

OPINION

HISTORY, POLITICS, ENVIRONMENT

Examples of fundamental change, and faith

In 1836, Americans said "Enough!" and took a stand at the Alamo. What started it? Mexican President Antonio



MARK LANDSBAUM
STAFF
COLUMNIST

López de Santa Anna decided his people were incapable of ruling themselves. He threw out the constitution, dissolved congress, declared himself dictator and punished states resisting his expanded, central government. Texas, largely populated with immigrants from the USA, was one of those states.

Today, don't we have a president who has jettisoned our Constitution, ignored and circumvented Congress, acts like a dictator and punishes states that oppose him? Just sayin'.

Santa Anna defeated the small band of resisters at the Alamo, executing all who surrendered, and, at Goliad, weeks later, took hundreds of prisoners, then murdered them all. But when confronted by a comparably sized force of Texans at San Jacinto, he was defeated in only 18 minutes. It fundamentally changed Texas.

Speaking of fundamental changes, candidate Barack Obama promised to improve race relations, a dubious goal in a nation that elected a president who claims to be a member of a minority.

How did it work out? As of

July 2013, "Public attitudes about race relations have plummeted since the historic election," a Wall Street Journal/NBC poll reported. Only 52 percent of whites and 38 percent of blacks had favorable opinions.

Maybe he needed more time? A year later, 10 percent of Americans and 8 percent of whites believed race relations have improved, said a New York Times/CBS poll.

This isn't foolproof, but try it at home. Tell your wife, husband or person closest to you that you love him or her. Then list everything you believe is wrong with him or her and that must be changed. Then pledge to "fundamentally change" him or her until he or she becomes what you really want.

Do you think he or she wants that kind of love? Is that even love? This context may help answer the question posed to Republican presidential candidates about whether President Barack Obama loves America. Obama's stated intent was to "fundamentally change" the country.

On a tangentially related topic, how much is a billion dollars? Try to imagine what you could do with it. Now consider that the federal government last year spent \$100 billion improperly. That's by the government's own estimate. We probably could come up with a higher number, but that is, if it weren't so difficult even to imagine how to spend \$1 billion. Never underestimate the potential of



Mexico's Antonio López de Santa Anna was victorious at the Alamo, but ultimately defeated in Texas.

large organizations financed with other peoples' money.

Here are more numbers of fundamental change: Unemployment supposedly is improving, dropping into the 5 percent range. But add in short- and long-term discouraged workers without jobs, and the rate is 23 percent plus. On the bright side, reducing unemployment benefits from 53 weeks to 25 weeks created 1.8 million new jobs last year, proving that when you stop paying people not to work they are more likely to work for pay.

On the bright side (bright, if your salary is paid by others' taxes), federal, state and local government employees since the

Great Recession were, respectively, 4 percent, 3 percent and 4 percent less likely to be laid off than private sector workers, says a recent Princeton University study.

File this next item under: "Is anything certain?" The 14th century's Black Death plague was caused by gerbils, not rats, as widely assumed, the BBC recently reported. Consensus seems irrelevant to truth.

Maybe that explains the consensus for imposing unneeded, harmful regulations to strangle the economy, make life's basics more costly and scarce, deprive the world's neediest people of affordable, life-sustaining energy,

all to *perhaps* reduce global temperatures by an unnoticeable amount over 100 years. Policy makers and climate scientists say they are certain that this is necessary.

One of them, the head of the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Rajendra Pachauri, resigned last month amid sexual harassment accusations. On his way out, Pachauri shared that, "the protection of planet Earth ... is more than a mission. It is my religion." (Did you think faith-based initiatives departed with George W. Bush?)

Perhaps this explains widespread skepticism about claims that manmade CO2 emissions are dangerously warming the Earth. Skeptics just don't have enough faith. By the way, the government confessed in February that 2,185 all-time local cold records were broken or tied during a seven-day period.

