

Unquestioned authority

A criticism heard during the early years of the Bush administration was that the media were "in the tank" for Bush, fearing to question his foreign and domestic policies in the aftermath of 9/11 because of his then-high approval numbers and concern that they would be labeled unpatriotic.

Such fears have evaporated with the advent of the Obama administration. The intensity of media worship and slavish devotion by more journalists to President Obama and his policies has risen to what one might expect from members of a cult.

On MSNBC, Newsweek editor Evan Thomas said of the president: "...in a way, Obama's standing above the country, above — above the world. He's sort of God." Speaking of Ronald Reagan, Thomas said he was "all about America" (and Obama is "we are above that now. We're not just parochial, we're not just chauvinistic, we're not just provincial.") When was the last time you heard an American president faulted for putting America first?

This religious-like faith in Obama has led the media not to question much of what he does. He claims his stimulus plan has "saved or created" 150,000 jobs and that "stimulus II" will "save or create" 600,000 jobs this summer. How does government "save" a job and how does one measure such a claim? In January, before taking office, the president said 90 percent of the new jobs he would create would be in the private sector. The media have yet to ask him why that promise has not yet been fulfilled.

Last March, the president visited Columbus, Ohio, and announced that 25 police jobs were being saved because of his stimulus bill. According to CNN, "without the money, the officers never would have hit the streets. They were to be laid off before their first day of patrol, victims of city budget cuts." The influx of federal stimulus money, however, has done little to solve the city's budget crisis. Columbus voters will decide in August whether to approve a tax increase. If they refuse, city officials may have to lay off 324 police officers. That would be a net loss of about 299 jobs. Don't look

for the media to headline that outcome, should it occur, as they trumpeted the original "job-saving" announcement.

Commenting (reporting is a lost art) on Obama's D-Day speech at Normandy, Chip Reid of CBS News said Obama "hopes to create a world where there never has to be another D-Day." Who told Reid that? And why didn't Reid ask how Obama intends to bring that about and what makes such an effort different from, say, the failed League of Nations and failing United Nations?

NBC's Brian Williams recently hosted an "Inside the Obama White House" special. As the conservative Media Research Center has noted, even liberal Bill Moyers couldn't take the sugar rush: "NBC News this week delivered a candygram to the President — two primetime specials called 'Inside the Obama White House.' President Obama couldn't have asked for a sweeter salute..." Perhaps what gave Moyers a toothache was this statement by Williams, "People react strongly to this president. We've seen people moved to tears after just the briefest encounter with him."

The danger in such hero worship is that this president (or any politician) might begin to believe his own press. A president who hears nothing but praise is likely to be less cautious and more enamored with himself. He could be tempted to think, if not actively, than passively, that he is, like Caesar, a "god," above all others in ability and accountability.

It is neither in the interest of the country, nor the president, for the public and the media to treat President Obama as a messianic deliverer.

I recently saw two bumper stickers on the same car. One said, "Obama '08" and the other "Question Authority." Surveys have shown most in the mainstream media supported Obama's election. Too many journalists have forfeited their responsibility by failing to question his authority, losing what little remains of their credibility, not to mention readers and viewers. The public is losing its right to be told the truth.

There are houses for worship. Newsrooms ought not to be one of them.



Cal Thomas

What is best way to choose judges?

By Sue Carlton
New York Times

This one had to be the plot of a John Grisham beach-read: The CEO of a mega coal company spends \$3 million to help put a judge on the bench. Selfsame judge casts the deciding vote twice to throw out a \$50 million verdict against aforementioned coal company. Judge does this despite attempts to get him to take himself off the case in the interest of, you know, fairness and all. (It really did inspire a Grisham novel.)

Real-life hero of our story? The U.S. Supreme Court, which this week ruled that an elected West Virginia Supreme Court justice should have stepped aside in a case involving a big-money donor to his campaign.

Well, yeah. All of which got me thinking about the age-old argument of how we get our judges. Elect 'em, or appoint 'em?

The Supreme Court's decision magnifies the obvious flaws in making judges, who are supposed to be independent and impartial, go begging for election money. Logically, the cash they collect often comes from people who are part of their tribe: local attorneys, many who appear before them.

Of course we know none of our good judges would do this, but there's always the smidgen of a chance that one rogue out there might favor a guy who consistently wrote him a check or disrespect one who didn't.

Another problem: Because judges are supposed to remain neutral and decide each case on its merits and the law, they're discouraged from talking about actual issues that might be on the minds of the voters, like, say, gay marriage.

So the folks who do the electing very often know little if anything about the judicial candidates on the ballot, unless they've taken the time to read up on rulings, reputations, lawyer polls and such.

To which voters say: yawn. Or: like I've got the time for that.

But mostly just: who? Case in point: You can find newspaper stories from around the country about the controversy over judicial candidates who changed their names to appear differently on the ballot.

Letters to the editor

The course needs a pro

To Editor:
I know I said I was done writing about the Gallup Course, however, with the latest events I have decided to write again.

It's a shame that the golf pro position has been eliminated. Another step in the ongoing saga of the dilapidated golf course. Let's blame the pro! After all he is the one that does all the maintainance, or does he? No, he is not responsible for that portion of the club. Now I would like to ask some questions about this.

1. Has anyone thought that without a pro your PGA events are null and void?

2. If you eliminated the position who is going to run tournaments?

3. Who is going to be responsible for keeping the handicaps updated and processed?

4. Who is going to sell clubs, gloves, balls, ect.?

5. Who is going to give lessons?

6. Is there going to be a replacement for Alex?

7. Are you going to close the pro shop and just have an honesty box for green fees?

Regarding the \$17,000 NGF survery the city paid for, I would like you to know that typically the NGF will have your report within 3 to 4 weeks. Through my contacts with the NGF I found out why the city has not received the report yet.

