

Obama's 15 months of fame over?

When President Obama appeared on "The Jay Leno Show" in March, one of his myriad and unprecedented appearances by a U.S. president, he said that Washington was a "little bit like 'American Idol'... where everybody's got an opinion." Hmmm. Maybe we need an Idol Czar.

The president is banking on American Idol status to save his presidency much in the same way he rose to the office; not because of a single accomplishment — he has none except for saddling generations with debt and creating or saving the number of people in the unemployment line — but because of speeches. I am sure Bernie Madoff is suffering from teleprompter envy.

Obama is like a child TV star who rose to fame because he eloquently delivered a cute catchphrase ("Hope and Change" as opposed to

"Hey, Mikey! He likes it!"), but now finds himself an adolescent in a grown-up world and faced with the task of actually manning up to the responsibilities of a new job for which he applied. Yet, instead of stepping up to the plate, Obama is relying merely on his celebrity status to coast through the sometimes ceremonial and often dire decisions a chief executive must make.

Since January, Obama has turned the 24-hour news cycle into Obama TV. When Senator Kit Bond joked that Obama has appeared on every network except the Food Network, heads must have rolled in the White House for missing that gig. Not to worry, First Lady Michelle is going to appear on "Iron Chef America" in January.

After all, Baramichelle is still very much key to the Obama brand. Their date night in NYC had the

OPINION:
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parapazzi salivating over the extravagant evening footed by taxpayers suffering in a deep recession (Let them eat *crème brûlée*). The coos by the liberal Stepford wife media were gushing.

Yet, I wonder if President Obama's 15 months of fame is finally tapering off. His job approval ratings are at new lows, as well as approval for his handling of just about every issue concerning Americans. Der Spiegel ripped his speech on Afghanistan saying "Obama's magic no longer works" and his trip to China looked less Kissinger-esque and more like I Survived a Chinese Game Show.

Even the left is getting a little tired of O-TV. In June, Bill Maher

commented on his HBO show "I don't want my president to be a TV star." Maher went on, "You're the president, not a rerun of 'Law & Order.'" After the dithering on Afghanistan, millions of jobs lost since January and failure to reach bipartisan support on his signature issue, healthcare, it appears that rather than "Law & Order," what we are seeing from this White House is more like "Saved by the Bell."

Perhaps in typical celebrity mindset, the waning J-Lo-in-Chief needs a little scandal diversion. Which makes me wonder what is really behind the gatecrashers scandal. After all, this administration seems to be obsessed with reality TV. "The Biggest Loser" was filmed in the White House garden, a promo for "America's Got Talent" was shot on the White House lawn, and

Michelle's hairstylist landed a spot in a reality show. Let's not forget Michelle's unveiling of the secret ingredient on "Iron Chef America."

I hate to say it, but we will probably be seeing more of the plastic sound bites and hype in an attempt to save his image and sell his unpopular policies. Where is the Shamwow guy when he needs him? An Obama/Oprah holiday special is already scheduled and I am sure there are many more to come, hopefully not preempting "A Charlie Brown Christmas" again. The only show I would like to see the King of Photo-op on is My Big Fat Obnoxious Deficit.

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Katharine DeBrecht is the author of the "Help! Mom!" children's book series including the just released "Help! Mom! Radicals Are Ruining My Country!"

OTHER VOICES

Excerpts from recent editorials in other newspapers:

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Politicians hoping to capitalize on a plan to move prisoners from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to sleepy Thomson, Ill., spin it one of two ways: Jobs, jobs, jobs! Or danger, danger, danger!

The Obama administration announced last week that it wants to buy the Thomson Correctional Center, a nearly empty state prison on the Mississippi River in north-west Illinois.

Gov. Pat Quinn and U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, the Democrats who pushed the deal, called it "an opportunity to dramatically reduce unemployment, create thousands of good-paying jobs and breathe new economic life into this part of downstate Illinois." Republicans Andy McKenna, who wants Quinn's job, and Mark Kirk, who's running for President Barack Obama's old U.S. Senate seat, are among the loudest voices warning of a rising terrorist threat to the heartland.

Most of the 1,600-bed prison would be used to house federal maximum-security inmates under the supervision of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. A separate section run by the Department of Defense would house up to 100 detainees. The administration confirmed it plans to hold military tribunals at the facility. ...

There's no good reason to fear those prisoners. Hundreds of international terrorists (and a lot of other scary people) are currently housed in U.S. prisons. Nobody has ever escaped from a federal super-max prison. There already are 34 inmates doing time in Illinois on terrorism charges...

When they're not busy stoking fear, some of the critics raise some legitimate questions about logistic... (such as) where prisoners who need offsite medical care would be treated and what security measures would be in place when that happens. We still don't know if the federal government is going to pay a fair price for the facility. We believe the feds must address those and other concerns quickly and openly.

Chicago Tribune

REASONS TO GO GREEN BESIDES GLOBAL WARMING

So the world's leaders went all the way to Copenhagen and all they brought back home was this lousy nonbinding agreement to set some goals for curtailing greenhouse gas emissions and maybe work up an agenda for the next climate summit. Arguably your average, bickering neighborhood association accomplishes more at one of its meetings.

At least they left a substantial carbon footprint of the very kind they traveled to Copenhagen to fix. A conference call would have been far more environmentally friendly.

Oh, the summit was probably doomed from the start. Getting 193 countries to agree on anything is all but impossible.

