



THE AUDACITY OF HYPE

Om mani padme Obama!

It has now been one year since Barack Obama won the race for the American presidency. Over the course of the past 12 months, he has attained much. Some of it is purely symbolic—he is, after all, the first president of African-American descent, a notable achievement in itself.

Other accomplishments are more tangible. Although at the time of this writing we do not know the outcome of his proposed health care reforms, we can state with near certainty that Barack Hussein Obama, the 44th president of the United States of America, has, over the past year, continued to be both presidential and black.

This stirring, unbroken record of success gives the audacious among us reason to hope. For, despite all that Barack Obama has done this past year, there is much, much more to do.

December 20, 2009: After two hours of intense conversation with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Barack Obama struck a deal to finally bring peace to the Middle East, ending over 60 years of bitter and violent conflict with, as he describes it, “some frank talk over hummus and matzo.” Later that same evening, during a 22-minute telephone call, the President persuaded Osama bin Laden to agree to a defacto truce with the West. (When asked later about the agreement, Mr. bin Laden told the BBC: “Barack was just so persuasive, and he really did put things in perspective. Honestly, I wish we’d had this talk years ago. So much pain could have been avoided. Oh well.”)

Meanwhile, First Lady Michelle Obama wore a potato sack to a Kwanza celebration at the White House, and *Vogue* editor-at-large André Leon Talley pronounced it “profoundly metaphoric yet comfortable and attractive.”

February 19, 2010: After three days of rigorous

shuttle diplomacy and, as he describes it, “some frank talk over kimchee and kebabs,” President Barack Obama re-established U.S. diplomatic ties with both North Korea and Iran, a move that even skeptical foreign-policy experts claim has set the stage for perpetual world peace and the flowering of everlasting love among all of mankind. Addressing a euphoric international press corps in Pyongyang, North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il explained: “I was so mad at those *South Park* guys for that stupid movie. I guess I let it cloud my judgment. Thanks, Barack, for setting things straight.” When asked what he was most looking forward to now that his country had been welcomed back into the community of nations, Iran’s Mahmoud Ahmadinejad responded, “That’s easy: Passover Seder!”

Meanwhile, Malia Obama, the President’s precocious 11-year-old daughter, discovered a cure for the common cold while playing with her chemistry set. “Sure, we’re proud,” said the President. “But next week, we’d like her to concentrate on something more challenging, like esophageal cancer.”

July 23, 2010: Arguably one of the most exceptional days of President Barack Obama’s audaciously hopeful first term. In the morning, over a breakfast of bran flakes (Kellogg) and organic berries with his wife, Michelle (who wore a daring Versace peignoir or a sarong made of used mosquito netting—we’re not quite sure), with the stroke of a presidential pen (Parker), the President passed a law that would ban global poverty, radically restructure the world economic system, eliminate anxiety disorders and ensure that every country that had participated in the 2010 Winter Olympics was retroactively awarded a gold medal just for showing up and playing so nice.

In the afternoon, President Obama solved the crisis in Darfur, ended sectarian strife in Chechnya, brought Michael Jackson back from the dead for a command performance at the White House and eliminated national boundaries throughout the world, bringing, as he put it, “all of humanity under one glorious, ‘un-hole’ roof”—thereby rendering the United Nations moot and war obsolete. Proving that he still had the common touch, before dinner he also brokered a tense dispute between Boise, Idaho, neighbours Larry Reems and Gladys Millover, who had a longstanding disagreement concerning their property line. (“He’s as wise as Solomon,” said the 83-year-old Mrs. Millover, “but much better looking.”)

Meanwhile, First Lady Michelle showed her arms. Skies parted. □



CARNIVORE GENERAL

Michaëlle Jean:
"Pleased to eat you!"

It was the gulp heard 'round the world. There she was, the lovely and dangerous Michaëlle Jean, the Governor General of Canada, traditional Inuit ulu blade in hand, making the North safe from the fearsome Canadian harp seal by gutting said mammal from stem to stern. But our GG wasn't finished. Indulging her inner vivisectionist had made her hungry. Passing on more conventional snacks, she asked for a piece of the seal's once-stout heart instead, which, although raw, she then proceeded to eat.

"It was delicious," said the insatiable Ms. Jean, blood dripping from her incisors. "It's like sushi—and very rich in protein." We will take her word for this.

