

January 1, 2015

Matthew Continetti writes on ubiquitous media bias.

On November 5, the morning after Republicans made historic gains in Congress, data guru Nate Silver issued a pronouncement. "The Polls Were Skewed Toward Democrats," read the headline on his website, FiveThirtyEight.com. For much of the 2014 election cycle, Silver wrote, Democrats had griped that polls were failing to capture the minorities, millennials, singles, and other members of the "coalition of the ascendant" responsible for Barack Obama's presidency.

It turned out that the Democrats were wrong. The polls hadn't overestimated Republican strength. They had underestimated it. And while the polls might have misjudged Democratic numbers as recently as 2012, the polls in the 2014 election, like those in 1994 and 2002, misjudged the GOP. "This evidence suggests," wrote Silver, "that polling bias has been largely unpredictable from election to election."

Media bias, on the other hand, is remarkably predictable from election to election. It always favors Democrats—preferably liberal ones. Not only did Republicans in 2014 labor under the burden of skewed polls; they also had to compensate for a skewed media. And when the results came in, it was schadenfreude time. They may not have been on the ballot, but the media were among the biggest losers of 2014. ...

... Who were the most exciting candidates of 2014? Ed Gillespie came astonishingly close to upsetting Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, and Larry Hogan won the governor's race in Maryland. They were down in the polls heading into the election—way down. Since the press deemed them both long shots, they received hardly any coverage. Of course. Both Gillespie and Hogan are Republicans.

To some extent, the floating liberal cheering section—in Kansas one week, in South Dakota the next, in Georgia, in North Carolina—can be explained by faulty polls that deceptively showed Orman, Pressler, Nunn, and incumbent Democrat Kay Hagan as competitive. Skewed polls contributed to skewed media. ...

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The Times piece led with an anecdote about Ed Gillespie, whose ObamaCare-replacement proposal has been widely praised. But, the Times said, "Almost no one took up the cause." That depends on how you define "almost no one." Enough people took it up to put Gillespie within striking distance on Election Day. Republicans ran more ads attacking ObamaCare than ads on any other issue in the closing weeks of the campaign. Every single Republican elected to the Senate supports repeal. Forty-seven percent of voters in the national exit poll said ObamaCare goes too far.

*Republicans didn't stop talking about Obama-Care. The media stopped listening. Their biases and parochialism were why they got the election entirely wrong. Losers. **(The next item in Today's Pickings is Pickerhead's compilation of a month's of media headlines providing a good example of the points Matt Continetti makes here.)***

Here's a sampling of Pickerhead's Compilation of Media Cheer Leading for Dems in the month before the election.

10/27 [Yes, Texas Could Turn Blue](#) - John Judis, *The New Republic*

10/29 [There Are No Easy Wins for Republicans](#) - Kirsten Powers, *USA Today*

10/30 [Why the Polls May Be Undercounting Dems](#) - Nate Cohn, *New York Times*

11/01 [Early Voting Numbers Look Good for Dems](#) - Nate Cohn, *New York Times*

11/02 [Why 2014 is Actually Shaping Up as a Bad GOP Year](#) - Nate Cohn, *NYTimes*

From time to time **Thomas Sowell** digs into his notes and brings to the surface thoughts that did not lead to a column. He gets a column out of a collection of them called Random Thoughts.

Now that Barack Obama is ruling by decree, he seems more like a king than a president. Maybe it is time we change the way we address him. "Your Majesty" may be a little too much, but perhaps "Your Royal Glibness" might be appropriate.

When Professor Jonathan Gruber of M.I.T. boasted of fooling the "stupid" American public, that was not just a personal quirk of his. It epitomized a smug and arrogant attitude that is widespread among academics at elite institutions. There should be an annual "Jonathan Gruber award" for the most smug and arrogant statement by an academic. There would be thousands eligible every year

Every society has some people who don't respect the law. But, when it is the people in charge of the law — like the President of the United States and his Attorney General — who don't respect it, that is when we are in big trouble.

And now, the annual **Dave Barry Year In Review**.

It was a year of mysteries. To list some of the more baffling ones:

A huge airliner simply vanished, and to this day nobody has any idea what happened to it, despite literally thousands of hours of intensive speculation on CNN.

Millions of Americans suddenly decided to make videos of themselves having ice water poured on their heads. Remember? There were rumors that this had something to do with charity, but for most of us, the connection was never clear. All we knew was that, for a while there, every time we turned on the TV, there was a local newscaster or Gwyneth Paltrow or Kermit the Frog or some random individual soaking wet and shivering. This mysterious phenomenon ended as suddenly as it started, but not before uncounted trillions of American brain cells died of frostbite.

An intruder jumped the White House fence and, inexplicably, managed to run into the White House through the unlocked front door. Most of us had assumed that anybody attempting this would instantly be converted to a bullet-ridden pile of smoking carbon by snipers, lasers, drones, ninjas, etc., but it turned out that, for some mysterious reason, the White House had effectively the same level of anti-penetration security as a Dunkin' Donuts.

LeBron James deliberately moved to Cleveland.

Of course not everything that happened in 2014 was mysterious. Some developments — ISIS, Ebola, the song "Happy" — were simply bad.

There was even some good news in 2014, mostly in the form of things that did not happen. A number of GM cars — the final total could be as high as four — were not recalled. There were several whole days during which no statements had to be issued by the U.S. Department of Explaining What the Vice President Meant to Say. And for the fifth consecutive year, the Yankees failed to even play in the World Series.

But other than that, it was a miserable 12 months. In case you have forgotten why, let's take one last look back, starting with ...

... Elsewhere abroad, NBA legend and idiot Dennis Rodman makes a fourth visit to North Korea to hang out with his misunderstood pal Kim Jong Un, who defeats Rodman 168-0 in a friendly one-on-one game refereed by the North Korean army, then celebrates by firing a missile at Japan. ...

... In sports, the largest audience in American TV history tunes in to watch one of the most anticipated Super Bowls in years, pitting the Denver Broncos against the Seattle Seahawks in a historic matchup so boring that the entire second half is preempted by Bud Light commercials. In other football news, Michael Sam, a defensive end for the University of Missouri, makes history by becoming the first college football player to openly declare that he actually attended some classes.

...

... Russia, ignoring both the Stern Warnings and the Harsh Sanctions, continues its military intervention in Ukraine, leaving the United States with no choice but to deploy the ultimate weapon: Vice President Biden, who is sent to Kiev to deliver a Strong Rebuke, followed by dinner.

On the domestic front, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, who oversaw the rollout of Obamacare, resigns from the Cabinet to take a position overseeing e-mail storage for the Internal Revenue Service. ...

... In sports, the month's biggest event is the National Football League draft, which draws 32 million viewers, who tune in to witness the high-voltage excitement of Roger Goodell walking to a microphone every 10 minutes to read a name, kind of like a slower version of bingo. The Kentucky Derby is won by a 2005 Chevrolet Malibu that escaped the steering recall. ...

... In sports, the top college football teams play in the traditional year-end bowl games, including the TaxSlayer Bowl, the Bitcoin Bowl, the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl, the Duck Commander Independence Bowl and the Thunderous Bidet Bowl. All but one of these are actual bowl games.

...

Commentary
Unskew the Press
by Matthew Continetti

On November 5, the morning after Republicans made historic gains in Congress, data guru Nate Silver issued a pronouncement. “The Polls Were Skewed Toward Democrats,” read the headline on his website, FiveThirtyEight.com. For much of the 2014 election cycle, Silver wrote, Democrats had griped that polls were failing to capture the minorities, millennials, singles, and other members of the “coalition of the ascendant” responsible for Barack Obama’s presidency.

