

Will Obama govern like idols before him?

The election of Barack Obama as president is a watershed, a turning point in American history in so many ways. The fact that voters worried far more about the way the country was going than they did about race or religion speaks volumes about how far this nation has come since the Civil Rights era less than 50 years ago.

In 1960, it seemed unimaginable that we could have a Roman Catholic president, despite the fact that the Roman Catholic church was the largest denomination in the country. It simply had never happened.

How long ago, how far away that seems today.

Now, we have a black president elect with a Muslim name — though it's considered impolite to stress that fact.

Even one short decade ago, who could have imagined.

And the country is looking for President Obama to lead them out of the wilderness.

But that's just part of the story.

Coming as it does at a similar time of economic and social crisis, this election marks an opportunity for the Democratic party that comes but once or twice a century. The only comparable times for the Democrats came with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, at the height of the Great Depression, and of Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Under Roosevelt, with majorities in Congress, the party moved to remake the American system, instituting Social Security, union-friendly labor laws, vast new social programs and a belief that the government could solve our every problem.

FDR's legacy is with us even today, when we look to a new president to lead us out of similar problems, though this crisis — so far — is neither as deep nor as permanent as the one he faced.

Lyndon Johnson, in his first term, seemed to be able to do no wrong. In a session, he passed a bundle of New Frontier welfare programs that had languished when John F. Kennedy was alive.

The combination of sympathy for the slain president and Johnson's persuasive powers and knowledge of the Congress was too much for conservatives to resist. He steamrolled the opposition, just as he plowed through the noble but out-of-place Barry Goldwater.

His majority, itself of historic proportions, blinded President Johnson to the growing malaise that would drive him from office. The dissatisfaction with the Vietnam War and the loss of American lives viewed nightly on television news would hang around to haunt him.

In the end, he squandered his mandate, had few concrete accomplishments in his second term and left a beaten man.

The Republicans, perhaps, had a similar opportunity after the reign of Ronald Reagan. Having vanquished the Soviet Union, ended the Cold War and tamed inflation, the GOP could have reshaped the government in its image.

Instead, it left us with a legacy of even larger deficits, a bloated and out-of-control bureaucracy, a corrupt Congress dedicated only to its own re-election and two wars of uncertain need and purpose.

Instead of an Abraham Lincoln, a Theodore Roosevelt or another Ronald Reagan, the Republicans gave us two George Bushes. You might say they blew the opportunity.

But perilous times make great presidents. Only time will tell how history views Barack Obama, or even George W. Bush.

We can say today, though, that it will be a fascinating four years.

— Steve Haynes

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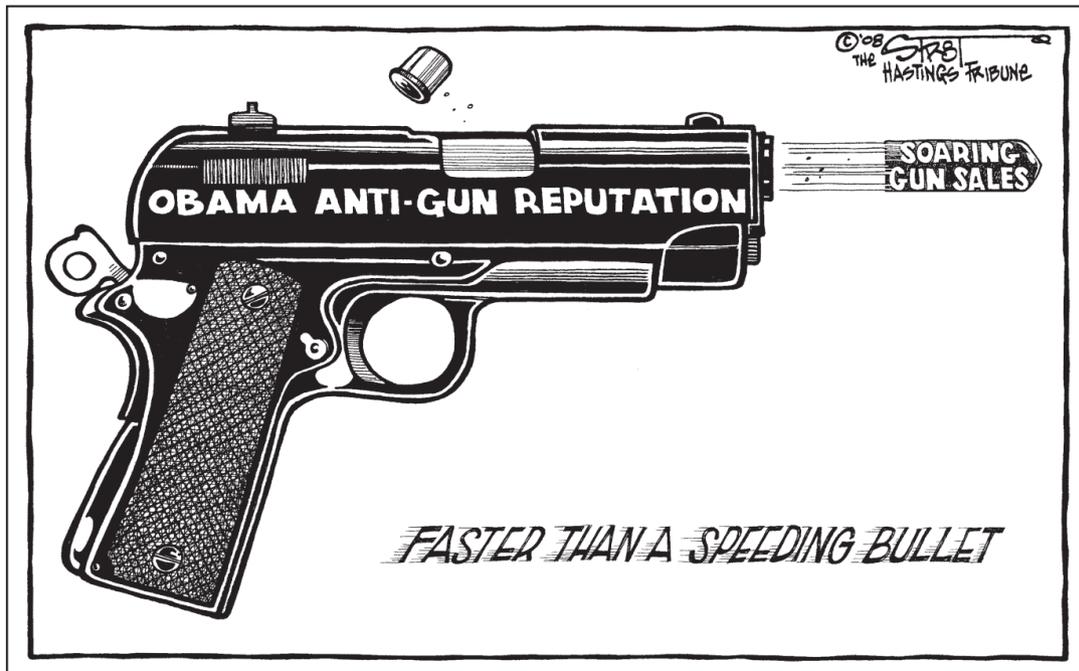
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Time once again to count our blessings

Our family has a Thanksgiving tradition. Before our very traditional turkey dinner (no lasagna or steak for us) we hold hands in a circle and everyone shares what they are thankful for.

