

## Clinton has second chance, search for history

After a joyous inauguration, the president's second term will be far from a joyride

It had been 60 years since a Democratic president last celebrated an inaugural sequel, so Bill Clinton placed his hand on the family Bible on Monday assured of at least that niche in history. But his legacy remains as uncertain at the dawn of his second term as it was when he took the oath four years ago.

Putting that first term of inconsistency behind him, Clinton spoke in awe of the historic threshold that will frame his presidency — the dawn of the 21st Century.

"A moment that will define our course — and our character — for decades to come," he called it. But what of a defining moment for him, America's youthful leader of so many seeming contradictions? Given a second chance, but with a Republican Congress as his chaperone, where will Clinton's search for history lead the nation?

**ANALYSIS**  
**John King**

The possibilities are many; the path to achieve uncertain.

Perhaps a balanced budget and, as a result, a redefined Democratic Party, freed of its tax-and-spend label. Maybe Middle East peace or some other landmark success abroad. Steps to put Social Security and Medicare on firmer financial footing are being discussed.

Or, perhaps, it will be a distinction less coveted, some blemish or scar from investigations into questionable Democratic fund-raising or past dealings in Arkansas.

His own thoughts squarely on earning a place in history, Clinton called for an end to "the politics of petty bickering and extreme partisanship."

The prospect of bipartisan cooperation will be sorely tested in the weeks ahead, as Clinton unveils his budget and seeks a fresh start with Republican congressional leaders he cast as callous and mean-spirited in his reelection campaign.

The target for many such barbs was House Speaker Newt Gingrich, like Clinton both a student of history and a man whose foibles often overshadow his considerable talents. Eager for a fresh start of his own, the speaker was in a forgiving mood on Inauguration Day.

"While we may disagree on some things, here you are among friends," Gingrich told Clinton and Vice President Al Gore at the traditional Capitol luncheon.

Such a cooperative tone is likely to echo through Feb. 4, when Clinton delivers his State of the Union address. But there already are myriad signs of the conflict that will follow Clinton's budget submission two days later.

Throughout late 1995 and 1996, Clinton pummeled Republicans for their plan to significantly control Medicare spending as part of a blueprint for balancing the budget. In 1997, Republicans want Clinton to take the lead in proposing significant Medicare reforms, but Clinton has decided to push more modest savings. Republicans are in

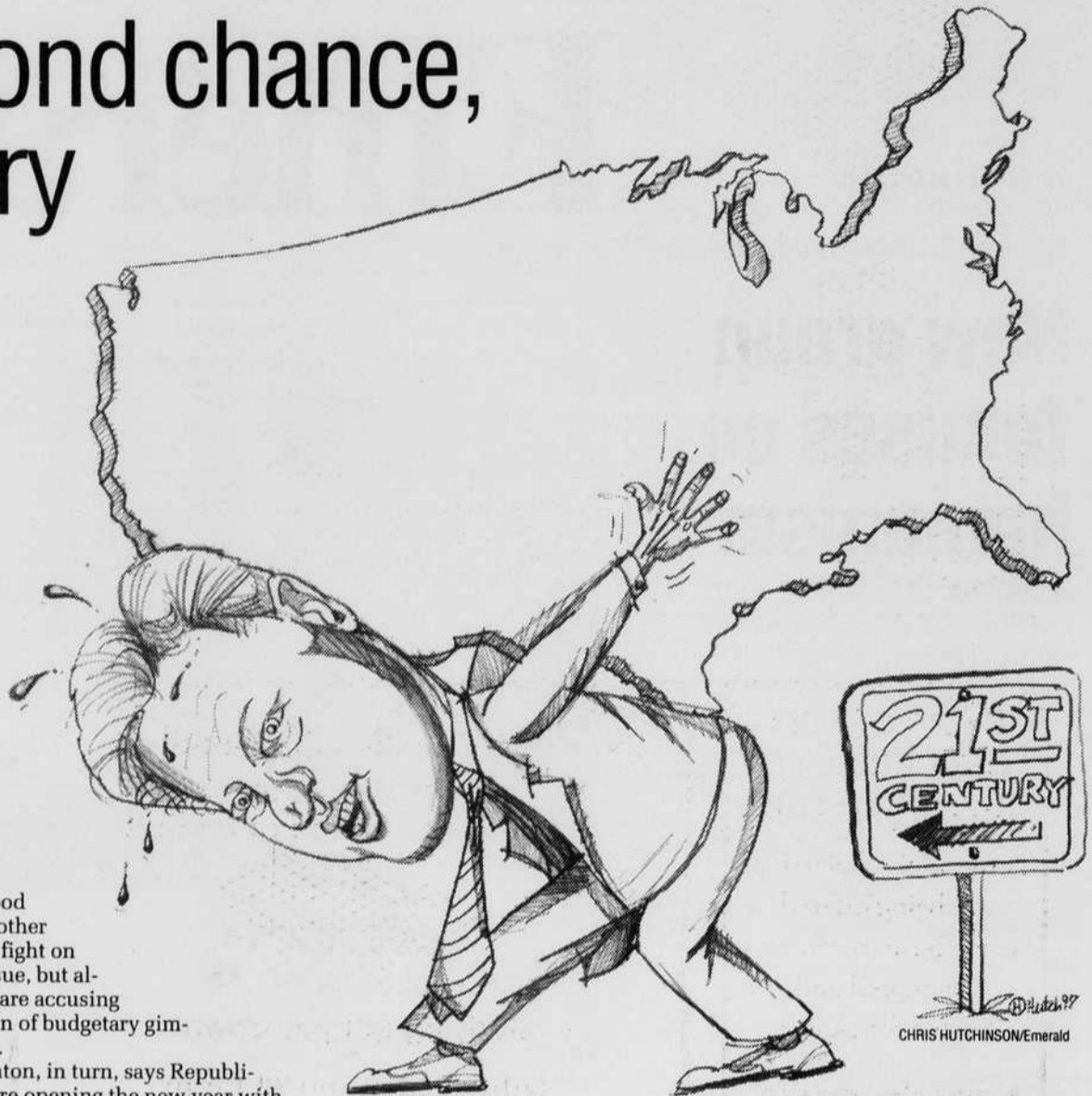
no mood for another major fight on the issue, but already are accusing Clinton of budgetary gimmicks.