It turned out that the Democrats were wrong. The polls hadn’t overestimated Republican strength. They had underestimated it. And while the polls might have misjudged Democratic numbers as recently as 2012, the polls in the 2014 election, like those in 1994 and 2002, misjudged the GOP. “This evidence suggests,” wrote Silver, “that polling bias has been largely unpredictable from election to election.”

Media bias, on the other hand, is remarkably predictable from election to election. It always favors Democrats—preferably liberal ones. Not only did Republicans in 2014 labor under the burden of skewed polls; they also had to compensate for a skewed media. And when the results came in, it was schadenfreude time. They may not have been on the ballot, but the media were among the biggest losers of 2014.

The press had championed Texas state senator Wendy Davis ever since her filibuster of a pro-life bill last year. Her looks, her life story, her wardrobe—all became subjects of praise. “Why Wendy Davis’s Iconic Shoes Are Newsworthy,” read a headline in the Daily Beast. And this was one of the milder things written about her.

Texas Monthly featured Davis on its August 2013 cover. She stood imposingly in between Congressman Joaquin Castro and his brother Julian, now secretary of Housing and Urban Development. “Can Wendy Davis, the Castro Brothers, and Team Obama’s vaunted field operation return their party to power?” the magazine asked. Last February, Davis appeared on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine*. The question on the editors’ minds: “Can Wendy Davis Have It All?”

No and no. Money can’t buy you love, and love from the media can’t buy you victory. Davis lost to state attorney general Greg Abbott by 20 points.

As the election approached and chances of a Republican takeover of the Senate increased, journalists zigzagged from state to state, searching for the man or woman who would rescue the Senate from the clutches of Mitch McConnell. E.J. Dionne’s column in the *Washington Post* became a sort of running advertisement for the latest Democratic hope. On October 29, he detected “Moderate Thunder Out of Kansas.” The Republican bastion, he suggested, was finally coming to its senses. **(The following item in today’s Pickings is Pickerhead’s compilation of**

media headlines providing a good example of the point Matt Continetti makes here in this paragraph.)

“Conservatism at its finest has been defined by a devotion to moderation,” Dionne wrote. And by firing their governor, Sam Brownback, “conservative Kansas may remind the nation that this is still true.” Uh oh: Brownback won reelection 50 percent to 46 percent. So much for that.

As for Kansas’s Senate race, Greg Orman wasn’t just the “independent” liberal challenging the Republican senator, Pat Roberts. He was, according to the *Atlantic*, “the Mystery Candidate Shaking Up Kansas Politics.” The NBC political unit called Orman “The Most Interesting Man in Politics This November.” The *Economist* struck a martial note, dubbing him “Stormin’ Orman.” But this wasn’t a war. It was a rout. Orman lost by 10 points.

The media seized on early-October polling from the South Dakota Senate race. Former liberal Republican senator Larry Pressler, running as an Independent, appeared to be gaining on longtime favorite Mike Rounds, a Republican. “South Dakota Senate Race Suddenly Looks Harder to Predict,” read the headline of a post by Nate Cohn, the *New York Times*’s replacement Nate.

Several days later, the paper ran a front-page story declaring South Dakota “a free-for-all.” One *New York Times* columnist wrote, “I love the fact that Pressler is back, once again disproving the most untrue truism in American literature, that there are no second acts in American life.” And now we can all look forward to a third act from Pressler, who earned just 17 percent of the vote. Mike Rounds was elected with 50 percent.

And let us not forget Democrat Michelle Nunn of Georgia, or, as NPR called her, “the great blue hope.” She ran against Republican David Perdue for an open Senate seat. Georgia, wrote *Roll Call*, offered the Democrats “their best offensive opportunity.” Nunn is “giving Republicans a real scare in a Senate race the GOP thought it had put away,” wrote E.J. Dionne. “If there’s a formula for winning as a Democrat in Georgia,” wrote a reporter for MSNBC, “Michelle Nunn thinks she’s found it.” She must have lost it. The final tally was 53 percent for Perdue and 45 percent for Nunn.

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To some extent, the floating liberal cheering section—in Kansas one week, in South Dakota the next, in Georgia, in North Carolina—can be explained by faulty polls that deceptively showed Orman, Pressler, Nunn, and incumbent Democrat Kay Hagan as competitive. Skewed polls contributed to skewed media.

But hinky polling does not explain the media’s devotion to storylines that the returns exposed as utterly spurious. Take the talking point that racial discord would boost black turnout. Last summer, in the middle of the controversy over police conduct in Missouri, the *New York Times* broadcast the Democratic strategy: “At Risk in Senate, Democrats Seek to Rally Blacks.” President Obama and black leaders, the *Times* reported, were telling “black voters to channel their anger by voting Democratic in the midterm elections.”

On October 18, the *Times* published a story headlined “Black Vote Seen as Last Hope for Democrats to Hold Senate.” Then, less than two weeks later, a third story appeared: “In Democratic Election Ads in South, A Focus on Racial Scars.” It reported on Democratic attempts to

link Republicans to the death not only of Brown, but also of Trayvon Martin, and to slavery, lynching, and impeachment. “For many African Americans,” wrote the (white) author of the piece, “feelings of persecution—from voter ID laws, aggressive police forces, and a host of other social problems—are hard to overstate.”

And they are hard to turn into votes. The race baiting, in which the Ferguson-obsessed national media was complicit, failed. Black turnout was neither similar to nor greater than it was in 2012. It fell to its 2010 level, contributing to Republican gains.

Another bogus storyline was that ObamaCare wasn’t a factor in the election. A writer for the *Washington Post* said in August that the health-care law was “not really a big voting issue heading into the final three months of the 2014 campaign.” *U.S. News & World Report* called the health-care law “the incredible shrinking issue.” The *New York Times* called the repeal of ObamaCare a “side issue.”

The *Times* piece led with an anecdote about Ed Gillespie, whose ObamaCare-replacement proposal has been widely praised. But, the *Times* said, “Almost no one took up the cause.” That depends on how you define “almost no one.” Enough people took it up to put Gillespie within striking distance on Election Day. Republicans ran more ads attacking ObamaCare than ads on any other issue in the closing weeks of the campaign. Every single Republican elected to the Senate supports repeal. Forty-seven percent of voters in the national exit poll said ObamaCare goes too far.

Republicans didn’t stop talking about Obama-Care. The media stopped listening. Their biases and parochialism were why they got the election entirely wrong. Losers.

Matthew Continetti, who appears monthly in this space, is editor in chief of the Washington Free Beacon.

Pickerhead's Compilation of Media Cheer Leading for Dems

October 7th to Election Day November 4th

It truly is a hoot to read the titles of the liberal media's dreams.