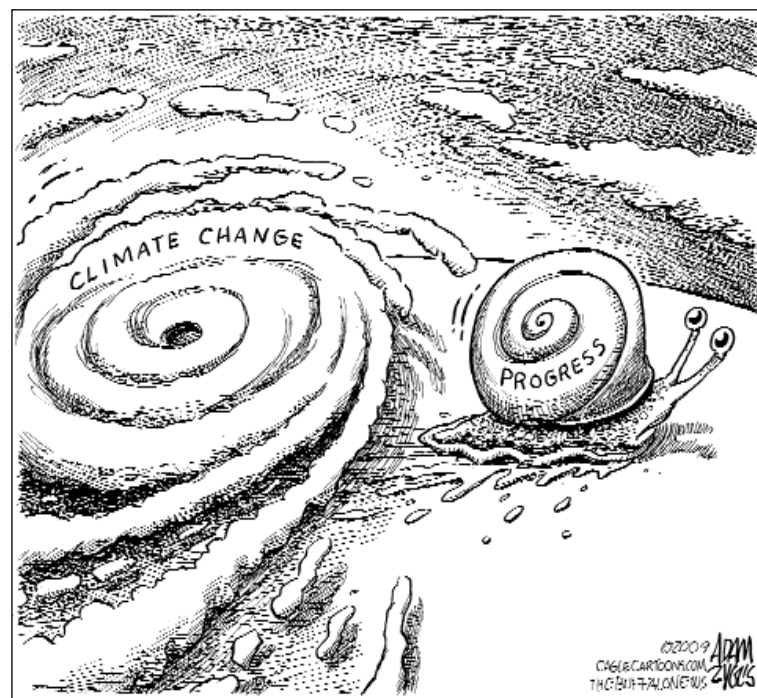
The Climategate scandal that erupted immediately before the meeting certainly did not help, with leaked e-mails from the United Kingdom's Climate Research Institute casting a cloud over the legitimacy of the science driving this whole climate change debate.

Meanwhile, the Chinese aren't going to do anything just because Barack Obama tells them to, though it was good to see the president get in China's face a bit. ...

In any event, it may be wise for the White House to literally change the terms of this debate, to alter the impetus for change on behalf of a skeptical public from man-made global warming to this nation's singular need to be at the cutting edge of new technologies, new industries and new jobs for an America that could very much use them.

(Peoria) Journal Star

Weekend gallery



Health-care reform: Major surgery not required

If you really want to know what doctors think about health care reform, ask your own family doctor. I did recently and I got an earful. Picture the scene: I was lying sideways on the examination table with one of those blue paper gowns — you know the kind I am talking about — they are open in the back; this one for a good reason. A lamp as bright as an arc welder's electrode illuminated the scene.

I had come to the office for — get ready for this one — a minor surgical procedure to alleviate a thrombosed hemorrhoid. (Curious readers can simply Google the term for more information, including pictures.)

As you can imagine, I wasn't about to upset the man who was hovering over my backside with a Novocain-loaded syringe in one hand and a scalpel in the other. I figured he'd be in favor of some kind of medical reform. Wasn't he a member of the American Medical Association? These guys had already put their stamp of approval on Obamacare.

So I led with something general. "What do you think

of health-care reform?" I asked naively.

"What they're proposing is awful," he said. And then he added, "Hold still, this will just sting a little."

"But wait a minute," I countered as the "sting" felt more like someone was holding a match about an inch below my backside. "I thought the American Medical Association is supporting health care reform."

"Most practicing doctors are not members of the AMA," he said. "You should not be feeling anything now," he added, nonchalantly.

I was still curious. "The way they make it sound, you'd think all of you guys are on board with their plan," I said, wincing as I could still feel a burn although it was subsiding.

"Absolutely not," he answered, the tone of his voice rising probably along with his blood pressure.

Defiance was not something I wanted to see coursing through my primary care physician's mind right at this moment. How do I diffuse this? I thought to myself as I saw him grab the

scalpel out of the corner of my eye.

"What's the answer, then?" I asked as the trembling in my voice became obvious.

"Relax, you shouldn't feel a thing," he said, trying to calm my nerves. The bright light glinted off the razor sharp blades as he went to work. "You want to reform health care? It's easy. We could solve the problem in 10 minutes — hold still, I am making the first incision."

"Everyone should be covered by some plan. Rates would drop if every insurance company were allowed to compete in all 50 states. The uninsured could be covered from a pool much like what is done in the automobile insurance industry," he said while thankfully paying attention to what and where he was cutting.

You also have to reform

the tort laws, removing the personal liability element that fuels most of these frivolous lawsuits that are driving my premiums and every other doctor's through the roof."

I could hear the tension and frustration rising in his voice. To calm him I interrupted, "That'll never happen as long as politicians — almost all of them are lawyers — are in charge of the reform process. Why don't they ask real, practicing doctors who care about their patients — like you — to help in crafting the legislation?"

This actually did seem to calm him. One thing you absolutely do not want is a doctor operating on you with a spike in systolic over diastolic pressure leading to shaky hands.

I added, "As a doctor, what would you suggest to make premiums fair for everyone?"

"Clean up the billions of dollars of fraud in Medicare. Then make people who refuse to have an annual physical pay a premium. You would do the same for smok-

ers and drinkers. And let small groups pool their resources together to form larger groups that could purchase insurance cost effectively."

How's it looking back there?" I asked cautiously, relieved to see that he wasn't covered in blood up to his forearms. "Oh, I'm finished. You should feel much better although you'll be sore when the anesthetic wears off."

As I left the office the thought struck me that in a mere 10 minutes we had solved two pains in the a... simultaneously. Now if only our representatives in Washington could come up with a simple solution to sensible health-care reform.

According to my primary care physician, major surgery really is not what the doctor ordered.

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