



The Fat Lady's Aria

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
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WASHINGTON — Four-year-old Abigail Evans spoke for millions when she sobbed, “I’m tired of Bronco Bamma and Mitt Romney.”

Her mother, who posted a video on YouTube of her crying daughter, consoled her, saying, “The election will be over soon, OK?”

There, there, Abby. Bronco and Mitt are all done now. The ads can cease. Mormons can exhale. Pinocchio can take a vacation — and the tides can do whatever the hell they want.

Call me a grouch, but I’m basically sick of everybody. One more mention of “the ground game,” and I was going to shave David Axelrod’s mustache. Give me a choice of company between the savviest political prognosticator and Jimbo at the bait shop, and I’ll take a carton of those worms, please.

The morning after the worst presidential race in memory, we now know the true meaning of the peace that passeth all understanding.

No matter which man you preferred, there is something unsatisfactory about the end of this race. Victory isn’t so much an uplifting story of hope or change but of survival. We The People weren’t so much participants in a great democratic experiment as we were spectators at a blood sport where everyone got hurt, none so much our nation, exhausted and battered by cynicism and snark.

Rather than elevating our spirits, this election diminished the currency of our aspirations. It was a campaign of “mosts”: The most money ever spent, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 billion. That’s a lot of health insurance and a lot of hurricane recovery. The most negative ads and the most media coverage.

By the infusion of millions from self-promoting .01 percenters, democracy was mocked. As for statesmen, our children will have to conjure their likeness as they do monsters. Greatness is not much apparent. The respective campaigns insulted our intelligence by making false promises and telling half-truths. They manipulated us by preying on our fears, prejudices and anxieties. They made little girls cry.

And yet, both are good men. Decent, smart, gifted men. Good husbands and fathers. But our political system could suck the goodness out of a saint.

There was one brief, glimmering moment, a flicker of light in the darkest of hours, when Hurricane Sandy came ashore and showed what real tides, oblivious to man’s vanities, can do. Pushing over houses like so

Writer’s Block

Thoughts Of A Pooped Grandma

BY LINDA WUEBBEN
P&D Correspondent

I have just come off of a four-day weekend with two of my five grandchildren. I watched my 4-year-old and 1-year-old grandsons so my daughter and husband could enjoy a weekend trip.

I learned something, or at least, I had a revelation.

I now know why I never got anything accomplished all those years ago when raising four children. All I did was run after the two sweetie pies (tongue-in-cheek!). Either I was worrying about what to feed them, feeding them, worrying if they ate enough, worried if I should put them down for a nap, putting them down for a nap, worrying the nap was too long, finding something appropriate for them to watch on TV so I could have a break, worried if they watched TV too long, worrying if they should hit their head on a piece of something which would send them and me to the ER, or sighing a huge groan of relief when their head hit the pillow every night only to have it start all over again in the morning.

So, by the time I delivered the sweethearts into their parents’ loving arms, both Grandma and I were brain dead. There, I have said it. I suppose my daughter will be mortified. The truth hurts. Life isn’t fair. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps and get over it.

But I still love my grandchildren. These two are still a little young. Someday, they won’t remember staying the weekend with Grandpa and me, but they will know we love them and that’s what counts. And I hope and look forward to more weekends when they get older and actually realize we are an important part of their lives.

Now, my oldest grandson is 9 and his brother is almost 3, a wannabee 9-year-old just like his brother. I can actually have conversations with those two and so we’ve started projects when they come for overnights. Here’s a clue for all grandparents: It’s best to do these projects when Mom and Dad aren’t around less they think Grandma and Grandpa are losing their minds. We did one in September which was great fun.

Several years ago after Bob’s uncles and aunts had either passed away or all gone to a nursing home, the nieces and nephews cleaned out their home. One of the items that ended in my lap was a bowling ball. I have clung to that ball all these years, moving it from our trailer home to our new house and still didn’t know why I tenaciously held on to it. It has been in a closet under our basement steps for nine years now.

Recently, I was perusing the Internet and read about

many sand castles, the storm reminded us that the gods care little for politics.

Neither do hurting people who need housing, food, fresh water and dry socks.

The flicker: President Obama and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Democrat and Republican, came together in common cause to confront a common enemy. Weather.

This is when we’re at our best: When something outside of us, beyond our power and unrelated to our selfish interests, reminds us of our mortality. Memento mori: Do the right thing, the good thing, the kind and remarkable thing, for you may not get another chance.

Many Republicans, of course, were apoplectic that Christie, keynote speaker at the Republican convention, would befriend the Democratic president so close to the election. Infamously, Christie declared that he didn’t care about the election.

What?! Heretic. Traitor. Blasphemer. Obama and Christie suddenly were having a “bromance.” Notably, Rush Limbaugh referred to Christie as Obama’s “Greek column” and questioned their “man-love.” Could his insinuation be any more clear?