- 10/7 [How Dems Could Maintain Senate Control](#) - Stuart Rothenberg, Roll Call
[Why Walker Is So Terrified of Burke in Wisconsin](#) - Joan Walsh, Salon
[Why Is Obama Making Election About Himself?](#) - David Graham, Atlantic
- 10/8 [In Defense of Obama](#) - Paul Krugman, Rolling Stone
[Evidence Suggests Dems Running Better Campaigns](#) - Nate Cohn, NYT
[Senate Battle Shaping Up 50-50](#) - Brent Budowsky, The Hill
- 10/9 [A Tar Heel Rebellion Against Reaction](#) - E.J. Dionne, Washington Post
[Bill Clinton Will Save Arkansas - and the Senate](#) - James Carville, The Hill
[The Triumph of the Democratic Party](#) - Francis Wilkinson, Bloomberg

10/10 [Republicans' Strategy Won't Fool Women Voters](#) - Sally Kohn, CNN
[How Obama Saved His Presidency](#) - Ezra Klein, Vox

10/11 [The Right's Relentless War on Women](#) - Kristen Doerer, American Prospect

Sunday

10/12 [Insulting Women Won't Win Election for GOP](#) - Amanda Marcotte, USAT
[Orman Would Bring Needed Change to U.S. Senate](#) - Kansas City Star

10/13 [Rand Paul Wants You to Be Very Afraid](#) - Sally Kohn, The Daily Beast
[How Republicans Lost the Culture War](#) - Bill Scher, Politico
[Senate Victory Won't Heal Republican Divisions](#) - Juan Williams, The Hill
[War on Women Continues, Just More Quietly](#) - Eleanor Clift, Daily Beast
[Senate Forecasts Aren't Obvious. Look at Kansas](#) - John Harwood, NYT
[The Big Lie Behind Voter ID Laws](#) - New York Times

10/14 [Election 2014: Why Voters Don't Care](#) - Julian Zelizer, CNN
[Can Climate Change Unite the Left?](#) - Naomi Klein, In These Times

10/15 [A Life Raft for Hagan in N.C.?](#) - Katrina vanden Heuvel, Washington Post
[Denver Post's Awful Endorsment in Colorado](#) - Gary Hart, Huffington Post
[Democrats Who Run From Obama Take a Risk](#) - Donna Brazile, CNN

10/16 [Republicans Aren't Guaranteed to Win](#) - Sam Wang, The New Republic
[This Election Is Tied, & GOP May Try to Steal It](#) - Rachel Maddow, MSNBC
[Four Ways Democrats Have Already Won](#) - Sally Kohn, CNN
[Republicans Want You to Be Terrified](#) - Brian Beutler, The New Republic
[Charlie Crist's Fan: A Love Story](#) - Molly Ball, The Atlantic

10/17 [When the Rick Hits the Fan in Florida](#) - Paul Begala, CNN
[Could the South Save the Democrats?](#) - Joy-Ann Reid, Miami Herald
[From "One Tough Nerd" to Embattled Governor](#) - Molly Ball, The Atlantic
[Republican Senate: America's Looming Freak Show](#) - Joan Walsh, Salon

10/18 [Klain Is a Great Choice for Ebola Czar](#) - Ezra Klein, Vox
[Democrats Put Prayers in Ground Game](#) - Cameron Joseph, The Hill
[Kentucky Showcases the Worst of Politics](#) - Michael Cohen, Boston Globe
[Our Downward Spiral Since Citizens United](#) - Norm Ornstein, Natl Journal

Sunday

10/19 [Republicans Pave Way to All-White Future](#) - Francis Wilkinson, Bloomberg
[Republicans Will Win--But 2014 Is Meaningless](#) - Andrew O'Hehir, Salon
[A Campaign With No Answers](#) - Ruth Marcus, Washington Post

10/20 [Republicans, Don't Undermine Government](#) - Sally Kohn, CNN
[Can the Dem Machine Beat Ernst in Iowa?](#) - Shane Goldmacher, Natl Jrnl
[North Carolina Voters Must Pick Between Negatives](#) - Al Hunt, Bloomberg
[Obama: One Very Successful President?](#) - Julian Zelizer, CNN

10/21 [Elizabeth Warren Makes the Case](#) - Eugene Robinson, Washington Post
[GOP Congress Would Be a Catastrophe](#) - Katrina vanden Heuvel, Wash Post

- 10/22 [In GA, Nunn Isn't Running From Obama](#) - Dana Milbank, Washington Post
[Why Voters Are So Totally Checked Out](#) - Eleanor Clift, The Daily Beast
- 10/23 [Can Landrieu Pull Off Another Louisiana Miracle?](#) - John Dickerson, Slate
[In Kentucky, Grimes Down - But Not Out](#) - Dana Milbank, Washington Post
[GOP Senate Would Be Shutdown Nightmare](#) - Annie Lowery, NY Magazine
[Southern Dem Stars in 2014](#) - Brent Budowsky, The Hill
- 10/24 [The Democrats' Closing Argument](#) - Jonathan Alter, The Daily Beast
[The Great Kansas Tea Party Disaster](#) - Mark Binelli, Rolling Stone
[Could Hagan's "Perfect" Campaign Lose?](#) - Alex Roarty, National Journal
[The Disgust Election](#) - Timothy Egan, New York Times
[Democrats Have Georgia Momentum](#) - Cameron Joseph, The Hill
- 10/25 [Democrats' Path of Last Resort Is Georgia](#) - Nate Silver, FiveThirtyEight
[Governors Miss Out on 2014 Conservative Wave](#) - Meredith Clark, MSNBC
[Independents Could Seize the Senate](#) - Norm Ornstein, The Atlantic
[Why Republican Control of Senate Would Be a Disaster](#) - The Nation

Sunday

- 10/26 [The Winner of Next Month's Election Is Obamacare](#) - Brian Beutler, TNR
[Can Ferguson Swing the Election?](#) - Joshua DuBois, The Daily Beast
- 10/27 [What If Democrats Win?](#) - A.B. Stoddard, The Hill
[Yes, Texas Could Turn Blue](#) - John Judis, The New Republic
[Boehner's Lame Lawsuit Stunt Fizzles](#) - Simon Maloy, Salon
- 10/28 [GOP Giddiness Over Hillary's "Gaffe" Will Backfire](#) - Brian Beutler, TNR
[A Catastrophe of Disenfranchisement](#) - Jeffrey Toobin, The New Yorker
[There's No Meat in the Iowa Senate Race](#) - Margaret Carlson, Bloomberg
[GOP's Big Senate Plans Are All Talk](#) - Danny Vinik, The New Republic
- 10/29 [Give WH More Credit for Crisis Management](#) - Danny Vinik, New Republic
[Republicans' Momentum Mirage](#) - Nate Silver & Harry Enten, FiveThirtyEight
[Mississippi, Burned by Conservatives](#) - Sarah Varney, Politico
[Republicans: Watch Out for Traps After Midterms](#) - Lanny Davis, The Hill
[There Are No Easy Wins for Republicans](#) - Kirsten Powers, USA Today
[Republicans Stoke False Border Fears](#) - Washington Post
- 10/30 [Why the Polls May Be Undercounting Dems](#) - Nate Cohn, New York Times
[Moderate Thunder Out of Kansas](#) - E.J. Dionne, Washington Post
[Dems Struggling to Tilt Colorado Blue](#) - Charles Lane, Washington Post
[To Fix Congress, Vote Right-Wingers Out](#) - Barney Frank, The Guardian
- 10/31 [GOP Has No Plan for the Country](#) - Eugene Robinson, Washington Post
[It Won't Be Obama's Fault If Dems Lose](#) - Brian Beutler, The New Republic
[Women Can't Fall for GOP Tricks](#) - Sally Kohn, The Daily Beast
[Win or Lose, Republicans Are a Wreck](#) - Francis Wilkinson, Bloomberg
[Republican Senate Win Could Splinter Party](#) - Norm Ornstein, Natl Journal
[Republicans: Over-Reaching & Underscoring](#) - Gary Younge, The Guardian

[Could Begich's Ground Game Save Him?](#) - Andrew Romano, Yahoo! News

- 11/1 [Early Voting Numbers Look Good for Dems](#) - Nate Cohn, New York Times
[Expect More Brinkmanship With GOP Senate](#) - Doyle McManus, LA Times
[GOP Wave Will Further Sink Black America](#) - Earl Hutchinson, Huff Post
[Enough! Martha Coakley Isn't "Choking"](#) - Jason Zengerle, New Republic
[8 Messaging Tips for Embattled Democrats](#) - Vic Fingerhut, In These Times

