

Cheer Up, Charlie

By Carrie Ellis

When I started scripting this column the day before President Obama's inauguration, I began writing the introductory paragraph several times, but kept running head-first into a wall. I wanted to write a somewhat motivational column, as opposed to what you're probably used to reading these days, and I wanted to be able to light a fire under your you-know-whats (as well as my own). But I couldn't do it because I didn't feel it within me either.

Rather I found myself apologizing for the bleak monologue with phrases like "with as much motivation as I can muster" and disclaimer sentences, such as, "I know, I know. What a way to start up a motivational column, but here goes a valiant effort anyway."

It's just a day later, and I find myself full of inspiration. On my way into work, I even found happy tears of hope in the corners of my eyes (whilst listening to NPR and anecdotes of those present for the inauguration), from absorbing the sheer heft and weight of the day that means so much to so many. Knowing how much the economical news has affected my personal friends, family and co-workers, I am just bursting with the notion that change is on the horizon.

So does this mean that we should sit back on our heels while waiting for it to happen like I'm sure most Americans are intending to do? Of course not—our jobs as citizens don't end at voters' polls. And even if you don't/didn't back President Obama, why should you throw his call to action to the wind? Don't you have as much responsibility to your fellow citizens as he?

I recall specifically writing an essay for a contest on what I thought America meant when I was in fifth or sixth grade. Even at that age and immaturity of mind, I likened the landmarks and philosophies of our nation to a wise old woman—a lady America if you will. The gnarled roots of ancient trees that have been around for seemingly forever were akin to her arthritic hands that have toiled in hard labor to sustain her family and the American dream. Blah, blah, blah, and so on and so forth—you get the gist.

Much to my chagrin, however, a friend of mine wanted to read my essay to garner some ideas for her own, and upon finishing it, she advised me to rewrite it as she didn't think it had anything to do with America. Despite my confidence in the aesthetics of the essay, I worried whether I had hit the target on content. (Mind you, we were also writing the essay for a mandatory homework assignment and subsequent grade.)

However, when it came right down to handing in the essay, I didn't change a thing. I decided to stick to the ideology behind my essay, which was that people are the

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essence of America. In summation, I concluded that its constituents and their fortitude are its strength.

Needless to say, the judges of the contest sided with me. I was one out of two to win that middle school competition, and I received an A on my paper. (I only tell you because I know that you were concerned.)

So although failing in the first several drafts of this column, I still hope to inspire a little bit of drive in you as inspiration ultimately (even if only amongst those more active contributors to society) should lead to motivation—that is, if people deem the cause worth it—especially in the here, especially in the now.

I understand that it's difficult to pluck out any good news from all of the media naysayers, but there are some economic indicators that may give us cause to look skyward rather than at our shabby sneakers. First off, consumer prices are down as a result of the downward trend in energy prices as manufacturers find themselves paying lower gas prices for distribution. If this remains consistent for any length of time, consumers may be able to count on some cash flow being freed up as a result.

Another positive indication can be found in this [Manufacturing.net article](#) [1] that proclaims IBM's new plan of attack, which is basically to act without regard to the negative financial outlook of America. Instead, the company plans to outmaneuver the crisis by outsmarting it in various ways.

Hope is all we need to bind us together as one people to eke out the change we seek so achingly, but we need more than just that binding. We need action, and President Obama has directly asked for our help.

At this juncture, even if it seems that all we can do is make the best of a very precarious situation, rather than snivel about the fairness of it all, let's look at it as an opportunity for betterment. America's current—and currency—instability issues has all of us fraying partially at the seams, but amongst the financial chaos, it behooves us to put our nervous energy into something a bit more positive.

While we can't individually do a whole lot about the American corporations collapsing under their own dinosaur-like weight or predict exactly where this country will be in five years, we can control some things, such as our goals and follow-through behaviors, and even more importantly, our mind-sets.

One of the tidbits I gathered while listening to NPR on my drive in this morning was: "You can't endure the light without feeling the heat." Well, here's to feeling the heat and hopefully being guided into the light.

I'd love to hear your opinion. Feel free to send me an e-mail at carrie.ellis@advantagemedia.com [2].

Thanks for your thoughts. I appreciate the cheer-up message. But I do take umbrage with t doesn't mean industrious people are sitting on their keisters waiting for the green light from offense.)

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We are working productively, efficiently and, even though I risk aspersions being cast at me by the subculture. It's just that the mainstream doesn't believe this unless everything is green and

Thanks,

Ray

Nice editorial. I hear a lot of comments from folks like your commenter, Ray, who seems to have "confidence" (or some similar BS) on the part of the American people and that, as soon as we get rid of the useless crap from China, things will be rosy again, and the economy will be miraculously healed.

Unless and until we face up to the tough problems and make a substantial change in our course, things are not going to get any better. Of course we have the capability as a nation to do this, and creativity, which have served us so well in past crises, and only if we do not let a few fat cats sustaining their own bloated bottom line.

Best regards,

Kim L. Ground

Tampa, FL

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[1] <http://www.manufacturing.net/News-IBM-Optimistic-About-2009-Despite-Dreary-Forecasts-012109.aspx>

[2] <mailto:carrie.ellis@advantagemedia.com>