

commentary

from other pens...

Presidential memoirs, a last wave from plane

By Lawrence L. Knutson

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — After the inaugural hopes and the gritty, harried reality of governing, there comes a quieter time for former presidents to take their own measure.

The modern presidential memoir amounts to a final after-action report, a symbolic last wave from Air Force One. Profitable too: Bill Clinton is collecting more than \$10 million for writing his.

Harry S. Truman is said to have derived much of his post-presidential income from book sales. Richard Nixon is said to have received a \$1 million advance for his autobiography, "RN," published 23 years ago. Jimmy Carter has made autobiography and book writing an essential part of his successful post-presidential career.

Truman thought much had been lost "because so few of our presidents told their own stories."

"It would have been helpful for us to know what was in their minds and to know what impelled them to do what they did," Truman wrote in "Year of Decisions," his memoirs of his life as president during the year after Franklin D. Roosevelt's death.

FDR was never given time to write a memoir of his New Deal policies or his World War II leadership. Neither were other 20th century presidents including Warren G. Harding, Woodrow Wilson, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

Except for Reagan, afflicted by Alzheimer's disease, all the presidents since FDR's time have produced an account of their presidential stewardship. Some started by wondering about their qualifications for the job, while others expressed self-confidence.

"I was convinced in my own mind that I was not qualified to fill the exalted office of president," Calvin Coolidge wrote in 1929.

"I'm not the sort of person who is torn by self-doubt," Gerald R. Ford said a half-century later. "And I had no doubts about my ability to function well in the office."

"No living mortal has ever possessed all the required qualifications," Lyndon B. Johnson concluded after his stormy presidency failed to shake itself free from the war in Vietnam.

Nixon's memoirs show how a scandal can consume a presidency. At the end of its more than 1,000 pages, Nixon, having admitted to a mistake in judgment in the Watergate cover-up, has resigned and is walking out of the White House for the last time.

"There was no talk; There were no tears left," Nixon writes of the moments the presidential helicopter climbs past the Washington Monument. "I leaned my head back against the seat and closed my eyes. I heard Pat saying to no one in particular, 'It's so sad. It's so sad.'"

In 1979, after completing Nixon's term, Ford groped for explanations in his own memoir, "A Time to Heal."

Nixon's "pride and personal contempt for weakness had overcome his ability to tell the difference between right and wrong," Ford wrote. "He viewed admitting the truth in this matter as a sign of weakness, and that was another mistake."

Many 19th century presidents kept diary notes.

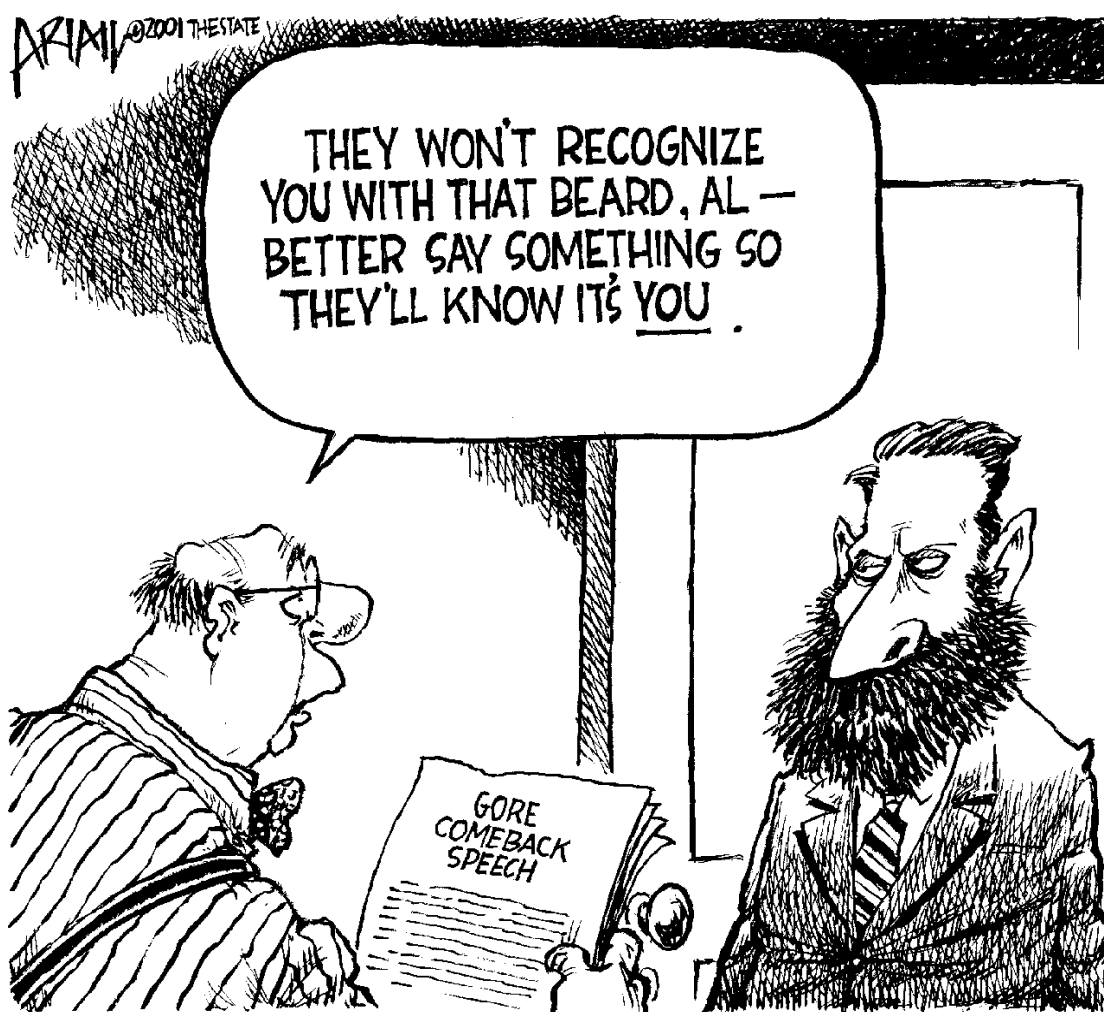
The first true White House memoir is the volume produced in 1866 by embittered former President James Buchanan to justify his passive role in the breakup of the federal Union and the onset of Civil War.