Sunday

- 11/2 [Why 2014 is Actually Shaping Up as a Bad GOP Year](#) - Nate Cohn, NYTimes
[Democrats Hope Turnout Will Save Senate](#) - Stephen Collinson, CNN
[Landrieu, Race & Phony GOP Outrage](#) - Jarvis DeBerry, NO Times-Picayune
[Obama Deserves More Credit Than He's Getting](#) - The Observer
[Kay Hagan the Best Choice for North Carolina](#) - Raleigh News & Observer
- 11/3 [Republicans Bank on Fear in Election](#) - Rachel Maddow, Washington Post
[Landrieu's Remark About Blacks Is True--& Shrewd](#) - Brian Beutler, TNR
[Cancel the Midterms](#) - Schanzer & Sullivan, New York Times
[Is 2014 Really a Republican Wave?](#) - Nate Silver, FiveThirtyEight

Election Day

- 11/4 [On Election Day, GOP Confident, Voters Sour](#) - Weisman & Parker, NYT
[Dems Make Mistake Running from Obama](#) - Jonathan Capehart, Wash Post
[Our Do-Nothing Politics](#) - Eugene Robinson, Washington Post
[Midterms Cover Everything Except an Agenda](#) - Albert Hunt, Bloomberg
[GOP Senate Could Lead to Court Disaster](#) - Jeffrey Rosen, New Republic

Jewish World Review

Random Thoughts

by Thomas Sowell

Random thoughts on the passing scene:

- Now that Barack Obama is ruling by decree, he seems more like a king than a president. Maybe it is time we change the way we address him. "Your Majesty" may be a little too much, but perhaps "Your Royal Glibness" might be appropriate.
- It tells us a lot about academia that the president of Smith College quickly apologized for saying, "All lives matter," after being criticized by those who are pushing the slogan, "Black lives matter." If science could cross breed a jellyfish with a parrot, it could create academic administrators.
- Mitt Romney seems to be ready to try again to run for president in 2016. But most defeated presidential candidates who ran again lost again. There are much stronger Republican candidates available now than there were in 2012, including governors Scott Walker of Wisconsin and Bobby Jindal of Louisiana. At this crucial juncture in the nation's history, why run a retreaded candidate?

- Explaining differences in achievements between groups often pits those who attribute these differences to ability against those who attribute differences to barriers. Neither seems to pay much attention to differences in what people want to do. Few guys from my old neighborhood were likely to end up as violinists or ballet dancers, simply because that was not what they were interested in.
- When Professor Jonathan Gruber of M.I.T. boasted of fooling the "stupid" American public, that was not just a personal quirk of his. It epitomized a smug and arrogant attitude that is widespread among academics at elite institutions. There should be an annual "Jonathan Gruber award" for the most smug and arrogant statement by an academic. There would be thousands eligible every year.
- Every society has some people who don't respect the law. But, when it is the people in charge of the law — like the President of the United States and his Attorney General — who don't respect it, that is when we are in big trouble.
- Has anyone asked the question, "How could so many people across the country spend so much time at night marching, rioting and looting, if they had to get up and go to work the next morning?"
- Hillary Clinton's idea that we have to see the world from our adversaries' point of view — and even "empathize" with it — is not new. Back in 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain said, "I have realized vividly how Herr Hitler feels." Ronald Reagan, however, made sure our adversaries understood how we felt. Reagan's approach turned out a lot better than Chamberlain's.
- Our schools and colleges are laying a guilt trip on those young people whose parents are productive, and who are raising them to become productive. What is amazing is how easily this has been done, largely just by replacing the word "achievement" with the word "privilege."
- There are few modest talents so richly rewarded — especially in politics and the media — as the ability to portray parasites as victims, and portray demands for preferential treatment as struggles for equal rights.
- Republicans complain when Democrats call them racists. But when have you ever heard a Republican counterattack? You don't win by protesting your innocence or whining about the unfairness of the charge. Yet when have you heard a Republican reply by saying, "You're a lying demagogue without a speck of evidence. Put up or shut up!"
- President Obama's establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba was not due to what the American public wanted or even what his own party wanted. It was a decision in defiance of both, just as his decisions about military matters ignore what generals say and his decisions about medical matters ignore what doctors have said. Yet pundits continue to depict him as a helpless lame duck president.
- When the political left wants to help the black community, they usually want to help the worst elements in that community — thugs they portray as martyrs, for example — without the slightest regard for the negative effect this can have on the lives of the majority of decent black people.
- If anyone in the mainstream media is at a loss for what New Year's resolution to make, try this: Stop "spinning" or censoring stories about race, and try telling the plain truth, if only for the novelty of it.

Washington Post Year in Review

by Dave Barry

It was a year of mysteries. To list some of the more baffling ones:

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Millions of Americans suddenly decided to make videos of themselves having [ice water](#) poured on their heads. Remember? There were rumors that this had something to do with charity, but for most of us, the connection was never clear. All we knew was that, for a while there, every time we turned on the TV, there was a local newscaster or [Gwyneth Paltrow](#) or [Kermit the Frog](#) or some random individual soaking wet and shivering. This mysterious phenomenon ended as suddenly as it started, but not before uncounted trillions of American brain cells died of frostbite.

An [intruder jumped](#) the White House fence and, inexplicably, [managed to run](#) into the White House through the unlocked front door. Most of us had assumed that anybody attempting this would instantly be converted to a bullet-ridden pile of smoking carbon by snipers, lasers, drones, ninjas, etc., but it turned out that, for some mysterious reason, the White House had effectively the same level of anti-penetration security as a Dunkin' Donuts.

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JANUARY

... when the nation is invaded by the [polar vortex](#), which blasts in from Canada, bringing with it heavy snows, record low temperatures and Justin Bieber, who penetrates as far south as Miami before being arrested for driving [a Lamborghini](#) drunk. Weather is also the big story in drought-stricken California, where the state legislature passes a tough new water-conservation law requiring all noncelebrity residents to go to the bathroom in Oregon.

In Colorado, the new year begins on a "high" note as the sale of recreational marijuana [becomes legal](#). Despite dire predictions from critics that this will lead to increases in crime and addiction, state law-enforcement officials report that if you stare for a while at the flashing lights on top of their cars, you can see some amazing colors.

The U.S. Senate confirms [Janet Yellen](#) as chair of the Federal Reserve after she assures senators that she will let them know if anybody ever figures out what the Federal Reserve actually does.

[In a major speech](#), President Obama, responding to allegations that the National Security Agency has been electronically snooping on foreign leaders, announces that all federal agencies will henceforth follow strict new guidelines on the sale and distribution of photos of Angela Merkel naked. In other foreign affairs, French President François Hollande is embroiled in [a sex scandal](#) involving his attractive girlfriend and an attractive actress despite the fact that he looks remarkably like George Costanza.

Elsewhere abroad, NBA legend and idiot [Dennis Rodman](#) makes a fourth visit to North Korea to hang out with his misunderstood pal Kim Jong Un, who defeats Rodman 168-0 in a friendly one-on-one game refereed by the North Korean army, then celebrates by firing a missile at Japan.

Speaking of soldiers, in ...

FEBRUARY

... as the Northeast continues to be battered by heavy snows and subzero temperatures, the Massachusetts National Guard is called out to battle the polar vortex, eventually cornering it inside a Costco near Boston, where it barricades itself along with several dozen hostages who are forced to survive by eating caramel cheddar popcorn from containers the size of hot tubs.

In sports, the largest audience in American TV history tunes in to watch one of the most anticipated [Super Bowls](#) in years, pitting the Denver Broncos against the Seattle Seahawks in a historic matchup so boring that the entire second half is preempted by Bud Light commercials. In other football news, [Michael Sam](#), a defensive end for the University of Missouri, makes history by becoming the first college football player to openly declare that he actually attended some classes.

