

from our viewpoint...

History being made; challenges a plenty

President Obama will have plenty to think about after he takes office in January.

His inauguration will be a momentous and historic occasion, marking the first time a member of any "minority" group has become president.

In many ways, it marks the end of not one era, but many: slavery, segregation, civil rights, the fading of race as a major issue in American society.

But as the celebration dies down, the new president will have to turn to face his problems, and they are legion.

The world's economy is in as perilous a condition as it has been since Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1932.

After dealing with crises in credit, banking and finance, the government turned around to find the U.S. auto industry dying at its doorstep.

Should the new president save General Motors? Is it a keystone of the system, or just a dinosaur that should be allowed to perish?

If GM goes, will Ford or Chrysler or any of the thousands of parts makers who depend on Detroit make it, or will the entire industry go down the tubes, leaving us at the mercy of foreign brands?

These are not questions to ask lightly. The cost of error will be high. To let the entire auto industry collapse might threaten the very foundation of the U.S. economy. But at the same time, the government is running out of money to save any skin but its own.

Congress is debating \$25 billion for Detroit, but GM alone may need more.

Nor is it just the U.S. economy the new president will have to worry about. Japan has slipped into recession already, somewhat ahead of the U.S. China, India and the rest of Asia may not be far behind. So might Europe.

The world is suffering. Predictions that the economy will recover in 2009 or 2010 seem wan in the light of GM's problems, and Japan's.

Then President Obama will have to reconcile his promises with the reality on the ground in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

He may well be able to start bringing more troops home from Iraq. Experts say the war there is all but over. Afghanistan is another matter. Afghanistan is a sinkhole for foreign troops. Just ask the Russians.

Our early success there belies the fact that we have not eliminated the Taliban or run al Qaida to the ground. They are resurgent, resupplying and resting in Pakistan to continue their attacks on NATO forces.

Yet it may not be a simple matter of shifting forces from the Mideast to Afghanistan. As we did in Iraq, we may need to rethink the entire plan in the mountainous Asian nation. Just moving troops will take months.

There are many books to read about this war-torn land, but watch sometime — if you can find it — the screen adaptation of Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King." Then rent "Charlie Wilson's War."

For President Obama, the celebrations will last a few days. The trials will begin soon after.

Envy not the new president. We'll soon see how well he lives up to the comparisons to Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy and Martin Luther King. — Steve Haynes



A few tips to avoid new scams

Someone handed the office manager a sheet of paper on how to avoid e-mail hoaxes and scams. They wanted us to publish it.

That's not the sort of thing we publish. We do local news — school board, sports teams, harvest, festivals, clubs, babies, you name it. We cover our towns, not the world.

But, I do get a lot of e-mails and have had to change my address twice in the last few years in the hopes of escaping some of them. So, I wasn't adverse to looking over the page and passing on a few tips, especially since the cats have been unaccountably well behaved this week.

I hope everyone remembers the one big sign of a fraud — be it e-mail, or Moses Pray (Ryan O'Neal) selling Bibles to widows in the movie Paper Moon: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. People don't give you money, and if they ask for money, run, do not walk away.

Here are seven telltale signs of a scam:
 • You don't know the person who sent you the message or you don't recognize the address.
 • You are promised something



cynthia haynes

• open season

- with little or no effort on your part.
- You are asked to give money or personal information, such as Social Security or bank account number.
- The request has a close time line. You must do something right now.
- The sender wants to remain anonymous or have the information remain confidential.
- The sender offers to send you proof of their legitimacy. What they would send is fake.
- Look at the e-mail address. Do they say they're from the government but have a .com address?
- Don't even open up an e-mail from someone you don't know. You wouldn't open your door to a stranger. (Well, maybe you would

out here in northwest Kansas, but, not if you lived in a city.)

You've put yourself on a no-call list. You've requested that the post office not send you junk mail. You don't bring garbage into your home and dump it. So why would you allow just any stranger into your home via the Internet.

If you start to get too much "spam," you can change your address. It's not a perfect solution, but you can send your friends and business associates the new address and be (relatively) spam free for a while, or you can continue to wade through hundreds of requests for money, offers of loans and pitches for everything from hot chicks from Russia to male and/or female enhancements.

If you do change your address, remember not to sign up for "hot" offers, sign up for "free" vacations or visit shaky-sounding websites. These will get your address, sell it to spammers and then — you'll have to change it again.

Your choice.

Republicans need to clean house

Congressman Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., spoke for millions of Republicans on election night when he told Fox News, "We need a housecleaning in our party, and we need a party that's going to go and tackle problems facing the American people. Take our timeless principles and apply them to today's problems and be the reform party we used to be."

Sen. John McCain and the Republican Party took a drubbing on Election Day because the Republicans lost their way. President George W. Bush and the Republican congressional leadership transformed a party of conservative principles and reform into the party of earmarks and big government.

Sen. McCain's efforts to belatedly transform into the candidate of reform had a hollow ring after he raced back to Washington to lock arms with the Democrats to squander 700 billion tax dollars on a Wall Street bailout which hasn't worked.

Newt Gingrich and the rebels that secured the majority in congress for Republicans in 1994 are mostly retired and gone. Their replacements are weak and ineffective and a full-scale Republican Party overhaul is imperative. We must return to a principled and reform-minded agenda similar to that embodied in the bold 1994 Contract with America.

Michael Reagan, the broadcaster and elder son of President Reagan is organizing an effort to shake up the GOP party leadership. He wrote on his website www.reaganaction.com to party activists saying: "It's official: America has its first truly Socialist president... and it's the Republican Party's fault. No, scratch that — it's the so-called "leaders" of the GOP who are at fault for this humiliating defeat — and I say it's time to name names and make heads roll in our party."

Reagan lays fault at the feet of congressional Republicans that were elected as conservatives and quickly dumped the reform agenda in exchange for the fat earmarks and pork handed out for going along with the corrupt system.

He calls on the current Republican members of Congress to stand tall against the agenda of President-elect Obama and the liberal Democrats. And if they won't



floyd, mary brown

• commentary

fight, Reagan also calls upon these leaders to resign and get out of the way.

Obama did not receive a mandate to govern to the far left. His campaign promises of tax cuts and fiscal discipline put him clearly in the political center, and only a vigorous Republican opposition will provide a counterweight to the left-wing activists that will attempt to push the new administration to the left.

Now is not a time to give Obama a free ride and a period without opposition. A honeymoon phase is a tradition that Republicans can ill afford. Too much damage could be done. America is still a conservative country. As Gary Bauer pointed out about the exit polls, "44 percent of voters identified themselves as

"moderates" and 34 percent identified as "conservatives." Just 22 percent called themselves "liberal." We've clearly got a lot of work to do, but that's a pretty good foundation for us to build upon!"

Americans abandoned the Republican Party and President Bush for the same reason they abandoned his father. They were promised a government of conservative values and they were the victims of a bait-and-switch. President Bush gave voters deficits and government overspending. Republicans must learn to govern as they promise as advocates of lower taxes and smaller government in addition to strong defenses and family values.

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