Although Ms. Jean's act was clearly a symbolic gesture of solidarity with our northern aboriginal peoples (who greatly appreciated it), outside Nunavut the optics were difficult. In particular, the act triggered great emotional wails from our friends in Europe—who, after centuries of internecine wars, devastating colonialist expansion and racist pogroms, have apparently developed an aversion to blood.

But by consuming the heart of one of God's lesser creatures, Ms. Jean demonstrated, above all, a deeply felt respect for historic native customs and traditions, some of which may conflict with highly sophisticated sensitivities. What, then, does the future hold for Ms. Jean and her culturally relativistic reign? We can only guess....

Dateline: Nice, France. (AFP) Canada's Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, courted controversy by swallowing whole an ortolan bunting, a tiny endangered bird that, after being artificially fattened, is traditionally killed by being drowned in Armagnac. While acknowledging that France has banned the practice, Ms. Jean was unapologetic. "Historically in French culture, the ortolan is said to

represent the soul of France," claimed Ms. Jean. "Drowning and eating the ortolan is a wonderful tradition, which I am honoured to celebrate." Later, Ms. Jean ate seven more. "Delicious," she said, "and very rich in protein."

Dateline: County Cork, Ireland. (AP) While representing Canada today at the funeral of former Cork County commissioner Ryan O'Grady, Governor General Michaëlle Jean caused a minor diplomatic incident when she insisted on disinterring O'Grady's corpse and presiding over a full Irish wake. "In Irish cultural tradition," explained Ms. Jean in a statement, "the all-night wake is a custom that was developed to ensure that the deceased is, in fact, dead and not simply in a near-catatonic state brought on by the consumption of bad whisky. It is a wonderful tradition, which I am honoured to celebrate." Reaction from the O'Grady family was less enthusiastic. "We were okay with the wake," said a family spokesman later, "but when she tickled Ryan to see if he might still be alive, we thought that, well, Ms. Jean had gone a wee bit far."

Dateline: Bountiful, B.C. (CP) In a startling show of solidarity with the polygamous community of Bountiful, B.C., Canadian Governor General Michaëlle Jean married community member Morton Filbuster in a hastily arranged ceremony, becoming his 23rd wife. "In the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' cultural tradition," explained Ms. Jean, "men of the community of Bountiful often take many wives. It is a wonderful tradition, which I am honoured to celebrate." Mr. Filbuster, it was reported, was polite but subdued: "She's pretty hot for an older babe," he said. "Hope her back is strong." No word on whether Ms. Jean spent the night.

Dateline: Papua New Guinea. (Reuters) In a diplomatic fiasco that sent shockwaves around the globe, Canadian Governor General Michaëlle Jean stunned her handlers and a small entourage of Papua New Guinean dignitaries by slicing off the head of an Asmat tribesman and, before anyone could stop her, eating a piece of his brain. "In the Melanesian cultural tradition," said Ms. Jean, "competing tribes often remove the heads of those killed in battle and, to appropriate the fallen enemy's spirit, consume parts of the body, including the brain. It is a wonderful tradition, which I am honoured to celebrate."

When one of the Papua New Guinean dignitaries pointed out that this particular tradition had not been practised for more than half a century, Ms. Jean seemed shocked. "This does not happen anymore?" she asked, between bites.

"No, Madame Jean," said the trembling tribal spokesman. "We haven't actually killed and eaten our enemies for a very, very long time." There was an awkward silence. Finally, Ms. Jean spoke. "Well, you should," she said. "They're delicious—and very rich in protein." □

LULULAND

Hiring me might be a stretch.

TO: LULULEMON ATHLETICA
RE: CEO JOB POSTING

Dear Sir and/or Madam:

A few days ago, I inadvertently stumbled upon your recent job posting while searching for a pornographic website. I must say, I found it highly entertaining and intriguing. After due consideration, I would like to apply for the position of CEO of Lululemon Athletica. I think that you will find my combination of skills, experience and interests an excellent fit.

First, let me say that, although I am eminently qualified for the position, there is one requirement I lack: I do not speak Sanskrit. I have,

*I am disciplined and focused,
a state I achieve through
the judicious use of Ritalin.*

however, been known to speak in tongues on occasion—I trust this will suffice. Your ad also says that you want someone who “communicates powerfully.” That’s me. I do this primarily by yelling, which, in my experience, helps get my point across forcefully and effectively. I can even do this in writing: HEY, YOU! YES, YOU! QUIT SLACKING OFF NOW AND START SELLING SOME STRETCHY PANTS! See?