But the big sports story takes place in Sochi, where Russia hosts the [Winter Olympics](#). Despite fears of violence, the games go smoothly until late in the Opening Ceremony, when — in what observers view as a troubling omen — the Russian biathlon team wipes out the entire Ukrainian delegation.

[General Motors](#) recalls 800,000 Chevrolet Cobalts and Pontiac G5s after tests show they don't always have enough wheels.

President Obama hosts [a state dinner](#) for French President François “Le Muffin de Stud” Hollande, who arrives at the White House driving a red scooter with two women riding on the back and three more chasing on foot.

In politics, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, responding to a radio interviewer's questions about his alleged role in the 2013 [“Bridgegate”](#) lane-closure scandal, eats the interviewer. And in a historic policy shift, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announces that [same-sex married couples](#) will henceforth be subject to the same incomprehensible tax laws as everybody else.

Speaking of incomprehensible, in ...

MARCH

... the news is dominated by the baffling disappearance of [Malaysia Airlines Flight 370](#), which has millions of viewers tuning in to CNN to follow its round-the-clock exclusive video coverage of random unidentified objects floating in the ocean that might be airplane pieces — although they never actually turn out to *be* airplane pieces, but they *might* have been — accompanied by countless hours of analysis by a wide array of experts who have no more actual knowledge of what happened to Flight 370 than the people selling jewelry on the Home Shopping Network.

Abroad, the big story involves the [Crimea](#), which until now many of us thought was a disease, as in “Bob has a bad case of the Crimea,” but which turns out to be a part of Ukraine that Russia wants to annex. As tension mounts in the region, the United States and the European Union issue Stern Warnings to Russia, such as “You better not annex the Crimea!” And: “Don’t make us turn this car around!” Nevertheless Russia goes ahead and annexes it, forcing the United States and Europe to escalate from Stern Warnings to Harsh Sanctions, including the suspension of Vladimir Putin’s Netflix account.

In other international developments, Bill Clinton discreetly inquires about the legal requirements involved in running for president of France.



Hopes for an end to the brutal winter weather are dashed when the polar vortex, having disguised itself as a warm front, manages to slip past surrounding Massachusetts National Guard troops and escape moments before the Costco is leveled by artillery fire, destroying two-thirds of the state's supply of jerky.

On a happier note, Colorado announces that it has already collected [marijuana sales taxes](#) totaling \$2 million, which the state plans to spend on "a subwoofer the size of Delaware."

General Motors [recalls](#) 1.5 million more cars to correct a steering issue that causes certain models to deliberately aim for elderly pedestrians.

In a development that surprises film critics, [Academy Awards](#) voters, apparently hoping to woo a younger audience, award the Oscar for Best Picture to "Sharknado."

Speaking of surprises, in ...

APRIL

... Russia, ignoring both the Stern Warnings and the Harsh Sanctions, continues its military intervention in Ukraine, leaving the United States with no choice but to deploy the ultimate weapon: Vice President Biden, [who is sent to Kiev](#) to deliver a Strong Rebuke, followed by dinner.

On the domestic front, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services [Kathleen Sebelius](#), who oversaw the rollout of [Obamacare](#), resigns from the Cabinet to take a position overseeing e-mail storage for the Internal Revenue Service.

In an aviation miracle, a 15-year-old boy sneaks into the [landing-gear compartment](#) of a Hawaiian Airlines Boeing 767 and somehow survives a five-hour flight from San Jose to Maui. Hours later major U.S. airlines jointly announce that they are offering "an exciting new seating option for budget-minder flyers who enjoy fresh air."

In financial news, India edges ahead of Japan to become the world's third-largest economy in purchasing power, behind Jay-Z and Beyoncé. General Motors, in what analysts view as a shrewd tactical move, announces that it is recalling 435,000 Fords. [Tyson Foods](#) recalls 75,000 pounds of frozen chicken nuggets following reports that some of them may contain chicken.

On a happier note, the polar vortex finally goes back to Canada after becoming involved in a street altercation with Alec Baldwin.

In sports, Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling, whose [racist comments](#) have sparked widespread outrage, is given the NBA's harshest possible punishment: season tickets to the Knicks.

Speaking of harsh punishments, in ...



MAY

... the United States and Europe, which are really starting to lose patience with Russia's actions in Ukraine, announce that they intend to "seriously consider" taking steps that could ultimately result in the cancellation of Vladimir Putin's American Express card.

In domestic news, the Department of Veterans Affairs is [engulfed in scandal](#) following revelations that some [VA hospitals](#) are just now getting around to treating veterans of the War of 1812. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki tells a Senate committee that he is "mad as hell" about this, but he ends up [resigning](#) after he is out-angered by President Obama, who according to a top aide is "madder than hell." Numerous Republicans declare that they, too, are extremely mad. Basically everybody in Washington is hopping mad about this scandal, leaving little doubt that it is only a matter of time before some strongly worded reports are generated.

Also resigning from the government is White House press spokesperson [Jay Carney](#), who plans to pursue a career as a Magic 8 Ball specializing in "Reply hazy try again."

In sports, the month's biggest event is the [National Football League draft](#), which draws [32 million](#) viewers, who tune in to witness the high-voltage excitement of Roger Goodell walking to a microphone every 10 minutes to read a name, kind of like a slower version of bingo. The [Kentucky Derby](#) is won by a 2005 Chevrolet Malibu that escaped the steering recall.

And the sports excitement continues in ...

JUNE

... as the [World Cup](#) soccer tournament gets under way in Brazil, where, in a surprise first-round elimination, the highly regarded [Spanish team](#) is consumed by an anaconda. The Russian team is also eliminated in the first round, but is able to remain in the tournament — over the strongly worded objections of the American team — by annexing the Belgian team.

In Washington scandal news, the Internal Revenue Service, responding to a subpoena, tells congressional investigators that [it cannot produce](#) 28 months of Lois Lerner's e-mails because the hard drive they were stored on failed, and the hard drive was thrown away, and the backup tapes were erased, and no printed copies were saved — contrary to the IRS's own record-keeping policy, which was eaten by the IRS's dog. "It was just one crazy thing after another," states the IRS, "and it got us to thinking: All these years we've been subjecting taxpayers to everything short of rectal probes if they can't produce EVERY SINGLE DOCUMENT WE WANT, and here we lose YEARS' worth of official records! So from now on, if taxpayers tell us they lost something, or just plain forgot to make a tax payment, we'll be like, 'Hey, whatever! Stuff happens!' Because who are we to judge?"

But all kidding aside, you can bet that before this thing is over there will be a strongly worded report.

As California's brutal drought worsens, state law-enforcement agents, operating under emergency authority granted by the legislature, raid Cher's home and confiscate an estimated \$3 million worth of moisturizer.

Speaking of brutal, in ...

JULY

... the Ukrainian crisis intensifies when a [Malaysia Airlines plane is shot down](#) over Ukraine by a missile apparently fired by separatists backed by Russia. This is the last straw for the United States and Europe, which retaliate swiftly with a stern statement warning that any Russians planning to dine in U.S. or European restaurants in the future can expect to receive "very slow service."

In other July Russia-related news, the Russian space agency launches a six-ton satellite carrying, among other animals, five geckos — four female and one male — as part of an experiment to determine how weightlessness will affect their sex lives. [Sex Geckos in Space!](#) We are not making this item up.

In state news, Colorado calls up Mexico at 1:30 a.m. and attempts to place a takeout order for 65,000 beef chimichangas.

General Motors, in an efficiency move, announces that it will start recalling cars while they are still on the assembly line.

