

Bitterness abounds in the race ahead

Working for a political campaign is good preparation for covering politics as a journalist. When I worked in the 1970 Tom Walsh for Portland City Council campaign, I canvassed North Portland homes. It was an education in many things. Most of all, I realized the broad mass of Portlanders were unaware there was an election coming until about two weeks out. As election day approached, you could see the growing curiosity.

Sixteen months prior to the 2016 presidential election, there is more buzz than I remember last time around — about who's running and what's at stake.

While my wife and I were in Washington, D.C., recently we had dinner with two old friends, George and Julie. I knew these two from when I covered the office of Congressman Norm Dicks of Tacoma, Wash. Politics and real estate are the two staples of dinner conversation in Washington. While we out here might view the presidential primaries from a distance, Washington's political class speaks of it in proprietary terms.

The following night — over dinner at my cousin's home — we had the presidential election discussion again. And two nights later in Annapolis it came up during a reunion with six old friends.

When Seattle friends stayed with us during the Astoria Music Festival, the Republican field of candidates and Hillary Clinton came up. And last Saturday, when we visited some other Seattle friends, it came up.

My wife's listening leads her to believe there is enthusiasm among women about having a woman president, but there is a lack of enthusiasm among her friends for Hillary Clinton. One very connected woman (who has two photos of herself with Barack Obama) says she is not helping Hillary unless she is nominated.

If you read the commentary surrounding the race thus far — and I confess to reading a fair bit of it — you know the themes. There is the GOP Clown Car that makes Hillary look good. There is the Donald Trump theme — that he is the nightmare Republicans asked for. There is the Royal Families theme — that the election will come down to a dynasty (the Bushes) versus a would-be dynasty (the Clintons). And there are smaller themes that might be called phenomena: Carly Fiorina, Bernie Sanders. And always there is the theme of Big Money that fuels the anti-Clinton pack.

Focusing on candidates sometimes misses a much larger story. For instance, the flip side of Donald Trump's berating Mexicans is the sudden recognition that the Hispanic community has enormous economic and political clout. Similarly the flip side of GOP voter restrictions in 2012 was a black electorate that struck back by enduring an interminable wait to vote.

The insightful Gerald Seib of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote this week that the apparent choice is "optimism vs. anger." On the optimistic side is Jeb Bush. On the anger side are Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump.

My Washington friend George sent me a story from *The Week* proclaiming that the presidential race is all about the Supreme Court.



Steve Forrester



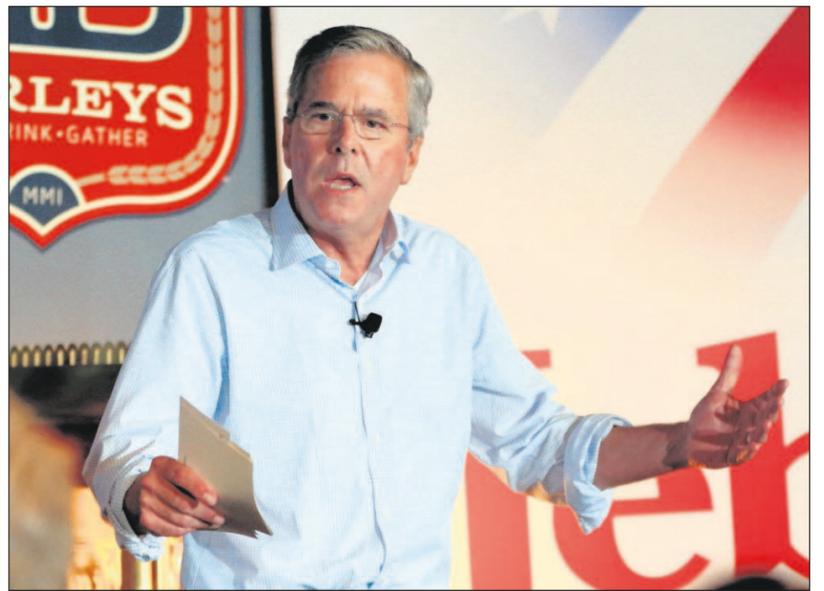
Seth Wenig/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks at a campaign event in New York Monday.



P. Kevin Morley/Richmond Times-Dispatch/AP

Donald Trump answers questions in Albemarle House, a property of his outside of Charlottesville, Va., Tuesday.



Nati Harnik/AP

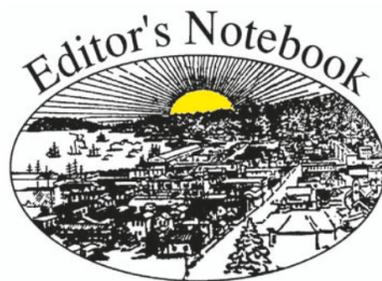
Republican presidential candidate former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush speaks during a meet and greet event in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Tuesday.

Optimism versus anger is how Gerald Seib describes the choice that's coming

centerpiece is the presidential gallery, where reside the Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington, the Matthew Brady photograph of Lincoln taken weeks prior to his assassination, a striking Norman Rockwell of Nixon, the Peter Hurd portrait of Lyndon Johnson ("the ugliest thing I've ever seen," said LBJ) and several studies and portraits of Franklin Roosevelt. There seem to be more portraiture — on canvas and in sculpture — of Andrew Jackson than of any other president. Old Hickory captured the popular imagination.