As required, I am disciplined and focused, a state I achieve through the judicious use of Ritalin and some other “stimulant medications.” As for holding a headstand for 10 minutes, I must admit that I cannot do this (although I can, at times, chew gum and walk). However, as CEO, I would hire someone to do this for me or—and this would be my personal preference—outsource the task to India, where accomplished yogis are as common as vegetarian curry. If you offer me the job, I can guarantee that this is the kind of innovative thinking I’ll deliver on a daily basis.

As per your requirements, I am extremely “passionate about doing chief executive officer type stuff,”

but, again, I must be honest with you: I have no direct experience leading a large multinational corporation (although I have shopped at both Target and Walmart). I have, however, watched several full-length feature films that deal with high-stakes corporate finance, including (but not limited to) *Wall Street* and *Margin Call*, so I’m confident I know the ropes.

I realize that Lululemon’s “corporate culture”—can those two words even be used together when we’re talking about a Vancouver company?—is probably very different from, say, a *real* business, where the emphasis is on making money. Once again, I think you’ll find my utter disregard for conventional thinking (a.k.a. “logic”) very much to your—or, rather, “our”—advantage. (You know I’ve got this one in the bag, so let’s stop playing coy and just roll

with it, shall we?) Throughout my career, I have gone out of my way to avoid acquiring any business acumen whatsoever, so rest assured that you’ll be investing in a leader who will never be spoiled by success.

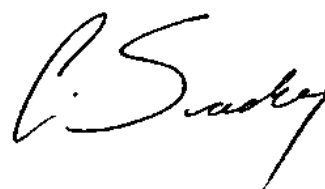
A bit about me: I am a junior-high-school graduate and have successfully completed the St. John Ambulance Standard Level First Aid Course. My interests include eating potato chips, arguing with strangers and silently passing gas in crowded elevators and subway cars. I am a keen learner, as long as it doesn’t involve the acquisition of facts or, indeed, knowledge or wisdom of any kind.

In this package, please also find my curriculum vitae, which is notable for its brevity and my sporadic and arbitrary use of the sadly underutilized Chalkduster font. And a few typing errors. Oh, and that stain on the upper-left corner is grease from a sausage I was eating. It was excellent.

Looking forward to discussing salary and stock options at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Guy Saddy

P.S. Regarding that “see-through yoga pants” debacle? For the record, I’m in favour of them.



TALKING SIT

You may not have noticed, but occasionally I get confused. For example, I just read that “sitting is the new smoking.” Whoa—that’s pretty heavy. Think I’d better sit down. Or maybe not. Considering the sedentary nature of my “job” and my generally lethargic approach to life, sitting-wise I’m probably a four-pack-a-day guy, easy. I don’t want to develop a hacking cough or, worse, smell like the interior of my dad’s old station wagon. That could happen, I guess.

So is sitting the new smoking? I hope not. Some people just tolerate sitting and probably view it as that awkward interlude between standing and walking, but I love to sit; it’s one of the few things I do exceptionally well. Over the years, many people

If sitting is the new smoking, “slouching” must be positively toxic.

have commented on my sitting technique—well, not really, but I’m sure I see admiration in their eyes. “Man, that guy is *really* good at sitting,” they’re probably thinking. I don’t have any evidence for this. But that’s okay, because I recently read that “believing is the new knowing.” I think it was in some religious book or on a Conservative Party website.

Long ago, I gave up smoking in favour of sitting. Really, it was easy. I just continued all my usual activities but substituted “sitting” for “smoking.” In the morning, I’d get

*Quit smoking?
Good for you.
Too bad that
isn’t enough to
get you off the
“sit list” of
health violations
this year.*

up, have a strong cup of coffee and... sit. After a particularly satisfying dinner, I would...sit. I now sit after sex; nothing quite says “You rocked my world!” like bolting upright in bed and then quickly making your way to the nearest recliner. Speaking of sex, or lack thereof, what would Freud say? In his view, smoking was the legacy of oral-stage fixation. A fetish for sitting implies something altogether unmentionable. Frankly, I don’t know that for sure. But it’s what I believe, so it’s the same thing.

I always thought that “sitting” was supposed to be the new “standing.” A long time ago, back when “cutting edge” meant the sharp bits of a knife, scientists and other people who liked wearing glasses told us we wouldn’t have to stand much longer. Space-age technology meant that we’d soon lead lives of total leisure. Our heads would grow as huge as free-range pumpkins to accommodate all the facts we’d be stuffing into them, and standing would become obsolete. As a result, our legs would atrophy into wispy little rodent-like appendages, and when we (eventually) decided to take a break from an exciting day spent

sitting to go out, we wouldn’t walk so much as roll, like a soft-boiled egg on a kitchen countertop. So “rolling” would be the new “walking.” But let’s be frank: It could never hold a candle to sitting. ‘Cause that’s how I roll.