Here's a test of faith. After receiving \$1.6 billion in federal loan guarantees to build a solar project in the Mojave Desert, this supposed solution to global warming produced a fourth of the energy promised, making it exceedingly unlikely the loan can be repaid.

The solution? Solar plant operators asked for a \$539 million grant from taxpayers to pay back what they originally borrowed from them. Perhaps it makes sense if one has the right religion.

Had enough?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Too many auditors in Orange County government

The Register article on county auditors quoted Eric Woolery, the auditor-controller, Peter Hughes, the internal auditor, and Philip Cheng, the performance auditor ["County officials battle over audit control," News, March 1]. Am I the only one who noticed that the county has three auditors' offices?

Only in the crazy world of government do you have a whole bunch of people doing the same thing with a "battle" over control. In the county government, you have the auditor-controller who's elected and you have the board of supervisors' two auditors, the internal auditor and the performance auditor. In a rational world, you have one set of auditors.

Common sense says shrink the government and consolidate the auditors. Instead, the county had the classic answer of growing government by creating more auditing offices, and now they have some committee studying it for six months or more.

If they don't understand common sense, put it on the ballot and let us, the people, decide. Then we'll tell the government to

streamline things with one audit office.

David Kim
Irvine

AGRAN'S SUSPICIOUS ANTICS

What does Larry Agran have to hide? If the auditors need him to testify about whether or not the \$200 million spent on the Great Park was wasteful or inappropriate, he should show up ["City to take Agran to court for deposition," Local, March 3].

We've heard the saying "you can run, but you can't hide." Agran, defeated in the last election for Irvine City Council, has a lot of questions to answer about the expenditures at the Great Park when he was a prior council member. As the final audit report we have all been waiting for in Irvine is being delayed by Agran's lack of cooperation, it makes me wonder about his intentions.

Paris Merriam
Irvine

FEAR REAL THREAT, NOT ISIS

Tony Barone's "Rhetoric has limits," [Letters, Feb. 28] makes some excellent points but draws too narrow a target for the radicals when he says "radical Islam is at war with us and every other nation and people that do not practice the Muslim faith." Indeed, these radicals are not only

at war with non-Muslims, but also with every Muslim that does not subscribe to their particular radical version of the faith.

Sending weapons and troops into this troubled area will create more problems than are already there. We should leave the fight to the Muslims that are immediately impacted by their proximity. The U.S. is threatened by fear, but not by the threats of these primitive terrorists.

Ernst F. Ghermann
Huntington Beach

LAGUNA HILLS REJUVENATED

How welcome it was to read about the Laguna Hills mall redevelopment plans ["Shopping inside-out," Business, Feb. 28]. Joanna Clay's well-researched and informative article was very good news for my wife and myself, who have been weekly shoppers, diners and/or movie-goers at the mall for the past 28 years. I'm sure it was equally well-received by many other regular users of the mall. We all have been concerned about the mall's future in view of its many retailers vacancies these past few years.

Hopefully the Register will follow-up with periodic status and progress report articles concerning the new mall.

Richard Havens
Laguna Niguel

SOLUTION TO PAYING TAXES

Once again, Mark Landsbaum attempts to argue that taxes are theft because the money is taken without his permission ["The societal perils of forced charity," Opinion, Feb. 28]. But by agreeing to be a part of our organized society, he has, in fact, given his permission to our democratically elected officials to collect the revenues needed and to redistribute them for the common good and welfare.

If he does not want to be a member of our society, I suggest Mr. Landsbaum find himself an off-the-grid cabin somewhere and solely provide all the funds needed for his own, and no one else's, needs, including energy and transportation, public safety, education, health care and the like. This will keep government from "stealing" any more of his money.

