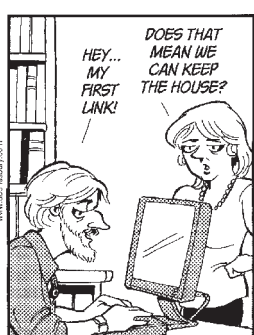
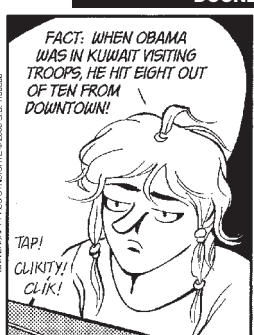
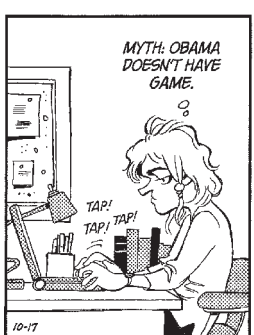
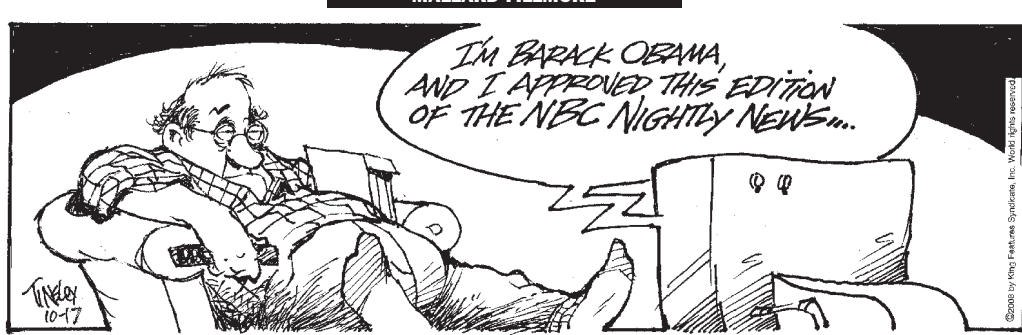


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MALLARD FILLMORE



Designing a love for the past in Brady Heights

BY TIMOTHY A. WILLIAMS

To say the least, it was run down. It's not anymore. The restoration of Brady Heights started as a trickle in the early 1980s. Hardy souls, some young, some old, many in between, happened upon a neighborhood all but forgotten by a quickly southeast growing Tulsa. It was named Brady Heights — born before Oklahoma's statehood as an unnamed upscale area of young Tulsa. In the early 80s it found its base of rebirth through the sweat of urban pioneers. Most Tulsans saw decay and neglect. We saw the individual details hidden in the homes of a neighborhood abandoned.

Friends tried to talk us pioneers out of saving the array of homes that were cheap for the plucking (at least cheap back then). They said it would never be a real neighborhood again — my own mother cried for two days when she saw the shell of a home my partner and I bought in 1982 (she lives in Brady Heights now). We saw promise in the tarnished glory of these early Tulsa oil and mercantile family mansions and cottages: great bones and individual owner-built architecture. Each home was different throughout the district. Each home was an individual piece of history.

We painted, scraped, hammered, restored original windows, recreated lost pieces of trim and chromed ancient plumbing fixtures. All the time we looked over our shoulder, watching for someone coming to tear down, or worse, re-muddle one of the homes in our beloved Brady Heights. Every home *had* to be saved. We knew then, as the Tulsa Preservation Com-

mission knows now, that each home is a part of the whole that makes any neighborhood cohesive, yet full of individual styles.

The Brady Heights Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, but the neighborhood needed more protection — real protection that was independent and



Williams

READERS FORUM

official. With the hard work of too many people to name, the City of Tulsa put together a neighborhood-oriented path for getting a historic preservation zoning overlay. Historic preservation zoning protects the facades of homes. Now there was a legal and impartial way to protect the homes that we had worked so long and diligently to save.

