

December 31, 2008 11:59 p.m.

A spectacularly special salutation during this calendar reset to you, my dearest friends, family, community organizers, home owners, former home owners, Mormon polygamists against gay marriage, bailout recipients, Clients 1 through 8, Ponzi scheme investors, Joe the Plumber, Rod the Corrupt Politician, Bristol the Unmarried Pregnant Teen, Orenthal the Prisoner, and Obamagirl:

With the smell of Christmas wafting throughout my domicile – baked ham, green bean casserole, and Mom’s homemade meatloaf – invading my olfactory senses only to be greeted as a liberator, I’m struck with amazement as to how they created candles with those aromas – and priced them on sale, no less! It really brings me back to my childhood when we had none of those foods in my house.

As has been the habit these past few years, the holiday season inspires me to take stock of the year that was and share it with you in this unsolicited manner. The past twelve months have flown by so swiftly that I wonder if it wasn’t merely eleven months dressed up by the Chinese to make them *look* like twelve. Either way, it certainly was a year of historical firsts made up of 31,622,400 seconds, sliced into thirds like apple pie on July Fourth, the day I pounded a fifth of gin in a sixth the time it took to place my bet on the seventh race at Hollywood Park. (My horse, Henry the Eighth, came in ninth, sadly, and I left with a tenth of the dollars I arrived with.)

Why, by the expiration of the third lunar cycle, I had already accomplished several personal achievements, the most impressive of which, outside of my finally being able to distinguish between yams and sweet potatoes without hyperventilating, was etching my name alongside bowling immortality by rolling a perfect game. (The alley owner remarked that I was the first person he’s ever seen, adult *or* child, throw 20 gutter balls in a row and suggested that I use the bumpers next time.)

But the dominant light source illuminating our consciousness in 2008 was powered by the political current surging through the airwaves. Grasping the immense immensity of the pending election, I became engrossed in the battle waged by both worthy presidential adversaries and immersed myself in their literature reading, first, Barack Obama’s manifesto, “The Audacity of Hope,” and then McCain’s *manifestisimo* “The Audacity of ‘That One’ Thinking He Deserves the Presidency Over Me.”

So swept up in the rip tide of political action was I, that I took to running for political office myself. Starting small (as anyone not named Kennedy or Bush should), I opted to campaign for head of my neighborhood watch committee. But I quickly was introduced to the brutal nature of politics. I felt private lives should be off limits, but my opponent held to a different philosophy, uncovering my recent charge of pet abuse. (They don't call her Edna "The Hammer" Plotznick for nothing.) Though it haunts me every day, I have come to grips with that day in January when I was babysitting my goddaughter's favorite Webkin and neglected to feed or play with him enough.

No, I didn't win, but in a show of bipartisan unity, though, I was appointed head of the *subcommittee*. Modesty aside, I believe I was the most qualified since my apartment overlooks the Quizno's. I took my duties seriously and made sure each neighborhood watch meeting had enough hoagies and grinders to go around.

August was a time for hosting old acquaintances. I was so excited to hear that my hometown friend Gustav would be blowing through town. I cleaned the apartment, prepped the guest room, cleared my schedule, and planned a fun itinerary. Sadly, he stood me up leaving me with two gallons of unopened guacamole. Even more sadly, my college classmate, Ike, *did* show up, unannounced, two weeks later, and trashed the place. I don't like Ike.

Early November expanded my horizons with my invitation to a very unique California wedding. Midway through the ceremony, they stopped it. Then, without missing a note of the "Bridal March," it was relocated to Connecticut where it finished hitch-free. Neither groom seemed fazed by the hiccup in the midst of their special day. And the flowers were simply fabulous.

Finally, when all the excitement had seemingly subsided, you'll remember that day we took heed of Financial Savings Time and set our 401K accounts back twenty years.

Before I leave you, I'm reminded of a joke I heard in the late summer:

Q: What's the difference between a pit bull and a hockey mom?

A: The pit bull presents a much greener environmental plan complete with strict benchmarks and standards for alternative forms of energy.

(I think I got the punch line wrong, but you get the idea.)

May the shoes of success be hurled in your direction and smack you in the face, thus giving you a fat lip of prosperity during 2009!

Yours truly,

Andy Wasif