What Christie meant, of course, is that politics wasn’t his most pressing concern under the circumstances. Saving lives and restoring order were, and he and the president shared in that mission. But two men actually doing their jobs together couldn’t possibly be only that. Immediately, the sideshow was on as politicians began quantifying the political ramifications.

Obviously, there are political repercussions to anything candidates do in the final days of a campaign. When one candidate happens to be the president — and his job happens to intersect with a catastrophic event — he gets the benefit of performing outside the usual fray.

But the notion that Christie should have been aloof toward Obama to score GOP points wins the limbo contest of contemporary politics.

As we begin the next leg of this journey, we might keep in the back of our minds the idea of a common enemy. For now, that enemy is our stubborn refusal to work together to solve our massive problems. If this election provided any mandate at all, it is that we set aside our special interests and work together before it’s too late.

Memento mori, indeed. And while we’re at it, *tempus fugit*, too.

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Kathleen PARKER



Linda WUEBBEN

making a glazing ball. I like to think I am creative and enjoy doing my own thing, so this seemed down my alley. And guess what? A bowling ball works great for a one-of-a-kind personalized, glazing ball. Did you know that? I’m sure you didn’t.

So after three daughters and countless wedding decorations, I have collected stuff. I’m not really a hoarder but I hate to throw anything away if it’s still good. Amongst my wedding castoff collection of odds and ends were several sizes and shapes of colored glass beads. Over the summer months, I thought about how those could be used to make a very colorful glazing ball for my flower bed. As I cleaned, I collected those beads from every nook and cranny into a large bowl, waiting for my two grandsons to come for a long visit so we could create Grandma’s Glazing Ball.

Armed with two tubes of craft glue, the bowls of beads and of course, the bowling/glazing ball, we headed out behind our house under the clothesline to contemplate the meaning of ... what, the boys weren’t sure. It was another one of Grandma’s kooky ideas. They know me well. Guess we’ve done this before. It’s all about blind love and trust.

The 3-year-old trusts me completely and just does whatever Grandma tells him. My 9-year-old, who thinks he is almost 10 and could just as well say he was 10, has to chop up what I am saying and make sense of it.

It was a great success. Nobody’s fingers ended up glued anywhere they shouldn’t have been and there were enough beads left over to do another ball. We had some good chuckles about the beads and where the glue should go and who should do the gluing, but Grandma kept the tube safely gripped in her hand.

Grandma’s glazing ball sits proudly on my back deck. At first, I wanted to make sure the beads stuck and now I don’t know if I can have it inside for the winter because the glue aroma is still very strong. Now that I think back, maybe that’s why we were laughing. Good memories — good times.

My daughter suggested we make cookies when my grandson was there over the long weekend so he could help me, but I silently nixed that. Grandma has a hard enough time making sure the ingredients are right when she cooks alone much less add into the mix a 4-year-old who can’t read recipes. That’s a memory for Mommy and him.

Someday my other two grandsons will be ready for Grandma’s projects and we will have a goofy time creating memories, too. Now, what project should we think about next?

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Obama Must Work To Heal Split Nation

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (Nov. 7): President Barack Obama won re-election in a nation that proved itself even more polarized than when he took office. The outcome was excruciatingly close, both nationally and in the battleground states. Republicans maintained control of the U.S. House of Representatives. GOP nominee Mitt Romney fared better than Obama with independent voters.

Obama was the first president in recent history to win re-election by a smaller margin than he received four years earlier. The tone of this campaign — by both sides — was unduly negative on both sides.

An appeal to the Democratic base was enough for Obama to prevail in a matchup with Romney. But the challenges facing this nation — starting with an economic plan to avoid the coming “fiscal cliff” — are going to require bipartisan support. And the stakes are too consequential for both parties to retreat into their bad habits of blame and gridlock.

Moreover, Obama has plenty of unfinished business that he barely touched in his first term. The nation drifted another four years without making a serious effort to combat climate change. Our immigration policy remains a tangled mess of contradictions and detachment from reality. Social Security and Medicare continue on a collision course with generational disaster.

Voters again have put their faith in Obama to take on the challenges of our times, albeit with a tempered expectation of what might be possible. There were many good reasons to believe that he, more than Romney, has the leadership skills and priorities that are needed at this critical time. His first term accomplishments were achieved despite a determined effort by Republicans to stymie him at every turn.

The onus is on Obama, as the freshly re-elected president, to take the lead in overcoming this polarization that seems to have turned almost everything into a partisan fight in Washington. ...

... It’s not getting any easier in a nation still deeply divided.

OUR LETTER POLICY

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■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

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TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Nov. 8, the 313th day of 2012. There are 53 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On Nov. 8, 1932, New York Democratic Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated incumbent Republican Herbert Hoover for the presidency.

On this date: In 1889, Montana became the 41st state.