For Brady Heights it took two efforts to achieve the protective zoning overlay that now defines and protects the historic fabric of our neighborhood. The difficulties were assailable. The confusion and questions from residents were legion. Many meetings and question and answer sessions were held for groups and individuals in the Brady Heights neighborhood as the petitions slowly were signed requesting the city of Tulsa bestow protections of historic preservation overlay zoning on Brady Heights. We knew the residents understood when at a late night meeting they quietly nodded their heads as I explained

that the zoning not only protected them from poorly designed new construction and the landlords who were out to make a quick buck at the expense of our architecture, but also from our well-meaning neighbor who loves his home and loves Brady Heights but is just slightly off the mark with a restoration design for his home.

We all tend to romanticize the past. It is an inherent part of every human's thought process. The desire to put that process into action is the impetus of historic preservation. The purpose of that action is saving the architectural and societal aspects of our history, not to create static museums of the past — simple dioramas — but to

keep them alive and functioning with respect for the design and details of the original structure. In the Brady Heights Historic District, we found that our historic preservation guidelines achieved protections that benefit every homeowner, add value to every home in the neighborhood and help to save Tulsa's historic resources.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is hosting the National Preservation Conference in downtown Tulsa Oct. 21-25. More than 2,000 guests are expected to attend.

For additional information visit tulsaworld.com/preservation.

Timothy A. Williams is a resident of Brady Heights.

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Let the leader lead

Editor's note: Garrison Keillor's column normally runs in the Sunday Tulsa World. During the remainder of October it will be in the weekday papers to make room for a continuing three-week Opinion section project that began last week.



Garrison Keillor
Tribune Media Services

The Scripture reading in church Sunday gave me a jolt — Exodus 32, which refers to the Chosen People wearing earrings, men as well as women, and I twitched when the lector read it. Yikes! Moses got his ears pierced? What else didn't we know???

And then a bigger jolt. God is so furious at the C.P. for worshipping the golden calf that He talks about consuming them with fire, but Moses talks Him out of it, which sort of dents one's faith in divine omniscience, does it not, the Lord taking a sharp turn like that? ("Oh, I hadn't thought about that — OK, cancel the thunderbolt!") But I didn't jump up in my pew and point this out — we like to keep things moving along in church, recite the Creed, confess our sins, pass the plate, sing the doxology, not stop for questions along the way — so I just brood over it.

I let other people carry the conversational ball when it comes to religion, or politics, these days. I've known enough old bores to want not to be one of them. As I write this, the sun is coming up over the Mississippi Valley, and in the orange swashes at the horizon is a long string of clouds that one could imagine are mountains. It rises on people facing challenges far beyond anything I've known in my rackets life. Patrick, whom I met on Saturday, lies speechless on a gurney, a trach tube in his windpipe, a pump humming softly on a shelf. Patrick smiles and raises his eyebrows — and suddenly one's own tiny troubles aren't worth mentioning.

The existence of human suffering seems to me to affirm the Christian faith. It's

the sacred duty of the faithful to uphold the Patricks of the world against the prevailing Darwinist forces. He is entitled to mercy as a basic right, and it is merciful of Christians to expect government to carry out this duty.

The safety net has become seriously frayed, as the parents of the Patricks of America know very well, and now the sun has risen on an October day of pure blue sky and yellow and red boughs raised against it, and the day must be acknowledged. What a gorgeous life we lead, here in this gaudy forest, the smell of smoke and apples in the air, and three weeks to go before the election.

The American people are poised to do something that could not be imagined ten years ago, or even five, which is to vote for the best man regardless of his skin color and elect him president. The campaign against him is not one that anybody will point to with pride in years to come. It is a long trail of honking and flapping and traces of green slime. But Barack's cool poise in the face of blather is some sort of testament to American heart and humor. The man has walked tall and his wife has turned out to be the brightest figure in the whole political parade, an ebullient woman of quick wit and beautiful spirit. Bravo, Michelle.

Onward, America. We've all seen plenty of the worst — the sly cruelty, the arrogant ignorance, the fascination with trivia, the cheats, the weaselly and piggish and the buzzardly — but we can rise above it if we will only recognize a leader when one comes along and have the sense to let him lead.



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