If this new sitting/smoking exchange goes forward, I foresee problems. All the old “smoking” references will have to be changed. A really sexy person will be “sittin’ hot.” Much to the chagrin of men who wear Dockers, Brownsville Station will have to recut “Smokin’ in the Boys Room”—but the new lyric won’t have the same ring, and it’s a bit redundant anyway. Smokin’ Joe Frazier will be known as Sittin’ Joe, which I’m not sure he’d have liked. If sitting is the new smoking, then wouldn’t the reverse also be true? The Sioux chief who dispatched General Custer will henceforth be christened Smoking Bull, which, although oddly fascinating in an “I’ll try anything once” sort of way, also sounds gross.

Where might this end? If sitting is the new smoking, “slouching” must be positively toxic. “Slumping” always had louche and sinister connotations, but when you throw the whole health card into the equation, it’s even worse. Not sure where all of this leaves “crouching,” but I figure that people who like lying down are pretty much screwed.

I could go on and on. Maybe I will. Because I read somewhere that “ending is the new beginning.” Whoa. Really, it’s enough to make a guy sit. Or smoke. Whatever. □



REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

*When “brawn
power” isn’t enough.*

A few weeks ago, I ran over myself with my own car. Let me try to explain.

It was a normal Vancouver day. The god of rain, having once again grown displeased with the citizenry, had unleashed its wrath. At City Hall, bicycle lanes were being legislated at a furious pace. Venti non-fat soy lattes were being consumed voraciously, and vegetarianism was running amok. Meanwhile, I was trying to exit an underground parking lot.

When I pulled up to the booth to pay, however, I discovered that there was no attendant. Sighing, I shifted into reverse just as a truck pulled up behind me. After hopelessly trying to communicate the dilemma to the other driver through arcane hand gestures, loud, exasperated sighs and telepathy, I got out of my car and began walking toward him. I was almost at the driver’s window when he began pointing and yelling.

At this very moment, my trusted 2007 Volkswagen Jetta, which I’ve always treated with the utmost respect and premium-grade motor oil, decided to attack. I spun around just in time to see my car, which I’d apparently stuck in “reverse” and not “park,” coming at me. Panicking, I did what any other mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan

newspaper would do: I inserted myself between the bumper of the truck and the slowly approaching vehicle, figuring that the vast reserves of superhuman strength I’d always suspected I possessed would finally prove useful, or at least be present.

Instead, my knee was crushed between the two bumpers. This hurt, of course, but not nearly as much as the revelation that *I had run over myself with my own car.*

What kind of idiot does this? At first, I tried to make myself feel better by seeking assurances that I was not

I tried to imagine the internal conversation that preceded the meal:

Hmmm, there’s a dead marmot.

Whoa, it smells bad.

Looks like it’s smiling...

Yum!

But every time I took solace in the misery of even greater fools, this thought hit me: *I had run over myself with my own car.* Believe it or not, however, this is not unheard of. In fact—this made me feel a bit better—it’s practically epidemic. If you Google “ran over myself with my own car,” you’ll find 17,100 similar stories. These are just the morons who have gone public. There must be millions of

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which I’d apparently stuck in “reverse”
and not “park,” coming at me.*

the most foolish person in the history of the world. I was not disappointed; in the annals of stupidity, there are many contenders. For example, last year there was the case of a 19-year-old bank robber who posted a self-congratulatory video about her crime on YouTube; her shock must have been complete when, as a result of the posting, she was apprehended. Then there was a woman who decided to hop the fence at a Berlin zoo and swim into the polar-bear habitat. How could this not turn out well?

My favourite story involves a Chinese herdsman who died of bubonic plague—after consuming an already dead rodent that was later found to be infected with the disease.

other like-minded twits who are too ashamed, too sensible or too dead to reveal how incredibly dumb they are.

However, in the grand scheme, does any of this really matter? At the end of my life, I hope to be remembered for a few things. Good partner, good father. A decent and loving person. A loyal and trusted friend. The guy who ran over himself with his own car.

I know it’s a bit wordy for a headstone, but it makes for the start of a killer eulogy. □

