

Learn from the past, look forward to the future

I expected this column to be a year-end wrap up but I changed my mind. Instead, I want to talk about transition. Change. Rebirth.

I am at the age of reminiscing and wondering, "what if...?" I constantly say things like, "I should have settled in California." Or "I should not have resigned from my last job." Or "I should have chosen Helvetica instead of Times for that last graphic design project."

Regretting past decisions is a waste of time. My mind says, "It happened. Learn from it. Get over it!" So, although I mourn the passing of my favorite celebrities like Isaac Hayes and Paul Newman, I won't dwell on the concept of mortality. Nor will I cry about the economy and the lack of good jobs, that helps no one. I won't tell you about my troubles in 2008. (You probably don't want to hear them anyway.)

I am a baby-boomer. I've grown old. Looking forward to the future is a little scary. It is highly unlikely that I'll live twice my current age. I



Richard
James

doubt that I'll live to be 124-years old. (You do the math.)

But I also recognize that we are living in exciting times and while the immediate future is not so bright, I envision a new day dawning for America. No, this is not a year-end wrap up column but I would like to thank all those who help me in 2008, including the management of this newspaper for giving me this opportunity.

So, what will I write about? Well, how about Hillary Clinton as President Obama's Secretary of State. I mean, what's up with that? The job should have gone to Bill Richardson. (But the UN Ambassador will be raised to cabinet level. Take that, Hillary!)

How about the inauguration?

We're talking 3 million people are expected to be in "DeeCee" on January 20th to see a black man take the oath of the President of the United States. Yep, that's historic all right. (I expect Mr. Obama to be a defender of civil rights and his pick of Eric Holder, as Attorney General seems to be a step in the right direction.)

Hmmm. How about the upcoming Martin Luther King Day celebrations? What will you be doing on that day? Are you going to work? Or will you take the day off and serve the community in his honor? I hear a march is planned in Williamsport.

The New Year will have its challenges, to be sure. But, Dr. King said, "As a people, we will get to the promise land." I believe he was right. Mr. Obama will not be an almighty savior of the lower economic class, nor will he be a radical socialist as many right-wingers fear. Above all else, Mr. Obama is a smart man. And he can be tough when necessary. I believe the coun-

try will be in capable hands. I am sure Dr. King would approve.

Our region will have its own share of problems in 2009. The gas drilling leasing has not been the windfall that folks expected, at least, not so far. But, luckily, we have not experienced massive foreclosures in our real estate market and our local banks seem to be weathering the financial storm.

Local businesses might have some layoffs but I am hoping for a minimal downturn in our local economy.

The good news is that many people are working hard to promote our region. The Main Street crew is moving forward to help businesses locate to Williamsport and to the other Main Street boroughs (Muncy, Montgomery, Montoursville, Hughesville and Jersey Shore). Visit: www.mainstreetslycoming.com. As Central Pennsylvanians, we stand united to bring prosperity to Lycoming County and beyond.

I am sure the Kohl's project will materialize and the proposed new

Eureka Plaza hotel and convention center will be a major asset to Williamsport City. This will have large impact on the region. There is a huge convention market out there. We'll compete with major metropolitan areas for the top trade shows. We'll have all the selling points and none of the negatives that plague big cities.

The newly formed Williamsport Film Commission will bring film production companies to our area. Lorena Beniquez and her band of volunteers will be working hard to persuade producers that "Williamsport has the will".

Overall, I am optimistic about our future. We must be patient, yet determined to succeed. We must believe in ourselves. Happy New Year! Have a prosperous 2009!

James, of Williamsport, is publisher of "An African-American Perspective" Newsletter that is published online at <http://rcjamesde>
