

Los Angeles Times 2009 Wish List
January 1, 2009

Directions:

1. Give evidence of a close reading.
2. Mark your confusion.
3. Write a reflection in your WN. Come up with at least 20 items for your 2009 wish list.

The fates were kind to *The Times* in 2008. OK, not the financial fates, what with our parent company's bankruptcy filing and all. But five of the 31 wishes we made last year at this time came true; that may not seem like an impressive record, but in the hoary tradition of The Times editorial board's New Year's wish list, which dates to the halcyon days of 1997 or so, we've seldom done better than two or three at a time.

Of course, there was a certain amount of cheating. We gave ourselves half a point for wishes that came halfway true, such as "for the Trojans to play next season at the Coliseum, and the Dodgers at a steroids rehab clinic." USC signed a contract in May that will keep L.A.'s closest thing to a professional football team at the signature stadium for at least another quarter of a century. At the other end of downtown, the pumped-up Dodgers are still managing to disappoint at their old digs.

As usual, our first wish this year is for a better success rate in 2009. On top of that, we wish:

For a wet winter and spectacular spring of wildflowers.

For meaningful federal legislation that would wean the country from its addiction to foreign oil and help stave off the worst effects of climate change. We're hoping for some kind of mechanism to price greenhouse gas emissions, but we'd settle for a national standard on renewable power.

For the best picture of the year to win the Best Picture Oscar for a change.

For an end to the recession and the start of another period of prolonged growth for the U.S. economy. We'd settle for an economic stimulus package that builds a strong foundation for long-term economic growth, rather than simply piling more debt onto future generations.

For brisk, efficient L.A. Unified school board meetings that focus on getting work done instead of pontificating.

For a year without a catastrophic California wildfire.

For at least two of the Big Three U.S. automakers to survive the economic downturn, and to return to profitability by making cars that are both cleaner and more desirable to buyers.

For gays and lesbians to be free to marry whom they choose.

For melamine to be found only in plastic dishes, rather than in baby formula, candy, fish and dog food.

For better public transit and cleaner ports in Los Angeles.

For the Obama administration to embrace international trade, and to aggressively pursue a broad multilateral pact under the World Trade Organization's Doha round of negotiations as well as specific bilateral deals such as the too-long-delayed agreement with Colombia.

For less makeup on the vampires in the movie sequels to "Twilight."

For falling oil prices to produce regime change and more democratic governance in saber-rattling countries kept afloat by petrodollars, such as Iran, Russia and Venezuela.

For the continued employment of all California schoolteachers.

For Republicans in Sacramento to put their duty to California before their pledge to Grover Norquist never to raise taxes.

For Democrats in Sacramento to put their duty to California before their fealty to public employee unions.

That Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa would say, "But enough about me. Let's talk about Los Angeles."

That City Councilman Jack Weiss would say, "But enough about Antonio. Let's talk about Los Angeles."

That Controller Laura Chick would say, "But enough about Rocky Delgadillo. Let's talk about Los Angeles."

That county Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky would say, "Antonio, let's you and me lock ourselves in a room and not come out until we have this whole homelessness thing taken care of."

For a response to the mortgage fiasco that averts foreclosures on a massive scale without rewarding people who bought homes they couldn't hope to afford.

For a strike-free resolution to the impasse between the Screen Actors Guild and the major Hollywood studios.

For a radically simpler tax system that's harder to evade.

For a trouble-free switch to digital TV in February, when broadcasters turn off their analog channels.

For South African leaders to put pressure on Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to step down.

That at least some of Barack Obama's planned stimulus package is invested in green infrastructure projects such as the restoration of the Los Angeles River, storm-water recharge (for example, porous parking lots to allow rainwater to seep back into aquifers) and recycling plants.

That California gets a healthy snowpack.

That President Obama succeeds in getting the ball rolling on meaningful healthcare reform.

That Republicans who argued that the Senate should defer to President Bush's choice of Supreme Court justices will extend the same courtesy to Obama when he nominates new justices.

That the Obama administration will succeed where the Bush administration failed in helping to secure a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

That Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Ann Coulter and Bill O'Reilly will discover a vocation to the monastic life and take a vow of silence.

That President Obama will break with tradition -- and the practice of President Bush -- and allow outstanding U.S. attorneys to remain in office.