

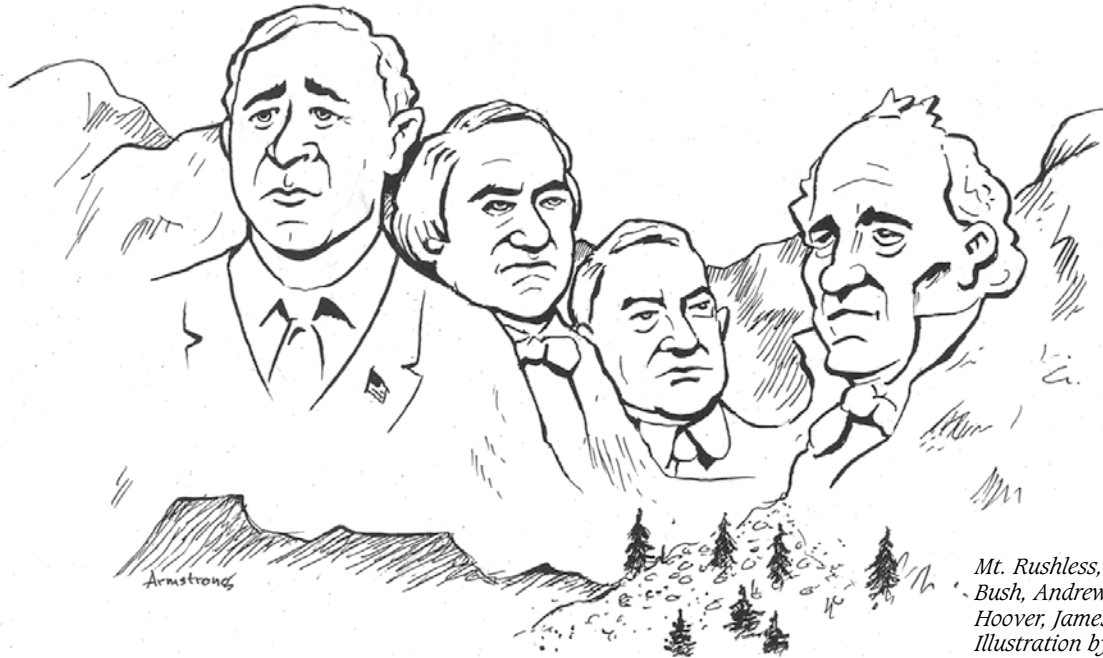
Bob's



Quarterly Update

BOB DREIZLER, CHARTERED FINANCIAL CONSULTANT

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Mt. Rushless, (l-r) George W. Bush, Andrew Johnson, Herbert Hoover, James Buchanan
Illustration by Bob Armstrong

IS PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH THE WORST PRESIDENT EVER?

In anticipation of writing this issue, I took an unscientific poll of about 30 of my clients and friends. In response to the question above, the results were: YES 100% NO 0% (margin of error +/- 4.2%).

I was surprised at the unanimity of such a thoughtful, partisan group. I thought there might be at least one vote for Richard Nixon, James Buchanan or even Millard Fillmore.

Even Yahoo! Agrees. When I searched for "worst president," Yahoo!'s first listing was George W. Bush's official biography from the White House website: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/president/gwbbio.html>

Using a Google search, the top listing is the cover story of *Rolling Stone* magazine's

May 4th issue, "The WORST President in History?" See page two. Wikipedia has an interesting site that shows a composite of 11 polls of historians and citizens taken between 1948 and 2005: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_rankings

According to historians, the best and the worst presidents seem to rule in times of crisis. The best (Lincoln, Washington and Franklin D. Roosevelt) were able to lead well and leave legacies of unity that survived after their terms ended. The worst also presided during difficult times, but their poor judgments hurt America and Americans more than they helped. The four presidents who preceded Lincoln and the two who followed him are generally ranked among the worst ten presidents.

Poor presidential ratings were also blamed on administrations known for their incompetence, corruption, cronyism, arrogance and divisiveness. George W. Bush's administration has frequently been

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accused of these during his five years tenure.

Bush is not without competition. Grant's and Harding's administrations were corrupt; Hoover's was incompetent. Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton were impeached. Richard Nixon resigned. James Buchanan might have prevented the Civil War, and Hoover might have avoided the Great Depression.

During the dark days of World War II, FDR said, "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself." George W. Bush, instead of trying to calm the nation, fueled the flames of fear and revenge. His administration exploited the 9/11 tragedy in order to implement neo-con economic, domestic and foreign policies. This strategy produced:

- a war of choice in Iraq that is costing taxpayers \$10 billion a month;
- lies to justify the preemptive invasion of a country that was not directly connected to 9/11;
- domestic spying on reporters and Americans without even seeking the required warrants from judges it appointed;
- gross fiscal irresponsibility;
- authorized torture;
- unilateral violation of treaties (including the Geneva Convention);
- the reversal of decades of bipartisan environmental progress; and
- the exposure of a CIA agent as an act of political revenge during his War on Terror.

The worst crime committed by the Bush administration may be inter-generational burglary. Tax cuts that have primarily benefited corporations and the super rich will burden the next generation of Americans with an enormous debt.

