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"We will harness the Sun and the Wind."

At the Lunar New Year, we are encouraged to satisfy our debts, bring old business to a conclusion, and begin the new year unencumbered. President Obama may have set this precedent when he took his Oath of Office a second time in a less-public ceremony. The official explanation was that the Chief Justice had misspoken when administering the Oath on the outdoor stage, so the exercise was repeated to get it right. One might visualize a whole range of ongoing Federal activities where the President might now say, "Stop!", push the re-set button, start fresh, and blame the necessity to start over on an official who was appointed by the previous administration.

When the President said, "We will restore Science to its rightful place," after I stopped cheering and wiped my eyes again, I thought, "For the first time in a long time, persons of good moral character may hope and pray in good conscience for the success of the President's programs, rather than forlornly plead, "Please God, don't let that scoundrel get away with it this time."

President Obama forcefully stated that there would be no Justice Department investigation of suspicions of unlawful treatment of terrorism suspects by employees of the previous administration. This wisely avoids the political divisiveness that such an investigation would provoke, beyond the practical effect on the future willingness of any American intelligence agent to engage in any form of interrogation. A much more productive set of targets for criminal investigation would be the Department of the Treasury, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Federal Reserve system, so as to identify any unlawful private advantages gained by any individual Federal officials in the administration of the handing out of inconceivable amounts of federal money to private financial institutions and the manipulation of securities transactions in the last year. With luck, would-be future candidates of the party of moneyed interests would prominently spring to the defense of the targets of such investigations shortly before the corruption convictions of such former officials.

In the "Harness the Sun" department, the President announced, two days into his term, that persons formerly employed as lobbyists will not be permitted to work in government offices which deal with the subjects of their lobbying, for a period of two years after the lobbying employment ended.

In the "Harness the Wind" department, about twenty minutes after the foregoing announcement, it was pointed out that an individual nominated for a Department of Defense position had lobbied for Raytheon only six months previously. The Administration responded that there would be a Waiver of the two-year Ban in this instance, and there might be other Waivers.

This writer anticipates that, after an uncomfortable number of Waivers are

announced, so that individuals who are particularly knowledgeable in specialized fields may benefit the country by using that specialized knowledge in government service, the Ban language will be clarified. Henceforth and retroactively to 2006, individuals who represented interests that are philosophically favored by the President, as environmental protection, culturally-repressed communities, economically-disadvantaged populations, educators, and interests not directly connected to private for-profit economic activity, are redefined as "public policy advocates" and are not subject to the restrictions imposed on "lobbyists".

In the department of "You win some, you lose some", now that the President of the United States may not so frequently commit official acts that provoke outrage close to home, acts of other world leaders may more readily come to attention. Pope Benedict XVI revoked the earlier excommunication of wannabe bishop Richard Williamson, who takes the position that Adolph Hitler's attempt to exterminate the Jewish population of Europe was limited to two hundred to three hundred thousand deaths rather than the widely-accepted six million deaths. While the rules of heresy and excommunication are far beyond this writer's scope, and a prominent Church historian explained, "To deny the Holocaust is not a heresy even though it is a lie. The excommunication can be lifted because (Williamson) is not a heretic, but he remains a liar," Pope Benedict's act of letting this specific infamous liar back in, is an outrage to decency. This writer was personally acquainted with individuals who were in concentration camps in Poland during World War II, who saw family members killed in their presence. Ten years ago, I introduced my son, then in high school, to a client of mine who, when he was a teenager in Ukraine in 1943, had been arrested, tattooed, and placed on a train to a death camp. He showed my son the number tattooed on his arm, and I asked my son to not forget and to not believe those who might tell him that it didn't happen.

So much for beginning the new year unencumbered. *Gung hao fat choy*. Good Fortune in the New Year.

- Christopher J. Mallin, Old Country Lawyer