Robert Belloli
Placentia

ANAHEIM CAN KEEP ANGELS

Re: "Moreno says stadium talks going 'nowhere'" [Sports, Feb. 21] and Tustin's city manager negotiating with Arte Moreno's company about building a stadium in Tustin. Not everyone in Tustin thinks this is a good idea. In fact, quite a few of us think the opposite. Some of us would be practically prisoners in

our homes 80-100 evenings a year due to the increase in traffic on the streets around these existing neighborhoods. And what are we to do about the extra noise, pollution, auto accidents and drunk drivers?

There are a lot of homes, some new and some older, that would be negatively affected by a stadium at Tustin Legacy. The original plan calls for homes, parks and businesses. And that's the way it should be.

Marsha Lindsey
Tustin

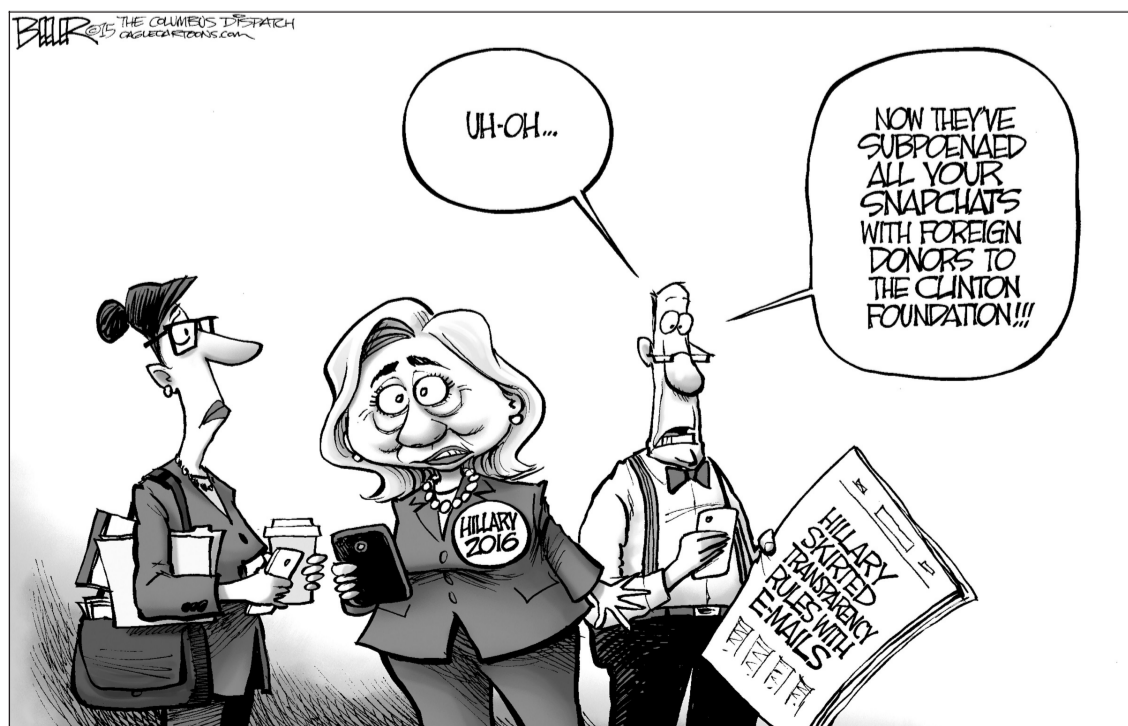
LEADERSHIP MORE IMPORTANT

Bob Baker and others think that a college degree must be required for a U.S. president and that no one without one could be a CEO of a large company ["Degrees mandatory," Letters, March 1]. Didn't Bill Gates drop out of college? And there are many other examples.

Not all college degrees will even get a decent-paying job in today's world. We elected our current president who has a degree but little previous leadership experience. There are many qualifications which can outrank a college degree. A college degree doesn't mean you are qualified to be a CEO, governor or president of this great nation.

Bill Chase
Mission Viejo

NATE BEELER / CAGLE CARTOONS



“ But how is this legal plunder to be identified? Quite simply. See if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong.”

FREDERIC BASTIAT

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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