In 1909, the original Boston Opera House first opened with a performance of “La Gioconda” by Amilcare Ponchielli.

In 1913, the play “Woyzeck,” by Georg Buchner, had its premiere in Munich, Germany, more than six decades after the playwright’s death.

In 1923, Adolf Hitler launched his first attempt at seizing power in Germany with a failed coup in Munich that came to be known as the “Beer-Hall Putsch.”

In 1942, Operation Torch, resulting in an Allied victory, began during World War II as U.S. and British forces landed in French North Africa.

In 1950, during the Korean War, the first jet-plane battle took place as U.S. Air Force Lt. Russell J. Brown shot down a North Korean MIG-15.

In 1960, Massachusetts Sen. John F. Kennedy defeated Vice President Richard M. Nixon for the presidency.

In 1972, the premium cable TV network HBO (Home Box Office) made its debut with a showing of the movie “Sometimes a Great Notion.”

In 1980, scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., announced that the U.S. space probe Voyager 1 had discovered a 15th moon orbiting the planet Saturn.

In 1987, 11 people were killed when an Irish Republican Army bomb exploded as crowds gathered in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, for a ceremony honoring Britain’s war dead.

In 1988, Vice President George H.W. Bush won the presidential election, defeating Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis.

In 1994, midterm elections resulted in Republicans winning a majority in the Senate while at the same time gaining control of the House for the first time in 40 years.

Ten years ago: The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1441, aimed at forcing Saddam Hussein to disarm or face “serious consequences.”

President George W. Bush said the new resolution presented the Iraqi regime “with a final test.”

Five years ago: The Senate confirmed President George W. Bush’s nomination of Michael Mukasey to be attorney general, 53-40. President Bush suffered the first veto override of his seven-year-old presidency as the Senate enacted, 79-14, a \$23 billion water resources bill despite his protest that it was filled with unnecessary projects. Dominican singer-songwriter Juan Luis Guerra swept the Latin Grammy Awards, taking home five musical honors including album of the year, record of the year and song of the year.

One year ago: A defiant Herman Cain declared he would not drop his bid for the Republican presidential nomination in the face of allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior, a day after a fourth woman accused him of unwanted sexual advances. Voters re-elected Kentucky’s Democratic governor, Steve Beshear, and picked a new governor in Mississippi, Republican Lt. Gov. Phil Bryant. Bill Keane, 89, creator of the comic strip “Family Circus,” died in Paradise Valley, Ariz. Rapper Heavy D, 44, died in Los Angeles.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Norman Lloyd is 98. Singer Patti Page is 85. CBS newsman Morley Safer is 81. Singer-actress Bonnie Bramlett is 68. Singer Bonnie Raitt is 63. TV personality Mary Hart is 62. Former Playboy Enterprises chairman and chief executive Christie Hefner is 60. Actress Alfre Woodard is 60. Singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones is 58. Author Kazuo Ishiguro is 58. Rock musician Porl Thompson (The Cure) is 55. Singer-actor Leif Garrett is 51. Chef and TV personality Gordon Ramsay is 46. Actress Courtney Thorne-Smith is 45. Actress Parker Posey is 44. Rock musician Jimmy Chaney is 43. Actress Roxana Zal is 43. Singer Diana King is 42. Actor Gonzalo Menendez is 41. Actress Gretchen Mol is 39. Actor Matthew Rhys is 38. Actress Tara Reid is 37. Country singer Buck Covington is 35. Actress Dania Ramirez is 33. Actress Azura Skye is 31. Actor Chris Rankin is 29. TV personality Jack Osbourne is 27. Actress Jessica Lowndes is 24. Country singer Lauren Alaina is 18.

Thought for Today: “Man is born to live, not to prepare for life.” — Boris Pasternak, Russian author (1890-1960).

FROM THE BIBLE

For we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

Sanctioning Soccer

Carol and Randy McKee, Sioux Falls

We enjoyed attending the inaugural S.D. High School Activities Association state soccer tournament in Aberdeen in early October as well as the 15th annual S.D. Soccer Association state high school tournament in Rapid City the next weekend. Both were outstanding events, one run very professionally by SDHSAA staff and a local committee, the other by SDSA state and local volunteers.

But there shouldn’t be two state high school tournaments. It’s time for everyone — S.D. Soccer Association and school boards — to bite the bullet and commit to fully sanctioning soccer by no later than 2014.

While we appreciate budget concerns, school boards must find a way to make it happen because it is the right thing to do. A boys’ and girls’ soccer program with varsity and JV teams can serve around 100 student-athletes. The teams already have uniforms, there are already fields so those costs are not an issue. Schools simply need to cover transportation and a small salary for coaching staff, as some schools in South Dakota are already doing.

Soccer is played by thousands of kids across South Dakota. And they deserve to have their sport fully incorporated into the school activities curriculum. It’s a matter of equity.

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