

Opinion

Change we can believe in?

By **CHRISTEN CROLEY**
STAFF WRITER
CMC5403@PSU.EDU

It's social suicide to admit that I never accepted Barack Obama's campaign for change as anything more than an illusion. Our president is a master of congeniality and as such he's inspired the masses to

vote for reforms both little understood and widely underestimated. Granted, any politician whose cadence triggers unprecedented populations to flood the polls on Election Day is noteworthy, but what about everyone else? Surely, much of the country already claimed stake in the debates and aligned themselves accordingly, never needing more than patriotic responsibility to inspire their vote. Yet, over a year later, popular culture prevailed and a charismatic, albeit left-wing ideologue now commands the direction of our country.

I'm aware that my voice is representative of a minority in academia. Others still cast conservatives aside as stubborn and uncompromising (or as Nancy Pelosi once said, Nazis). Still, my distaste for Obama's "new world" goes far deeper than a moral war across party aisles. The president's enthusiasm is admirable, his integrity doesn't require closer inspection and as far as I'm concerned, he is not an evil socialist out to reign in a new communist era. I don't agree with the radical approach many conservative critics employ to discredit Obama and his attempts to enrich the lives of all Americans. Yet, their arguments, although pushed obnoxiously on every media outlet in existence, are hard to ignore.

Case in point: Obamacare. Recently, Congress passed a new bill that transforms the country's healthcare system as we know it into a pricey, expansive and invasive government program. There's no denying that the uninsured Americans, particularly children, deserve affordable coverage. No one will argue that insurance companies are shady and unreliable. People with preexisting conditions shouldn't be refused of benefits. The new bill promises to eliminate all of these issues and then some. Unfortunately, it's those other conditions that have the opposition reeling.

As I understand it, by 2014, citizens will be taxed to cover the uninsured and those caught without coverage will be smacked with a fine upwards of \$700. I can't speak for everyone; however, I am not only uncomfortable with assuming financial responsibility for health-care-free-loaders, but rather *unable* to spare an extra dollar, even at my own expense. The "great recession" is still taking its toll on the country; unemployment is a reality in my life, not just a statistic, and the thought of losing more to taxes and government assistance programs (and all the ensuing corruption) is unfathomable.

I struggle to make ends meet while maintaining a full time academic schedule, preparing for a job that may not exist in a shrinking, outsourced industry. So many college students are plagued with the same anxiety as the improbability of landing a job after graduation reaches an all time high. How are we expected to inherit a nation when we can barely survive in the system it's enforcing?

Under Obama's administration, the "American Dream" is a matter of interpretation. Capitalist societies don't provide privileges to the people, only rights, and as such encourage determination and work ethic to acquire a desired lifestyle. Health insurance is not a right; it's a high priority expense afforded by those who find it necessary. Our freedom is unique among industrialized nations and too often is it forgotten-including the liberty to choose how we spend our money.

Healthcare is still nowhere near fixed-even with last week's history-making legislation becoming law. The new system's flaws are numerous and predictable; Obama's hasty approach and underhanded deals may come back to haunt the American people for decades. As the first evidence of his highly anticipated "change," Obama has pleased a few and alienated many, shaking the confidence of his army of supporters. As droves of Americans abandon the White House in favor of surprisingly conservative alternatives, such as the Tea Party Movement, much of the nation is lost among the deepening divide. Change we can believe in? No we can't.



Photo courtesy of **BARACK OBAMA** on Flickr.com

Broad Street Market Holds Asian Treat

By **VINCENT DANGOLOVICH**
ASSISTANT EDITOR
VWD5006@PSU.EDU

One of the better aspects of being a "foodie" is in discovering great food in humble places. Such a find was made in Harrisburg's famous Broad Street Market in the form of Lyly Asian Food.

Owned and run by Oanh and Larry Lowers with a little help from their friends, the stand is a tribute to home cooking and romance. Larry was on hand to recommend dishes and give a brief history of the place.

Oanh once operated at a Vietnamese restaurant in Harrisburg that Larry patronized following Sept. 11 2001. He was in full uniform as an Army officer of Homeland Security when Oanh leaned her head out and giggled.