Writing in 1952, 20 years after he lost to FDR, a bitter Herbert Hoover refused to accept blame for the Great Depression and accused Roosevelt of fostering a policy of collectivization akin to communism.

While former presidents can remember their days of power they cannot wield it, a fact with which Theodore Roosevelt was fully familiar by the time he produced his own memoirs.

"Every shred of power which a president exercises while in office vanishes absolutely once he has left office," Roosevelt wrote.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lawrence L. Knutson has covered the White House, Congress, and Washington's history for more than 30 years.



Surplus of sharks? Nah, a shark reserve in Florida

Isn't American capitalism great? The enviros have given us gas prices on the moon and now they have a surplus of sharks on Florida's beaches.

There are so many sharks along the resort beaches in Florida that the romp and stomp ecounuts can't skinny dip.

But you polluters will wind up in the slammer if you snag too many.

Wonder if that's anything like a shark reserve?

Think so, when you have a reserve you always have surpluses. Even the Peoples Republic of China knows that. They are creating a grain reserve before joining the World Trade Organization.

Doesn't matter. Now the enviros could declare Florida's beaches a wetland and turn it into a national park. Bet they would use Agriculture Department funds to hire more shark rangers. Nah there already are hundreds. There are 10 feet long bull shark-rangers, hammerhead-rangers. Even nurse sharks-rangers, and they are meaner than a mama bear with a sore paw, if anyone comes close to her teddy shark.

We know there is global warming, you can't see it but we know it is happening. If we don't do something now it will be too late. But it doesn't take a shark expert...even an enviro can see there are too many. An eight year old boy's arm had to be surgically reattached after it was retrieved from the



wayne gattshall

• wayne's world

gullet of a bull shark.

If we don't talk sensibly we can't act sensibly. When you cross an enviro with politicians the endangered specie is people. They say don't blame the sharks, man has invaded it's world.

They say pipe lines or transmission poles are incompatible with our God made pristine woods. Only a eco-proff would vouch for such foolishment.

It is amazing how those rich guys like to say how the Joe Six Packs should live.

For them fasting is godly when the other guys do it. They fear the ozone layer more than the corporate cartels of meat IBPConAgra, and Cargil-Continental Grain corporations, of grain.

In their sanctified wisdom enviros know how to do everything from cleaning up Chesapeake Bay to forest fires in Idaho. Say who put forest fires out before the white guys came along? But in less than five minutes they like to tell the homosapiens what they should do in what they can fly over America.

Well there is civilization out there and there is plenty of clean air and water, too. You won't have to buy bottled water. We don't have enough arsenic in our water to endanger the monarch butterfly. Just bring your bare essentials of cell phones and videos that may not be intellectual. We don't have to drink arsenic water from some toxic dump along the Potomac. Come out here the Indians are all gone. They are all in Congress, nowadays.

That's unfair the enviro-nuts would never work for \$16,000 a year. According to a C-span report that is what the average farm income was last year.

You know there was an election in 2000 and someone lost. When gas cost \$3.00 and there might be rolling blackouts in California the enviros up there in places like Vermont are being isolated. In fact they are squealing like someone who took his money out of the stock market to buy a herd of cattle, that had mad cow disease.

Clearly, there are more shark attacks and you can't ignore global warming, so you see there just are too many people. But don't you mess with the woods ah's...I mean, the beach the way God made it.

Come to think of it these fancy guys sure know how to turn a silk purse into a sow's ear.

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Pretexters are breaking the law

Dear Kansas Consumers:

In the past, I have addressed the issue of identity theft: what it is, how to protect yourself, and what to do if you are a victim. It is vitally important in this day and age to protect your personal identification and information, just as you would for your home, car, savings, and investments.

