

from our viewpoint...

Election is over; rhetoric continues

Now that the election is behind us, every talking head and pounding pen will be telling us what it means. No, they already are. Liberal commentators, which is most of them on television and at big newspapers, news magazines and in public broadcasting, know the nation continues on the road to ruin. The vile Republicans will lead us to financial and foreign disaster, just as they have the last four years. But, hey, their side lost. Conservatives, at newspapers, on talk radio and a few to-kens on television, will say the vote was a victory for moral values and tax cutting. They won, but only by 3 percent. This is no mandate. It's going to take more than five votes in the Senate to get much done. Democrats will still try to block President George Bush's judicial appointments, and their votes and cooperation will be needed to get anything passed. GOP leaders can't run the House with the iron fist speakers of yore used. Sam Rayburn has been dead for years. Our own Rep. Jerry Moran has defied the leadership more than once, and good for him.

But Republican tax policies are aimed at the two-income working family that makes up the bulk of the American middle class. These are the people who Democrats write off as "rich" and want to tax.

And, yes, the Republicans favor business, too. As the economy continues to grow, that should pay off in more jobs and robust growth.

Phony charges apparently did not stick to Mr. Bush — the youth vote did not turn out against a make-believe threat of a Republican draft — but the president still has to deal with Iraq and the war on terror.

It's far from clear that he can resolve Iraq by the end of his term. The terrorist threat is likely to outlast the next president, though, and all he can do there is make a good start.

Mr. Bush has had his foreign policy successes as well, and he needs to capitalize on those, as he did with Libya.

On the domestic front, it wasn't his policies that put the country in a recession. That started under Bill Clinton, runnings its course, and turning around, under Mr. Bush. He will need to deal with the growing deficit. That means there can be no expensive new initiatives until the economy is a lot better and the war winds down.

Both sides, the fighting Republicans, and the social-spending-but-deficit-hating Democrats, will have to accept that.

The country will go on, and Congress will remain bogged down, evading decisions on most issues until they become a crisis. The bureaucracy will continue to push for more and more regulations, from the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act to the dishonestly named Patriot Act to No Child Left Behind.

With luck, though, gridlock will slow the growth of government that neither party seems capable of dealing with.

And life will go on. That's what the election means. — *Steve Haynes*

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They shall not grow old,
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Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning
We will remember them.



Our society doesn't seem as kind as it was

I don't know about you, but I think our society isn't what it used to be.

Somehow it isn't as gentle and mannerly. Social norms are bound to change, but it seems sad to me that we are less kind and less innocent.

For example: In the movie Jumanji, there are some definite contrasts between 1969 and 1995.

In 1969, children were playing happily and well-dressed in their suburban front yards. In 1995, people were warming themselves around open-barrel fires, ragged, homeless, fearful. Having lived through both of those times, I know the examples are not all that far-fetched.

Of course some changes are good. I'm glad we are making strides against segregation. I like that we're more conscious of how ethnic jokes can offend people.

Or even blond jokes. But, more and more, it seems we are losing our senses of humor — especially when it comes to laughing at ourselves. Political correctness, it seems to me, is forced consideration. Isn't it depressing to have to have consideration forced on us?

There have been times before when America underwent changes.



**lorna
gt**

• commentary

In Stephen Birmingham's book, "The Rest of Us, The Rise of America's Eastern European Jews," he writes: Around 1940, "America seemed to have reentered an era of Victorian nicety, when mild expressions were substituted for disagreeable truths; an era of euphemism, when to die became pass away; when toilet became rest room or convenience or powder room; when poverty stricken became underprivileged or disadvantaged; when crippled became handicapped, a garbage collector became a sanitation engineer, and a defeat became a strategic withdrawal of troops.

Of course even anti-Semite is a euphemism for anti-Jew, since, a true anti-Semite would be one opposed to all Semitic people, including Arabs. And even the term "Jewish" could be construed as evasive or defensive, since there are no equivalent terms, such as "Christianish" or "Moslemish."

Hitler was himself fond of euphemisms, and

instead of murder spoke of a final solution.

"...euphemism is a characteristic form of expression in totalitarian countries, where assassination become liquidation, where an invasion is a liberation, and where a military takeover is an appropriate action."

So I suppose Birmingham is proving the other side to terminology.

We need to be careful with euphemisms and even political correctness. We might be using them to mask snideness. We can't soft-pedal hate by calling it nicer names. But we can't be good by refusing to acknowledge the bad within us.

In 50's, I was smug thinking the uprisings happening in South and Central America couldn't happen in the United States. Not too many years later, we had riots on U.S. college campuses with people dying to protest a war in Viet Nam. Wars bring out the best and the worst in people, and they leave no participating nation un-scarred.

Maybe I'm just older, but I still think our society isn't what it used to be.

Maybe it's worse; maybe it's better.

I suppose it's all in the way we look at it.

Maybe we just need to live each day to the best of our abilities, and trust God to run the world.

Clothes seem to multiply unless watched

Clothes multiply if you don't keep a close eye on them.

On Sunday, I decided to clean out my closets. It wasn't going to be anything so desperate as pulling stuff out and actually sweeping the floor or anything like that.

No, I just wanted to put some winter clothes in my main closet and move some of the summer stuff to the auxiliary closet.

Having an auxiliary closet sounds better than saying I'm storing stuff in the kid's room. Since youngest daughter moved out eight years ago, I've been slowing sneaking stuff into her closet.

None of the closets in this house is big. If I stood in our closet or in those of the rooms our son and daughter occupied, I could touch all four walls without fully extending my arms. Steve and I have to share our closet, and luckily, it's the biggest.

Since his wardrobe consists of two suits and half a dozen sport coats, plus slacks and short-sleeved shirts for the summer and slacks and long-sleeved shirts for the winter, he doesn't need quite as much space as I do.

While my wardrobe is not as extensive as some I've seen, I do need the necessities — long skirts, medium-length skirts, short skirts, long-sleeved tops, short-sleeved tops, sleeveless tops, short dressy dresses, long dressy dresses, short casual dresses, long casual dresses, suits, slacks, jackets and accessories. And those are my winter clothes.

I also need all of the above plus swimsuits and shorts for summer. I don't do fall and spring. I wear whatever seems best from the summer and winter wardrobes, and usually end up being too hot or too cold halfway through the day.

Since it was the last day of October, Sunday seemed like a good time to move summer into daughter's closet and winter back into mine. I couldn't quite figure out from where all those short-sleeved shirts came. I don't remember



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

some of them, and I'm sure I didn't wear half of those this summer. They really must have been hiding back there, multiplying like mold on a loaf of bread.

Then I realized that the floor of the closet was covered with clothes. I'm not sure how long things have been moving off their hangers and taking up residence down there. I guess I haven't been looking down often enough.

Some of the stuff had fallen off their hangers.

Those I either rehung or threw down the laundry chute to be rewashed. (Anything on the floor is destined to pick up a lot of cat hair).

But, what about the pile of neatly folded slacks, which I'd never seen before in my life? Is some slacks fairy sneaking into my house? Did I buy five pairs of slacks at some time and put them on the floor? Did the moths bring back the sweaters they ate last year and re sew them into slacks? Or am I just losing my mind?

With these thoughts in mind, I decided that I had done enough clothes moving for one day and went off to take a nap with the blanket I found hiding behind the slacks.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I know where she got those slacks, and if she's nice to me, I may tell her. It was only a couple of years ago.

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