"We took it slow. We didn't rush into anything," recalled Mr. Lowers.

As Oanh could not speak English at the time, the two exchanged notes that were translated by a waiter. A chaperoned courtship followed.

"So she didn't marry me for my money or good looks," Lowers joked pointing out his 61 years of age.

Today, Larry works as bus driver awaiting retirement while occasionally helping his wife as a waiter and occasional language consultant. The old restaurant was sold allowing Oanh to concentrate her efforts on a smaller venue. This allowed extra attention to detail that is evident in the food.

On the review visit the self-taught chef recommended pad thai and happily switched out the meat for tofu. Made with vegetables, noodles, and a flavor packed ginger sauce, the dish far exceeded any expectations for a humble food stand. However this quickly paled in comparison to the Vietnamese spring rolls.

These are not your fried cigar-shaped rolls such as you might find in a Chinese buffet. Instead these slightly chilled, thick rolls are filled with tofu or shrimp, cabbage, carrots, rice noodles, and parsley. Served with dark, homemade peanut sauce, the result is a delicious, fresh tasting dish that could be a meal unto itself.

So popular are these spring rolls that an entire display cooler is regularly sold out for everyday the stand is open.

If you need something to warm you on a rainy day, look no further than Lyly's soups. While wonton and coconut are endorsed by Mr. Lowers, ordering a giant bowl of pho noodles is never a bad idea. Made with shrimp, chicken, or beef the order comes in with bean sprouts and parsley which allows the individual to perfect the dish to taste.

It is also important to note that as a smaller venue, Oanh and company are happy to accommodate the customer. Meat dishes are often easily prepared as vegetable ones. Those wanting a little more or less spice usually need only ask.

Those who wish to visit need only go to the Broad Street Market and enter the third street building. Hours of operation include Wednesday thru Saturday, 10 am-3:30 pm. Prices range from \$3-8.

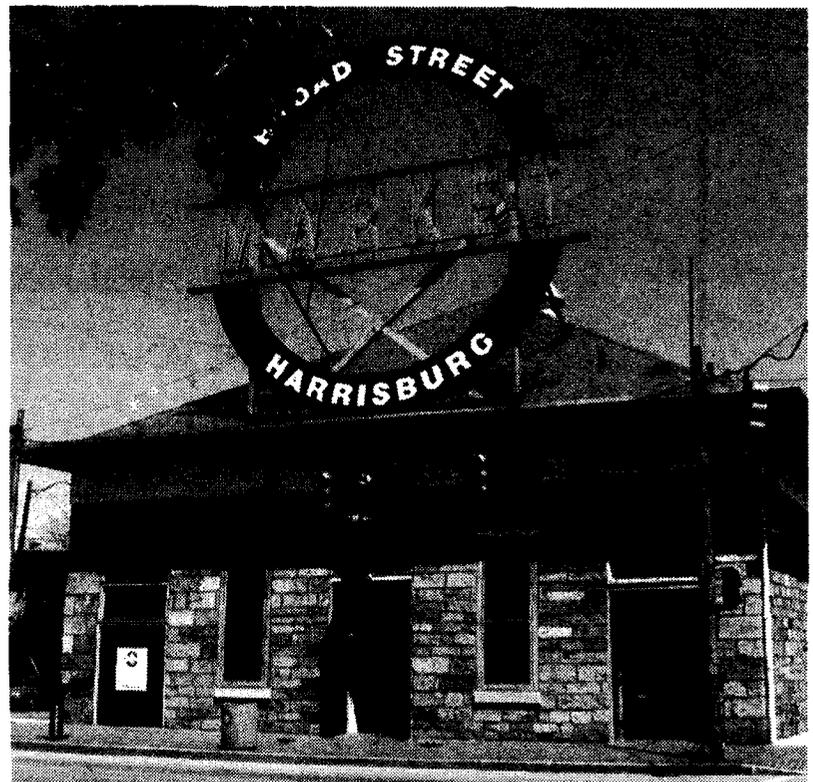


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