In sports, [LeBron James decides to return to Cleveland](#), revealing his decision in a heartfelt and deeply personal first-person essay written by [Lee Jenkins](#). Overjoyed Cavaliers fans rush to purchase LeBron James jerseys to replace the ones they burned when he left. The Tour de France is won by Derek Jeter as part of his seemingly endless farewell tour.

Speaking of seemingly endless, in ...

AUGUST

... President Obama announces that the U.S. military, which finally, with much fanfare, managed to get out of Iraq after a long string of operations including [Operation Desert Fox](#), [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#) and [Operation New Dawn](#), is [commencing an operation in ... Iraq](#). This new operation — against a group called “ISIL,” an abbreviation that stands for “[ISIS](#)” — is hampered when a technical glitch causes the Pentagon’s Operation Name Generator to spew out a string of unacceptable candidates, including Operation Staunch Bedsread, Operation Iron Tapeworm and Operation Thunderous Bidet. While technicians work to solve the problem, the military is forced to refer to the new operation as “Bob.”

In other endless-conflict news, [a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas is broken](#) three-thousandths of a second after it is signed, setting a new Middle East record that is celebrated by rocket fire far into the night.

In a potentially troubling development, Russia annexes Canada.

Domestically, the big story is in Ferguson, Mo., which is rocked by a wave of sometimes-violent protests following the [fatal shooting of Michael Brown](#) by police officer Darren Wilson. The shooting ignites a passionate national debate whose participants have basically as much solid information about what actually happened as they do about [Malaysia Airlines Flight 370](#).

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, responding to criticism of his handling of the Ray Rice case, announces a [strict new policy](#) under which the league will assume that an [unconscious woman being dragged off an elevator](#) “probably is not napping.”

In entertainment news, the big winner in television’s Primetime Emmy Awards, taking home five Emmys including Outstanding Drama Series, is, to nobody’s surprise, Derek Jeter.

Speaking of drama, in ...

SEPTEMBER

... the FBI announces that it is investigating the [distribution of hundreds of naked-celebrity photos](#) that were helpfully uploaded from the celebrities' iPhones to the "cloud," which also has all of your personal information despite the fact that you have NO idea what it is.

An outraged Miley Cyrus threatens to sue Apple when she discovers that none of the photos are of her. In government news, the troubled Secret Service once again comes under withering criticism when an intruder is able to [jump the White House fence](#), enter the White House through the front door, overpower a Secret Service agent, run through the Central Hall, enter the East Room, deliver a nationwide radio address and appoint four federal judges before being overpowered. In a [congressional hearing](#) probing the incident, the Secret Service director promises to improve White House security, but suggests that in the meantime the first family should "consider adopting a larger dog."

Abroad, [Scottish voters](#), in a closely watched referendum, decide by a surprisingly large margin that they, too, hate bagpipe music.

In a sad development, the Russian space agency announces that when the satellite containing the five geckos in the weightless-sex experiment returned from orbit, [the geckos were dead](#). On a more positive note, the agency notes that "they were all smiling."

In the celebrity social event of the year, [George Clooney marries Amal Alamuddin](#) in what it is believed to be one of the most elaborate and expensive weddings ever held in a Chuck E. Cheese. Sources describe it as "like a fairy tale, until Anna Wintour threw up on Matt Damon in the ball pit."

But the mood turns less festive in ...

OCTOBER

... when the Ebola virus takes center stage as a parade of medical authorities appear on cable news to assure the American public that there is absolutely [no reason to panic](#) about Ebola so we should just stay calm regarding Ebola because given what we know about Ebola there is probably no danger that you will get Ebola so just stop worrying about Ebola Ebola Ebola OMIGOD EBOLA! After a solid week of being reassured 24/7 about Ebola, the public has been soothed into a state of panic, which is not improved when the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does an interview for CNN from inside a bubble.

President Obama, responding decisively to the mounting crisis, appoints as his ["Ebola Czar" Ron Klain](#), a lawyer who is never heard from again.

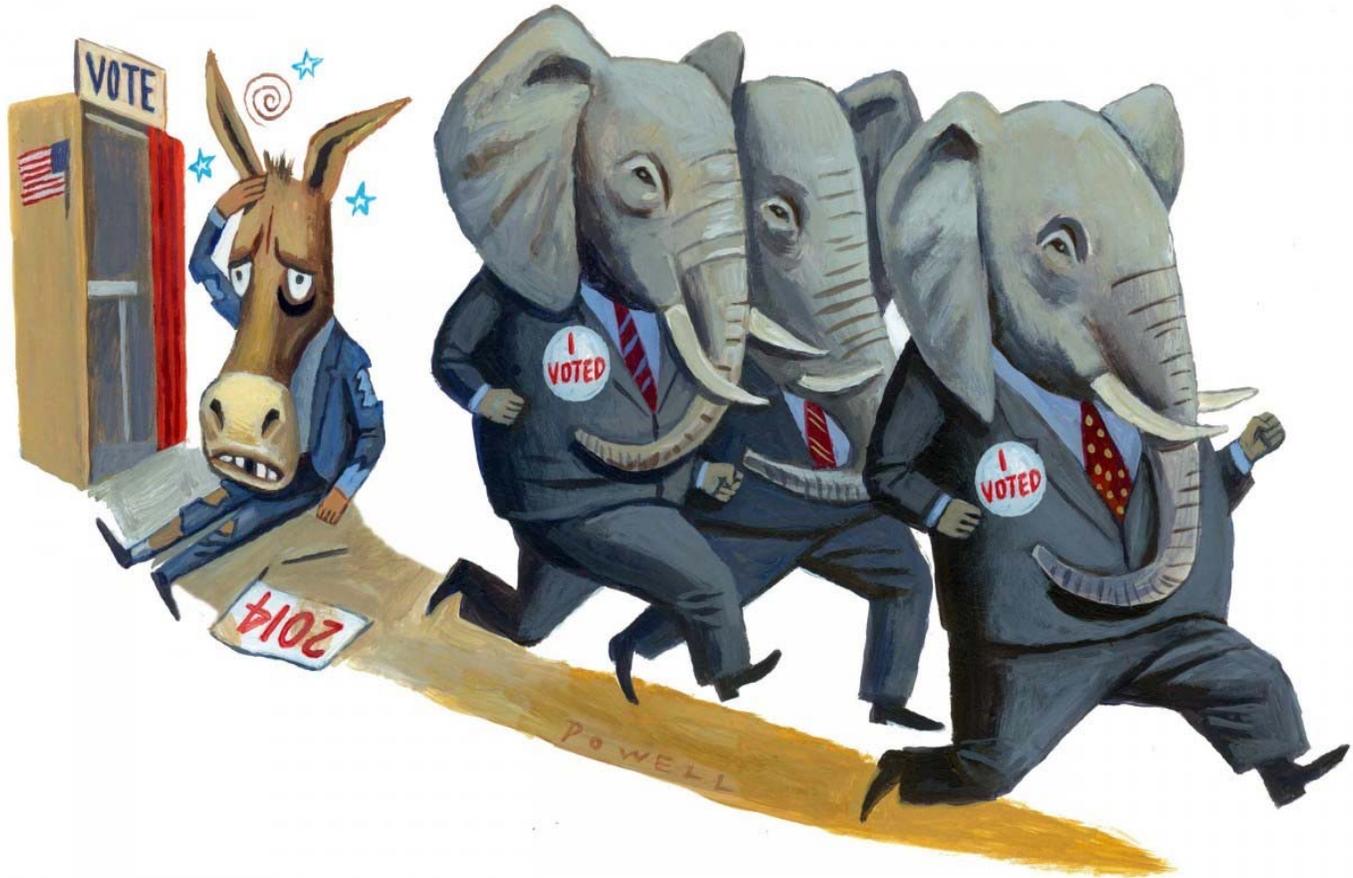
In military news, the Pentagon announces that it has finally come up with a name for the current U.S. actions in Iraq and Syria: [Operation Inherent Resolve](#). Seriously, that is the actual name. They should have gone with Thunderous Bidet.