Clinton, in turn, says Republicans are opening the new year with a gimmick of their own — a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott warned over the weekend that Clinton's team was putting the bipartisan spirit at risk with "hysterical" attacks on this GOP priority.

Clinton and Republicans also are at odds over the administration's plan to cut defense spending, money that Clinton needs to pay for tax cuts promised in last year's campaign as well as a bigger education budget and other Democratic domestic priorities.

Still, Lott and Gingrich said they were optimistic of reaching an agreement, and Clinton sounded more like a Republican than a Democrat at times in his speech, promising a leaner government that "lives within its means, and does more with less."

But as Clinton labors to resolve his differences with the Republicans, there will be pressures from Democrats as well, beginning with demands for major changes to the welfare law Clinton signed last year. Clinton has pledged to restore \$16 billion in cut welfare funding, but Republicans are in no mood for major changes.



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

Several lawmakers concerned about Social Security's solvency had hoped Clinton would use the national stage of his inauguration to push specific solutions, including changes in the way the government calculates inflation. But the president, chastened by failure to deliver the biggest promise of his first term — health care for all — would not go along, only promising vaguely to be part of the reform effort.

He was vague as well on the issue of campaign finance reform, an area of considerable disagreement between the political parties and an issue Clinton pushed in his 1992 campaign but largely ignored as president until his party's fund-raising came under scrutiny last year.

All this uncertainty, however, did not deter Clinton from grand thoughts of how he might be one day be remembered and he wished aloud near the end of his speech, "Let us shape the hope of this day into the noblest chapter of our history."

John King covers politics and Washington for The Associated Press.

**READER VOICES**

Should the cross on Skinner Butte be removed?



"I don't think it should be removed because it's a war memorial."

**Stacie Hutt**  
Landscape Architecture



"I'm not into this political correctness. [The cross] has been there this long, and if others feel offended because it has nothing to do with their religion, then don't be here."

**Ed Hartley**  
Journalism



"I don't think it should be on public land because it's a cross and that's a violation of church and state. It's ridiculous that the city of Eugene is making a huge controversy over this."

**Maria Isabel Rodriguez**  
General Science



"No, [it shouldn't be removed], I don't think there is a separation of church and state in this country anyway."

**Julie Toupal**  
English



"Yes, I think it should be removed. I think it's important that public land should not contain symbols of religion. The separation of church and state should be protected at all costs."

**Philip Green**  
History



"If [the cross] is a tribute the community decided to give to the [war] veterans, then it should be able to stay."

**Roland Ahyes**  
Journalism

### Letters policy

Letters to the editor must be typed, double spaced and include the author's name, signature and phone number. The identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

Letters must be limited to 250 words or less. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar or style.

### Correction

In the Jan. 17 story "Mock date rape trial ends in hung jury," Judge Lauren Holland was quoted as saying: "I thought it was a great opportunity to talk about issues people don't really like to talk about." John Dodd, also quoted in the story, said Judge Holland said this. The quote should not have been in quotation marks.