Without exception, we are all thankful for family — warts and all. It is family that holds it all together. It's what makes us drive 650 miles to be together. It's what draws us to wherever the others are. It's being with the people we love most. It's having more fun with them than we have anywhere else. Ani, our little two-year old granddaughter, might not be able to articulate her thoughts, but we're sure thankful for her. There's nothing like a

Sound off

Yeager's letter a real belly buster

Over many years, I have often gotten a smile and even a chuckle over Right Wing Yeager's pious pontificates.

I got a belly buster laugh reading his epistle published on Friday, Nov 21.

I have not heard or read such goblygook since Artie Shelton quit writing.

I publicly apologize to Artie.

Dave Browne II
Norton

These coaches deserve praise

I am thanking the coaches of the sixth grade football team, for taking the time to coach us and get us ready for our games.

All of us learned a lot over the four years you have coached us. You guys make football funner when we play running games instead of doing sprints.

The coaches are Darren Campbell, Toby Kuhn, Kelly Karnopp and Steve Whitney.

Nic Koch
Norton

Dog owners need more control

I'm writing here to spread awareness about the dog crisis in Norton. I deliver papers for The Norton Telegram and have been bitten once and not able to deliver several times because of aggressive dogs running off their leashes.

My family has dealt with dog bites before because my sister has been bitten twice.

Owners should keep dogs on leashes when they walk their dogs and keep up on their dogs rabies shots, so if the dog does bite someone the dog keeps its head attached. (To check for rabies, the dog is put to sleep, the head cut off and their brain tested for rabies.)

If the head is tested positive, then the person bitten is given many painful shots. If the dog has had its rabies shots, the dog lives and the person gets only one shot. (A tetanus shot.)

I hope this letter raises awareness about dog control.

Leif Carlson
Norton

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



taking the baby to bed with them was the only way for anyone in the family to get any sleep. I can appreciate her position. I was fortunate enough to be a stay-at-home mom when I had newborns. And, I didn't have to be anywhere but the kitchen at 8 a.m.

-ob-

Jim's dad is still in a long-term care facility following his accident several months ago which caused the loss of his left leg. His overall health is very good and he is working hard to be ready for his artificial leg. Measurements have been taken and he's already had one fitting. It's exciting for him to consider the possibility of being upright, again. He doesn't expect to be anywhere but the kitchen at 8 a.m.

-ob-

My sister-in-law, Mary, sent me a list of advantages to growing older. I like this one: "There's nothing left to learn the hard way." That's not to say there're no mistakes left to be made. But, by the time you've reached my age, the list has certainly been whittled down a lot.

-ob-

We pray that you and your family have a safe and blessed Thanksgiving. Amen.

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



Thanksgiving prep demands proper focus

This is the season — to be Thankful! I found myself about to become the Thanksgiving Scrooge. Because for me it is easy to lose focus on what this holiday is all about. Instead I was myself thinking about how I had to shop, clean house, cook, entertain house guests all weekend etc.

There is a wedding looming in the background. The eldest daughter compares it to getting ready for the county fair. Remember how we might still be sewing in a hem on the way to town, but we still got it all done?

Apparently she remembers this fondly, maybe even with a sense of gratitude. I am having nightmares involving a sewing machine in the narthex as the Bride prepares to walk down the aisle.

I made a Thanksgiving list. It wasn't about what I am thankful for. It was what meals I was going to cook, and what food I needed to buy and the cleaning that had to be done.

I spent a fair amount of time grumbling: about the how I hate to cook a turkey (love to eat it though), the ones on my guest list who never reciprocate, and about how no one helps me (though I readily admit I can't give up CONTROL).

About the time I decided to just serve a lot of wine and hope no one notices the rest of the mess, I talked to a friend in my graduating class. She was preparing to go to Texas for the winter. She and her husband are Snowbirds. "How could this be?" I queried, "We are too young to be retired!"

Her reply, " know, I JUST THANK GOD EVERY DAY, I never thought I'd get to do something like this!"

In the days hence, her words have come back to me again and again. And I ask myself, what do I thank God for everyday?

Ouch. My main prayer is often, "Get me through this Lord. Amen."

Some ladies were discussing funeral dinners recently. Should it be invite the congregation or only family and maybe out-of-towners if there is no restaurant in town? One lady said her husband thought everyone should get a meal. Another said, "He's never cooked a funeral dinner, has he?"

The church I attended as a bride had a very stringent attitude about who should attend funeral dinners, which in fairness has evolved considerably over the years. I carried it with me until my Mother died.

I was so grateful for the meal our church provided and for the friends who were there. As I have been able, I always volunteer to help with funeral dinners. I volunteer at that church we attended in our early years of marriage, although it is not now our church.

I do because I don't mind doing it; because someone did it for me and I am ever so grateful. I do it because I can do it without begrudging doing it.

I wish I could say that is why I'm doing Thanksgiving. I'm working on it! Everyday I cross something off my list. Not because I got it done. Because I decided how important is it? Not to worry, I already have wine!

I'm working on another list. Things to thank God for EVERYDAY! That I have these people in my life who want to come be with us! That I have money to buy this excessive amount of food! That our house is big enough (almost) to have house guests and provide them with a measure of comfort. That we live in a country that sets aside a day to remind us of what we ought to do everyday: GIVE THANKS!

'Tis the season.....
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