In politics, the big story is the looming midterm elections, which have [President Obama crisscrossing the nation](#) at a hectic pace in a last-ditch effort to find a Democratic candidate willing to appear in public with him. The president is finally able to schedule an event with 94-year-old R. Nordstrom Fleemer, who is running for his 17th term as road commissioner of Carwankle County,

Tennessee. Fleemer appears pleased by the endorsement, although he refers to the president repeatedly as “Mr. Truman.”

In baseball, the [Giants defeat the Royals](#) to win the World Series, with the Series MVP award going to Derek Jeter.

Speaking of defeat, in ...



NOVEMBER

... the Democrats get creamed in the [midterm elections](#), which means the Republicans will control both chambers of Congress as well as the road commissionerhip of Carwankle County, which R. Nordstrom Fleemer, despite being unopposed, loses badly, although his wife elects not to tell him. With the federal government now facing total gridlock, Republican and Democratic leaders realize that the only way they can attack the many serious problems facing the nation is to stop their endless cheap-shot partisan bickering and work together in the spirit of ... Wow, this is some STRONG stuff I am smoking here.

In other political news, the debate over U.S. immigration policy intensifies when President Obama, in a move that infuriates Republicans, [signs an executive order](#) giving Texas back to Mexico. In a close vote, [the U.S. Senate defeats the Keystone pipeline](#), which would, at peak capacity, have delivered 830,000 barrels of oil per day from the Canadian tar sands to [Leonardo DiCaprio's yacht](#).

[A monster early snowstorm](#) paralyzes much of the nation, dumping more than four feet of snow on Buffalo, N.Y., which fortunately is uninhabited. As highways become impassable, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo declares a state of emergency moments before being carried off by a yeti.

In what some international observers see as a deliberate provocation, a Russian fighter jet shoots down the Goodyear Blimp. On the science front, a module from the space [probe Rosetta](#), having traveled 310 million miles, lands on a comet and sends back clear images of what astronomers identify, based on the planets orbiting it, as Kim Kardashian's butt.

In a much-anticipated decision, a St. Louis County grand jury elects [not to indict Darren Wilson](#), setting in motion a vintage performance of the timeless Kabuki theater of American racial relations, with all parties — blacks, whites, conservatives, progressives, politicians, the media, police, protesters, racists, rioters and of course [the Rev. Al Sharpton](#) — playing their traditional roles and delivering their traditional lines, following a script that could have been written five years ago, or 10, so there is no risk that anybody will say, do or think anything remotely unexpected, or emerge in any way changed. (This doesn't apply to YOU, of course. I'm talking about everybody else.)

As the month draws to a close, the healing begins, with the Thanksgiving holiday bringing Americans of all races and religions together to fight over discounted electronics.

Speaking of fighting, in ...

DECEMBER

... President Obama, moving to fill the Cabinet vacancy created by the [resignation of Chuck Hagel](#), announces — in what is seen as a major shift in military policy — that his new Secretary of Defense will be Chuck Norris. The nomination is swiftly approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee after Norris, in lieu of making an opening statement at his confirmation hearing, reduces the witness table to kindling with his forehead.

In a shocking political bombshell, Rob Portman announces that he [will not run for president in 2016](#), setting off a nationwide frenzy of Googling by people wondering who Rob Portman is. Fortunately, there are still plenty of politicians in both major parties thinking about getting into the race, thereby assuring that the voters will ultimately be able to choose their next president from a wide range of fresh, exciting options, be it [Jeb Bush](#) or [Hillary Clinton](#).

Air travel in the Midwest is disrupted when four unscheduled Russian bombers land at O'Hare during rush hour and refuse to leave until they receive fuel and Egg McMuffins. Prince William and Kate, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, [arrive in New York](#) for a whirlwind visit that begins with a four-hour ride from the airport to their hotel in a taxi with a driver complaining the entire time about Uber.

In sports, the top college football teams play in the traditional year-end bowl games, including the [TaxSlayer Bowl](#), [the Bitcoin Bowl](#), the Popeyes [Bahamas Bowl](#), the [Duck Commander Independence Bowl](#) and the Thunderous Bidet Bowl. All but one of these are actual bowl games.

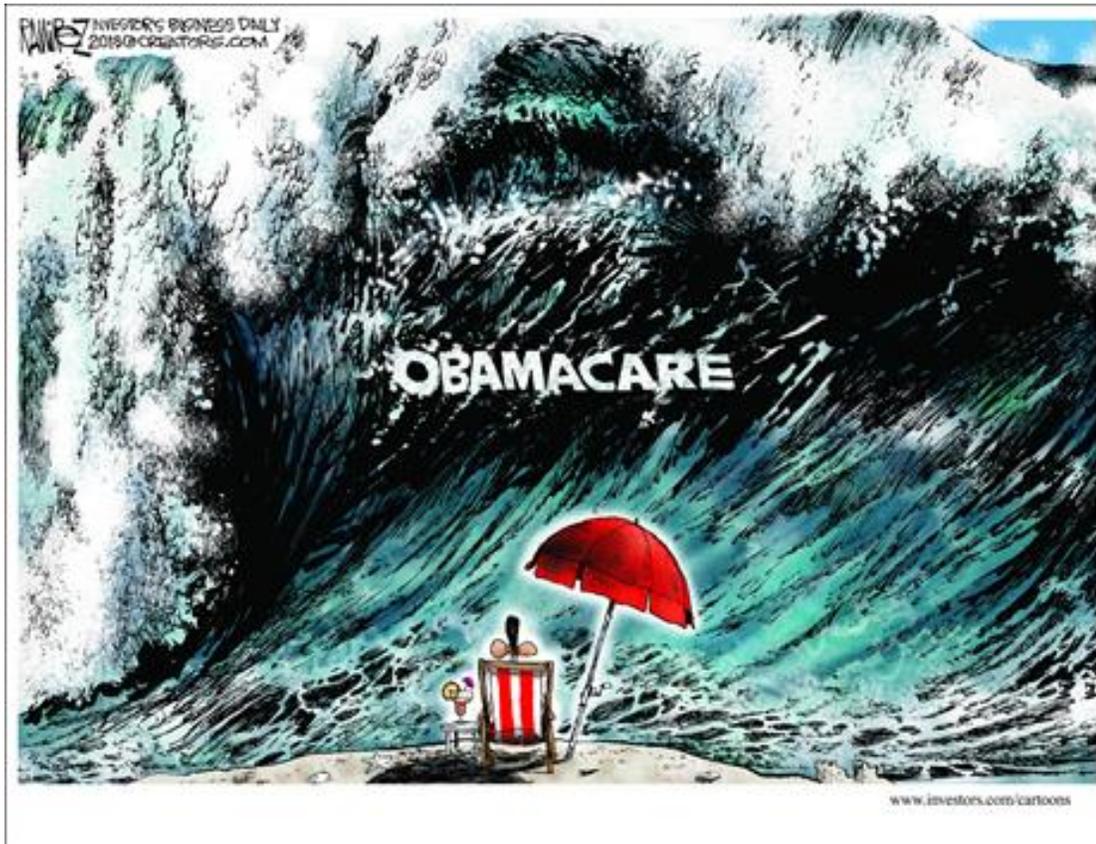
In another year-end tradition, millions of children stay up late on Christmas Eve, eagerly awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus, who unfortunately is delayed because five of his reindeer were recalled by GM.

