands Righty and Lefty and had a nice conversation with them over the next 2 1/2 hours.

Well, maybe not a conversation. They didn't say much, but they nodded in all the right places and were wonderful listeners.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

Spend taxes on health care, not Iraq

To the Editor:

The *Colby Free Press* on Jan. 8 announced that Gov. Kathleen Sebelius would assess the state budget in her televised State of the State address on Jan. 13, and I watched her do that.

In the *Free Press* of Jan. 15, in the Opinion column, The *Wichita Eagle* comments that the governor's speech avoids money issues. Most surprising, she offered not a word on behalf of health care reform, which has been her top issue for several years.

I noticed that Gov. Sebelius mentions that "Medicaid is the largest expenditure in the state budget." In the past, she had proposed that the federal government should pay for Kansas Medicaid.

Where is all that money going that ordinary citizens can't have health care? Instead of "nation building" in Iraq and other countries, let us have that money going to nation building in the United States. We need that money to repair roads and bridges so that our food and products can be traded here in America and cut out some of that bacteria we are getting in our food supplies from other countries.

Children of all ages are in dire need of education if this country is to survive.

George W. Bush could be tried in World Court for violation of the Geneva Convention. Torture is a war crime. He made a bad choice when he selected Dick Cheney for vice president.

The citizens of this country — the poor and the middle class — are so busy trying to keep up with living expenses that they don't have time to be aware of the maneuvers of Washington. For example, the cost of the Iraq war is not listed in the federal budget; when more money is granted for ...the "nation-building of Iraq," it is taken out of some other fund. At one time it was called "the Rainy Day Fund" by some in Congress. Yes, that's right — the Social Security Trust Fund. If Congress has a contingency



Free Press Letter Drop

- Our readers sound off

fund, which successful businesses keep, I've never heard of it.

When George W. Bush gave "tax cuts," most



HEARTLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The Heartland Crusaders cheerleaders: (back row, from left) Alexi Regier, Brittany Bear, Ariel Regier, Abbie Reed, Megan Bear, and (front row) Kirsten Bandy, Danyelle Mazanec, Tiffany Wilson and Reiley Wilson.

Cheerleaders thank fire department

To the Editor:

The Heartland Christian School Crusaders cheerleaders would like to thank the Colby Fire Department for the use of a fire truck for our first Homecoming pep rally. The theme

was "Firing up the Crusaders for a Victory." The weather was turning cold and snowing, but we persevered and had a lot of fun.

The Heartland Cheerleaders

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