In 2012, I was impressed with how personal the anger over Barack Obama became here in Astoria. I was visited prior to the election by an angry friend whom I had not seen in months, if not years. My wife learned of an old Astoria friendship that was unilaterally severed because of Obama's election.

I have no doubt that what's coming will be acrimonious. Since the odds-on Democratic candidate will be the first woman nominated by a major party for president, that will be as big an ignition point as the first black candidate for president. — S.A.F.



In calamitous moments, visiting the past provides calming perspective. In Salem following the sudden departure of Gov. John Kitzhaber, I ruminated on the comforting stability of the Mark Hatfield era.

While in Washington, my wife and I visited the National Portrait Gallery. Its

The Dalai Lama gets mischievous

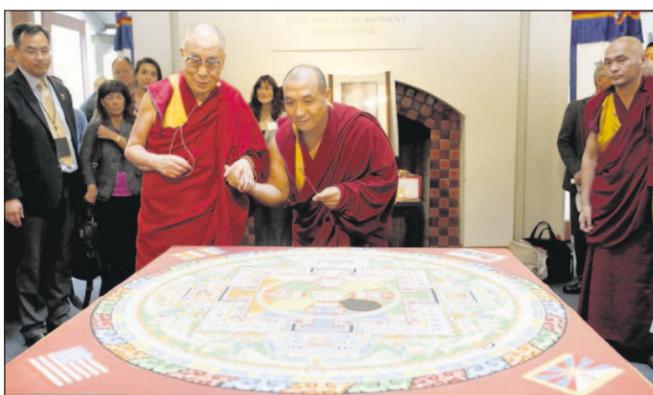
By NICHOLAS KRISTOF
New York Times News Service

The Dalai Lama, who may be the only octogenarian spiritual leader with a profoundly mischievous streak, has a suggestion for China's Communist leaders: Take up reincarnation.

I'm interviewing him in his hotel room in New York, at the end of an overseas tour marking his 80th birthday, and we're talking about what happens after he dies.

He is the 14th Dalai Lama, each considered a reincarnation of the previous one, and usually after one has died a search is undertaken for an infant to become the next. But he has said that he may be the last of the line, or that the next Dalai Lama might emerge outside Tibet — or might even be a girl.

This talk infuriates Beijing, which is determined to choose the next Dalai Lama (to use as a tool to control Tibet). So, startlingly, the atheists in the Chinese Communist Party have been insisting that Buddhist reincarnation must continue.



Francine Orr/Los Angeles Times/AP

The Dalai Lama, left, with Tibetan monk Sherab Chopel, right, the artist who created the mandala, view the mandala together during a private event July 7 at the Banning House at the University of California, in Irvine. The sand mandala was created in honor of the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday.

"The Chinese Communist Party is pretending that they know more about the reincarnation system than the Dalai Lama," said the Dalai Lama, laughing. "The Chinese Communists should accept the concept of rebirth. Then they should recognize the reincarnation of Chairman Mao Zedong, then Deng Xiaoping. Then they have the right to involve them-

selves in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation."

The Dalai Lama hinted that he would hold some kind of referendum among Tibetan exiles, and consultations among Tibetans within China, about whether a new Dalai Lama should succeed him. The issue will be formally resolved around his 90th birthday, he said.

The next Dalai Lama might emerge outside Tibet — or might even be a girl.

One reason to end the line, he suggested, is that a future Dalai Lama might be "naughty" and diminish the position. His biggest concern seems to be that after he dies, China will select a new pet Dalai Lama who may act as a quisling to help the Chinese control Tibet and to give legitimacy to their policies there.

"Sadly, the precedent has been set," he said, referring to the Panchen Lama, the second most important reincarnated lama in Tibetan Buddhism. After the 10th Panchen Lama died in 1989, China kidnapped the baby chosen by Tibetans as his successor and helped anoint a different child as the 11th Panchen Lama. Nobody knows what happened to the real Panchen Lama.

I admire the Dalai Lama enormous-

ly, and in 2007 he bravely used my column to send an important olive branch to Beijing — only to be criticized by fellow Tibetans as too conciliatory, and rejected as insincere by China. But I told him that I also thought there were times when he had been too cautious and had missed opportunities for rapprochement with Beijing. My examples: In the 1980s, when the leaders Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang sought compromise on Tibet; after the 10th Panchen Lama died; and in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics.

The Dalai Lama was having none of that — he doesn't think he missed opportunities. But he acknowledged that Zhao had been sympathetic and added that if Zhao and Hu had not been ousted, "the Tibetan issue would already be solved, no question."

To my surprise, the Dalai Lama was also enthusiastic about Xi Jinping, the current Chinese leader. He spoke admiringly of Xi's anti-corruption campaign, said Xi's mother was "very religious, a very devout Buddhist," and noted Xi himself had spoken positively of Buddhism.

So, President Xi, if you're reading this, the Dalai Lama would like to visit China. How about an invitation?



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