As the year draws to a close, happy revelers jam New York's Times Square to watch the traditional dropping of the illuminated ball, while in Denver a mellower throng gathers to ring in the new year with the lighting of the 200-Foot Doobie. And all across America, voices join in singing "Auld Lang Syne," the beloved traditional song that makes no sense. Which makes it perfect for 2014.

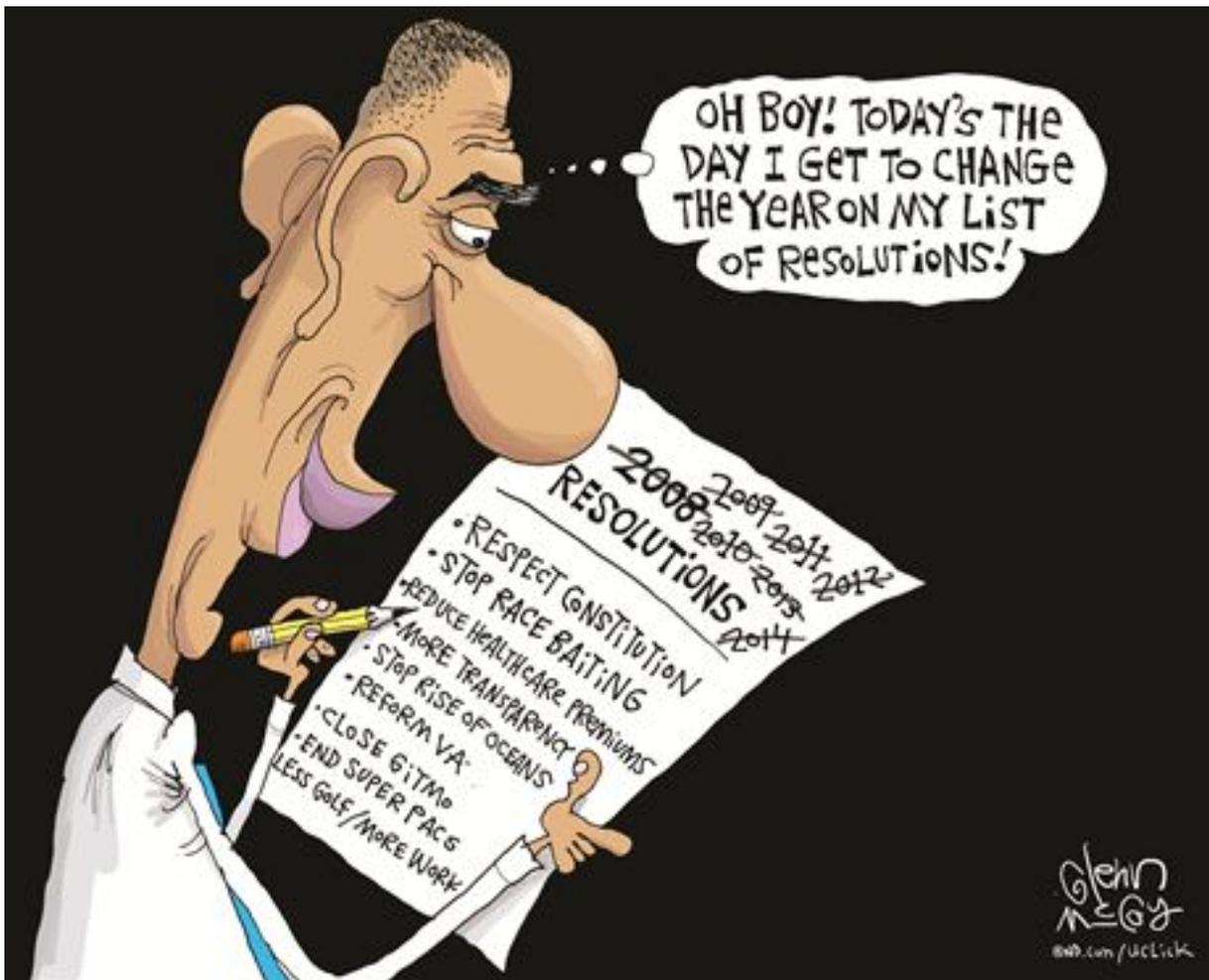
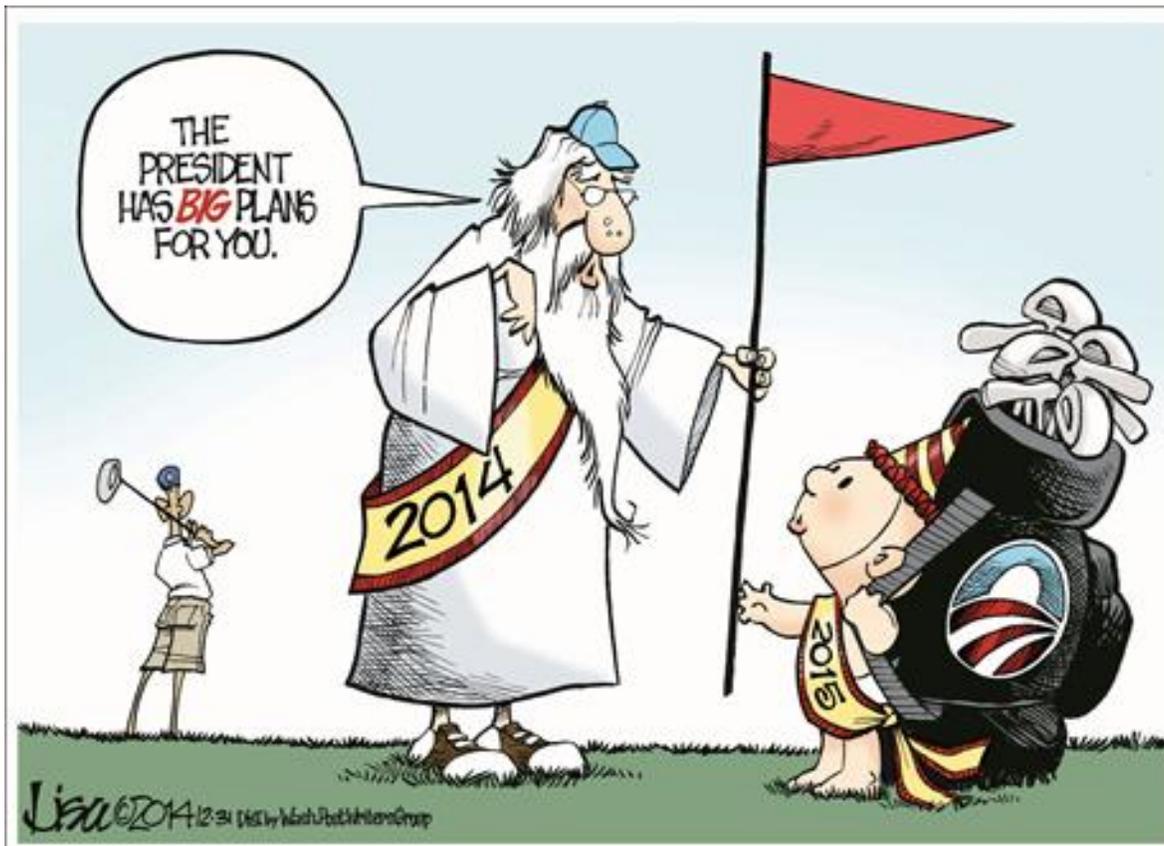
Maybe 2015 will be better. We can hope, right? It might help if we stand downwind of Denver.

Anyway, Happy New Year.









HAPPY
NEW
FEAR!...



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