

2009: YEAR IN REVIEW

The man and the hour have met. —William Yancey

2009: POLITICS, LAW, AND ECONOMY—2009 marks a pivotal point in our nation's history. While the United States remains embroiled in an economic quagmire, China, our major trading partner, an Asian juggernaut, is forging ceaselessly forward with an insatiable appetite to build and conquer. Given the speed of its economic, social and military progress, as well as its financial surplus, the world will soon have two superpowers, one in the east and one in the west. In China, people are saving more money and borrowing less, driving more and pedaling less. For the moment, their future seems brighter than ours because debts can destroy families, states, and even nations. But bleak as our tomorrow may look at this moment compared to our eastern counterpart, this nation is too young to shrivel away and crumble into dust. We are simply shifting gears to prepare for the next phase of growth. Like a young adult outgrowing the gawkiness of his teen years, our balance will eventually be restored. When that time comes, this nation will be bigger, stronger and better.

This year alone, a sea of changes took place in the United States. Some were good and others were bad. In the field of science, we made a quantum leap. Our scientists received more Noble Prizes than any other nation. More importantly, a team of researchers at the Joint Quantum Institute of the University of Maryland achieved atom-to-atom teleportation. This landmark breakthrough, being able to teleport data from one atom to another in a container a short distance away, will have a major impact in the future of computing and information technology.

In politics, President Obama won a Noble Prize—a sign of the changing times. Rarely in history has possibility, potential, and popularity equated to a lifetime of accomplishments and achievements. But if there is any doubt whether President Obama deserved this prestigious award, there is no doubt about the weight of responsibilities that he carries. He and his administration are faced with a mountain of problems: dealing with a failing U.S. economy, stabilizing a global crisis, waging two wars, reforming a failing health system, rebuilding foreign relations, and more.

On the consumer side, this country was marked by a year full of recalls. It appeared every time I turned on the TV, there were food recalls, drug recalls, baby crib recalls, toy recalls, window blind recalls, and recalls that I never heard of 10 or 20 years ago. U.S. companies, American consumers and the U.S. economy bear the brunt of these actions. Hundreds of millions of dollars are lost in the process.

Furthermore, the partisan bickering over big government versus small government is out of control. The louder each side shouts, the noisier it gets. Their argument concerning over-regulation and under-regulation has not only been transformed from an economic issue into a political issue, but a menacing issue filled with outrageous claims of socialistic and capitalistic indulgences. The implication and reality of our health, safety, and wealth have become nothing more than a political punching bag, and some so-called unbiased news media are nothing more than a propaganda tool to spread weighty political views. I take great caution whenever a journalist or anchorperson declares beforehand that he or she is broadcasting a fair and unbiased view. Why doesn't he or she just broadcast the news and let the viewers decide?

Regardless of the gloom and doom predicaments, not all was bad in 2009. The economic turmoil, it turned out, has forged family relationships, lowered divorce rates, and forced people to return to the basics by cutting costs and finding the good old way of doing things together without spending a fortune. This year alone, we became more innovative, creative, efficient, hardworking, and humble. A bruised ego won't kill us. As we recover, I've seen evidence of our becoming more responsible citizens. Raising windmills and driving hybrid cars may not sound like much, but it is a start. Neither is stressing concerns for global warming issues, as long as we don't fool ourselves into thinking that glacial melting is an indisputable result of man pouring hydrocarbons into the atmosphere. Let's not forget that the earth has been changing since its creation. There once was one continent and now there are five. Man did not spread his arms and split the earth into five pieces. That was the work of Mother Nature.



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