To people known as "pretexters," personal information is an asset they can use or sell to steal your identity. Pretexting is against federal law, but the best way to protect yourself is to not fall prey to a pretexter in the first place.

Pretexters use a variety of tactics to get your personal information. They can pose as representatives of survey firms, Internet service providers, banks, and even government agencies to get the information they want from you.

When pretexters have the information, it can then be used to contact your financial institution in order to gain access to your account. At that point, the pretexter may be able to acquire other personal information such as your Social Security number, bank and credit card account numbers, information in your credit report, and the existence and size of your savings and investment portfolios. Once this information is obtained, it is easy for the pretexter to steal your identity or sell the information to an identity thief.



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act states that it is illegal for anyone to participate in any of the following practices:

- to use false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or documents in order to get customer information from a financial institution or directly from a customer of a financial institution;
- to use forged, counterfeit, lost or stolen documents in order to get customer information from a financial institution or directly from a customer of a financial institution; or
- to ask another person to get someone else's customer information using documents which are false, fictitious, fraudulent, forged, counterfeit, lost, or stolen.

While the law is there to protect you, it is wise to take an active role in protecting your own information. Never give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact.

Know the policies of your financial institutions regarding the sharing of information and pretexting.

Use passwords to protect your accounts from access by unauthorized individuals, and make sure the passwords are not easily obtainable. Do not use passwords such as your mother's maiden name, your birthdate, or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

Be mindful of where you leave personal information in your home, especially if you have roommates or are having work done in your home by others.

If you feel you have fallen victim to pretexting or identity theft, please contact my Consumer Protection division by calling toll-free, 1-800-432-2310.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints.

For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject of your inquiry with the receptionist and an agent will return your call promptly.

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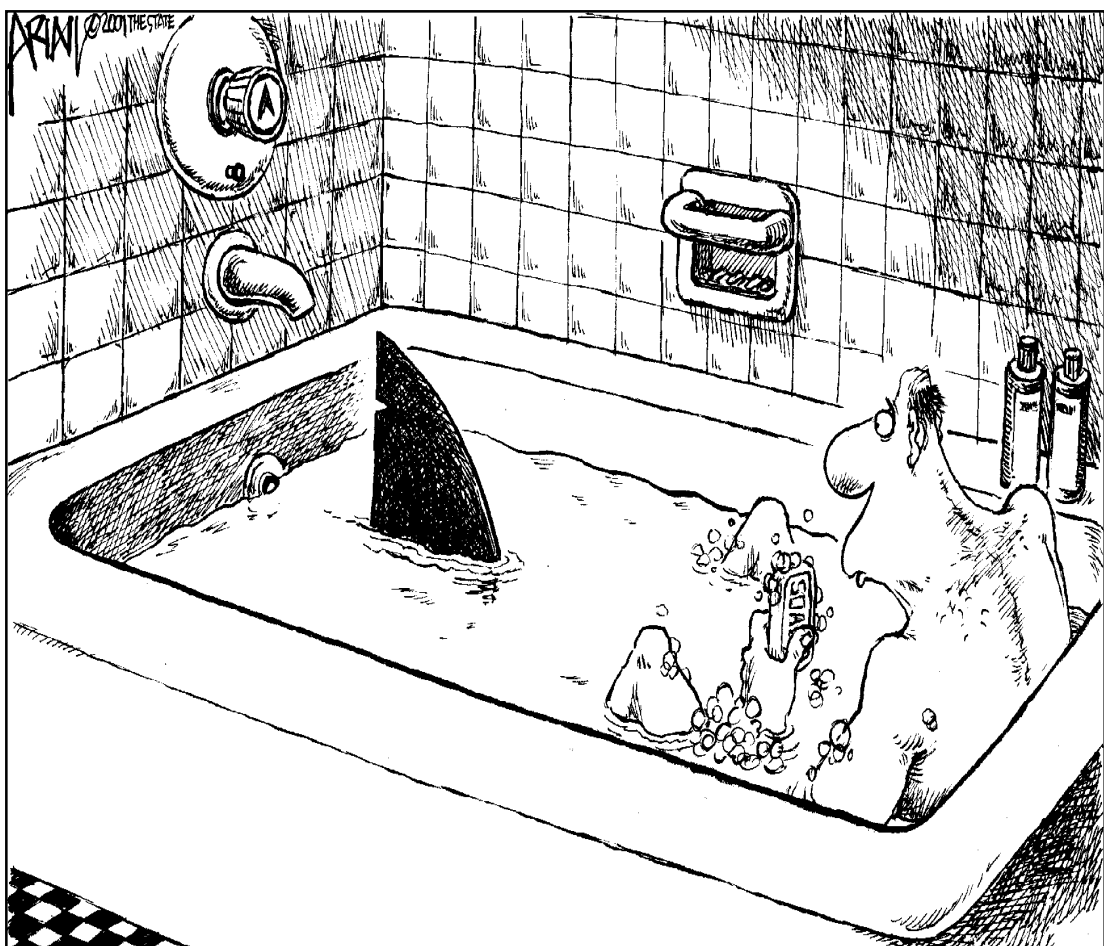
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