According to the sources, Mr. Weekes has failed to provide them with the criteria they asked for in mid-March. Until they receive this you are not going to get your report. \$17,000 dollars for nothing I guess. Its a shame that the so called director of golf operations or whatever he calls himself is failing again.

Perhaps the people of Gallup should ask him about this \$17,000 report and find out for themselves what's going on.

I don't even live there and can find out more if you want. It's not only what you know but who you know when you want to find out information.

By the way, has any one ever found out why the city didn't advertise the director of golf operations job? How come a person hired as a superintendent all of a sudden became the Director?

What are his qualifications? Has anyone asked?

Well still trying to get resolution on the golf course, guess it's just going to go down hill, (it can't go much further cause its almost at the bottom).

Tom Noe,
Albuquerque

Thank You!

To Editor:
To the vendors who participated in our first Route 66 Bike and Balloon Rally. I hope your investment

was returned it 100 fold. Your hard work was evident in you enthusiasm.

To Ben Welch and the city crew from Parks and Recreation, your efforts to accomate our every need were outstanding. To Debbie Garcia, your liason with City Hall made for a smooth and successful rally.

To the Gallup Police Dept., add to your credo of "Serve and Protect" "with dignity", your officers were very helpful and courteous.

To the men and women of McKinley West Fire Dept., your posting of colors and directing traffic were a credit to your department.

To the Over the Hill Car Club, your presence was hostalgic.

To Gerald Valdez, Joe Mesich, Cory Kline, Larry Linford and Robert Morrisette of Sun Dance Ironriders, your handling of the games and scavenger hunt were the talk of the rally.

To Maria Ortega Ramirez and the Abate motorcycle Club, very professional.

To Bobby Trujillo, Mike Touchine and Danny Unale and the members of American Legion Riders, great work veterans.

Fire Chief Soto, Chevy Morales and Raymond Ross, your insistence on the code, kept our vendors and rally guests safe.

To Mayor Harry Mendoza, it was your idea that put Gallup on the map in the Biker Realm.

And especially to the members of the committee, who did so much of the groundwork, ideas, soliciting, long hours, and many, many meetings. Rick Eustace, Robert Day, Danny Unale, Maria and Zack Ramirez, The Steadman family and Morgan Newsom. To all the Gallup merchants that donated money and gift certificates, you made Gallup prouder.

To Bill Lee, chairman of the balloon portion and his staff, your expertise is a credit to the chamber and the Gallup Community.

Thanks again to all of you.

Bill Martinez
Chairman

Illegal Hopi Council

To Editor:
On June 1, the so-called Hopi Tribal Council recessed till June 6. As a result, no action was taken on an agenda item 12-2009 which reads "to conduct a special election due to the resignations of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman."

I am convinced that this council will not allow 12-2009 to be approved in any event.

These representatives and the general counsel deliberately decided to violate the amendment to the Hopi Tribal Constitution approved by the members of the tribe in August 1969, and also approved by the secretary of the Interior.

They violated this amendment in

two places. First, they violated Article IV, section 7, which reads as follows: "The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be elected by secret ballot by all members of the Hopi Tribe." This provided that the presiding officer of the Tribal Council shall no longer be elected from within the Council as was done in the past. 007-2009 violated this law by allowing the Council to elect a presiding officer from the Council.

Second, they violated Article V, Section 5, which reads "vacancies occurring for any reason in the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman or in the office of any other officer shall be filled for the rest of the term in the same manner as those officers are ordinarily chosen."

This section continues to be violated because the general counsel and councilors are unwilling to allow a special election to take place. They interpret this section to mean that it does not authorize a special election because the word "special" is not the section. Therefore, they reason that these vacancies can only be filled at the general election in November because this also said "in the same manner as those officers are ordinarily chosen."

I disagree with this interpretation. To me, the key words in this section are "for the rest of the term." The only possible way that the rest of the term can be filled is by a special election. Otherwise, why put these words in the section?

These are the reasons why I maintain and will maintain that 007-2009 is illegal and a violation of the Hopi Tribal Constitution. In my opinion, every decision of this council pursuant to this resolution is illegal. In my opinion, the only way this can be corrected is by a special election where, we the members of the Hopi Tribe will by secret ballot elect a chairman and vice-chairman.

I have taken the liberty as an American citizen to make some recommendations to the federal authorities to intervene into our situation. However, some say that they will not intervene because this is a matter of internal affairs of the tribe. The BIA have already taken this position. They only thing that I can say is "we shall see".

I feel that we have to try because to me, a deliberate violation of the tribal constitution, even with the best of intentions, is wrong. Violations of one's oath of office to uphold and defend the Hopi Constitution is also wrong especially when it is sanctioned by "so help me God." Nevertheless, this is what these village representatives have done and continue to do. I will never accept any justification for these violations because you can never make a wrong a right.

Caleb H. Johnson
Kykotsmivi



Letters to the Editor policy

GALLUP — The Independent encourages letters to the editor, which are published twice weekly — Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Letters must include writer's name, address and phone number although only the name and community of residence will be published.

Letters may not exceed 500 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. The Independent may choose not to print any letter for any reason.

Anyone may submit a letter, and there is no charge for publication.

Letters may be mailed, delivered in person, faxed or e-mailed to: Editor, The Independent, P.O. Box 1210, Gallup, New Mexico 87305, (505) 722-5750 (fax); editorialgallup@yahoo.com (e-mail).

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The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

-Isaiah 35:1