In examining a president, a historian's duties do not end when the president leaves office. The president should also be critiqued based on how his policies and actions impacted future Americans.

A citizen's duties do not end after he or she votes. Americans should also be actively involved in our political system. So, do you believe that George W. Bush is the worst American president ever? If so, what will you do now?

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Your feedback is always appreciated.

From: The Worst President in History: One of America's leading historians assesses George W. Bush

Rolling Stone, May 4, 2006

The following excerpts are from a fabulous article by Sean Wilentz*. I urge you to read the entire text: http://www.rollingstone.com/news/profile/story/9961300/the_worst_president_in_history?rnd=1145468541266&has-player=true&version=6.0.8.1024

George W. Bush's presidency appears headed for colossal historical disgrace. Barring a cataclysmic event on the order of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, after which the public might rally around the White House once again, there seems to be little the administration can do to avoid being ranked on the lowest tier of U.S. presidents.

In early 2004, an informal survey of 415 historians conducted by the nonpartisan History News Network found that eighty-one percent considered the Bush administration a "failure."

No other president – Lincoln in the Civil War, FDR in World War II, John F. Kennedy at critical moments of the Cold War – faced with such a monumental set of military and political circumstances failed to embrace the opposing political party to help wage a truly national struggle. But Bush shut out and even demonized the Democrats.

The monster deficits, caused by increased federal spending combined with the reduction of revenue resulting from the tax cuts, have also placed Bush's administration in a historic class of its own with respect to government borrowing. According to the Treasury Department, the forty-two presidents who held office between 1789 and 2000 borrowed a combined total of \$1.01 trillion from foreign governments and financial institutions. But between 2001 and 2005 alone, the Bush White House borrowed \$1.05 trillion, more than all of the previous presidencies combined.

Karl Rove has sometimes likened Bush to the imposing, no-nonsense President Andrew Jackson. Yet Jackson took measures to prevent those he called "the rich and powerful" from bending "the acts of government to their selfish purposes."

Bush seems to think that, since 9/11, he has been placed, by the grace of God, in the same kind of situation Lincoln faced. But Lincoln, under pressure of daily combat on American soil against fellow Americans, did not operate in secret, as Bush has.

Nor did Lincoln act under the amorphous cover

of a “war on terror” -- a war against a tactic, not a specific nation or political entity, which could last as long as any president deems the tactic a threat to national security.

The president came to office calling himself “a uniter, not a divider” and promising to soften the acrimonious tone in Washington. He has had two enormous opportunities to fulfill those pledges: first, in the noisy aftermath of his controversial election in 2000, and, even more, after the attacks of September 11th, when the nation pulled behind him as it has supported no other president in living memory. Yet under both sets of historically unprecedented circumstances, Bush has chosen to act in ways that have

left the country less united and more divided, less conciliatory and more acrimonious – much like James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson and Herbert Hoover before him.

* SEAN WILENTZ. Sean Wilentz is the Dayton-Stockton Professor of History and the director of the Program in American Studies. He is a contributing editor to the *New Republic*, has written some 200 articles, reviews, and op-ed pieces, and is currently writing a biography of Andrew Jackson as part of a series on American presidents edited by Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

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Answers to presidential quiz on page 4

Warning: Don't read this until you've answered the questions on page 4.



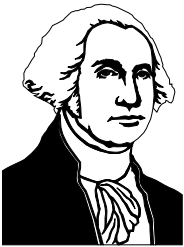
1. Grover Cleveland; 2. Andrew Johnson & Bill Clinton (both were acquitted by the Senate—Richard Nixon resigned before impeachment was voted); 3. John Adams & John Quincy Adams; 4. William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison; 5. James Buchanan; 6. John Quincy Adams; 7. William H. Taft (1913); 8. William H. Taft (1913); 9. William McKinley; 10. William Henry Harrison; 11. Dennis Haster, Speaker of the House of Representatives; 12. Secretary of Defense; currently Donald Rumsfeld; 13. James Madison, know as “the father of the Constitution”; 14. George Washington signed neither document; 15. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams (allegedly, Adams’ last words were, “Jefferson lives,” though TJ had died just hours before).



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PRESIDENTIAL QUIZ

(Answers at bottom of page 3, extra credit if you can identify their pictures.)



1. Which U.S. President served two non-consecutive terms?
2. Who were the only presidents to be impeached?
3. Other than George W. Bush and his father, who were the only other father and son presidents?
4. Which presidents were grandfather and grandson?
5. Who was the only bachelor president?
6. Who was the first president with facial hair?
7. What unique kind of facial hair?
8. Who was the last president with facial hair?
9. Between 1869 and 1913, who was the only president without facial hair?
10. Which president was the first to die in office? He caught a cold on his inauguration day and died 30 days later of "bilious pleurisy."
11. Who is next in line for succession to the presidency, after VP Dick Cheney?
12. Who is sixth in line?
13. Who was the only future president to sign the U.S. Constitution?
14. Who was the first president who signed neither the U.S. Constitution nor the Declaration of Independence?
15. Which two former presidents died on July 4, 1826 (exactly fifty years after the formal signing of the Declaration of Independence)?

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