

Iowans, it all comes down to today. Tens of millions of dollars' worth of television commercials. Countless hours of talking-head punditry. Enough mailers to wallpaper your house. Phone ringing off the hook. All of it aimed at getting your vote today.

Many Iowans are weary of the campaign, and for good reason. We've been through well over two years of the presidential race. We've researched the issues and watched the debates. We've turned out to see candidates in the heat and the cold. We've pored over the polls. We've talked to our friends and neighbors — and sometimes regretted it. Some have knocked on doors and made phone calls. Some have sent campaign checks.

We've done much of this under the glare of the national spotlight. Iowa fulfilled its role

ON POLITICS



KATHIE OBRADOVICH
kobradov@dmreg.com

as the state to launch the presidential nominating campaign, turning out caucusgoers in record numbers. The state also took its lumps after mistakes in counting and reporting a historically close vote in the Republican caucuses. State political leaders have worked hard to improve the process for next time.

Over much of the past year, Iowa has also been in the crosshairs of both presidential campaigns, as a swing state and one of the few, true battlegrounds of

the campaign. It's been both exhilarating and exhausting to be the target of such ardent courtship and unrelenting scrutiny.

Iowans have come through it all with a remarkably positive outlook. Sixty-five percent of Iowa likely voters described themselves as inspired and optimistic as they looked toward Election Day, according to The Des Moines Register's latest Iowa Poll. Only 24 percent were angry or pessimistic.

It's time to put away the polls, but it would be a wonderful gift if Iowans could hold on to that sense of inspiration. It has been a long, emotional and hard-fought battle. Now, it's up to every voter, every campaign worker and every candidate to finish the race with honor.

There are things each of us can do to make sure Iowa's election is worthy of all the national

attention, regardless of who wins:

» **Be prepared.** If you're voting today, make sure you know where your polling place is. If you're not sure, go to the Iowa secretary of state's website, sos.iowa.gov, and click on "find my polling place." Or call your county auditor. Bring your ID, even if you think you shouldn't need it. If you're registering to vote, or you've recently moved, be prepared to prove your residence and identity. If your eligibility to vote is questioned and you can't resolve it today, you have the right to cast a provisional ballot. Don't let confusion or an honest mistake disenfranchise you.

» **Play fair.** Iowans are known for their honesty, and the state has long deserved its reputation for clean elections. Some of us may face temptation today under the final pressure to turn out

voters, count ballots and report results. Don't think for a minute that your integrity is a fair price for winning an election.

» **Be patient.** We're likely to have record turnout and some very close races around the state. That may mean lines to vote. It may mean extra time to count ballots and report results. There may be some glitches. Keep your cool. Give those with election duties your respect.

» **Be accurate.** Report what you know — don't repeat what you hear. All those 11th-hour rumors about campaign dishonesty, dirty tricks and personal attacks are intended to discourage people from voting. Your candidate doesn't need that kind of help. Hit "delete."

Let's act not out of fear but out of joy. If this is, indeed, the election of our lifetime, may each of us be able to look back on it and say, "I did my part."

We invite next U.S., China leaders

Iowa would be a fitting place for the presidents to meet to reshape our relations

Americans will cast their votes today for president, and if reports are accurate, a few days later Vice President Xi Jinping of China will ascend to the chairmanship of the Chinese Communist Party, the first step in his assuming the presidency of China sometime in 2013.

The installation of these leaders provides a unique opportunity to help reshape the Sino-U.S. relationship in a positive direction. This could be a critical step given that there have been issues raised in both countries which would suggest that no matter who is sworn in on Jan. 20 in Washington, the relationship between China and the U.S. could face some potentially volatile political and economic confrontations — be they about the currency and trade issues Gov. Mitt Romney has pledged to redress, or the sovereignty over disputed islands in the South China Sea, which so roiled the recent visit to Beijing of President Barack Obama's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

With the political transition process in both the United States and China only a few days away, there is a way the next president of the United States and the new president of China could set the relationship between our two countries on as positive a course as possible from the very beginning.

To that end, I would propose that President Obama, Governor Romney and Vice President Xi should immediately announce their willingness to accept this invitation to meet at the World Food Prize in Des Moines on Oct. 16, 2013 (U.N. World Food Day), with a goal of joining their two countries in a long-term effort to confront and reduce hunger in the world.

There is some significant background that could make Iowa an acceptable venue for such a meeting. Earlier this year, in February, Vice President Xi made an official visit to the United States, which included several days in Iowa at the invitation of Gov. Terry Branstad.

Xi was reprising a visit he made in 1985 as a young provincial agricultural official which brought him to the Hawkeye State and in particular to a



China's Vice President Xi Jinping meets with Iowa leaders prior to a dinner at the Iowa Capitol during Xi's return visit to Iowa on Feb. 15, 2012. Xi greets Luca Berrone of SACMI Group as Gov. Terry Branstad and Larry Zimpleman of Principal Financial Group listen. ANDREA MELENDEZ/THE REGISTER

Iowa View



KENNETH M. QUINN of Des Moines is a retired U.S. Foreign Service officer and is president of the World Food Prize Foundation. Contact: kquinn@worldfoodprize.org

warm embrace by the citizens of the small town of Muscatine, where he spent several days.

Returning in 2012, Xi went back to Muscatine and then touched the hearts of many Iowans at an official dinner in his honor in Des Moines, when he spoke eloquently about the beauty of the sunset over the Mississippi River and the compelling words of Mark Twain.

Of equal significance, the following day, Vice President Xi participated in the U.S.-China agricultural symposium held at the World Food Prize Hall of

Laureates, where I had the opportunity to serve as his host. There, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Chinese Agricultural Minister Han Changfu signed the most significant strategic agreement on agricultural trade ever entered into by the U.S. and China.

Of course, both Governor Romney and President Obama have significant histories in Iowa as well, having spent many days here (including stops in Muscatine) en route to the nomination by their parties for the presidency.

Iowa would thus seem to be a most appropriate place for a meeting between the leaders of two of the most significant countries on the planet.

It is even more so, since the state was the birthplace of the late Norman E. Borlaug, the Iowa farm boy who received the Nobel Peace Prize as the father of the Green Revolution. Bor-

laug, who founded the World Food Prize, was one of the very first individuals who entered China in the early 1970s and worked closely with former Premier Chou En Lai and Deng Xiaoping as they set China on its modern course for agricultural development.

The World Food Prize is truly an international setting. Each October, it holds a several-day conference known as the Borlaug Dialogue, which draws more than 1,000 participants from more than 70 countries around the globe. This past Oct. 18, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke at this conference as we honored an Israeli scientist who received the \$250,000 prize.

It is not too difficult to imagine two new presidents pledging a combined effort with joint U.S.-Chinese teams working in agricultural research and field

application over the next decade.

At the dinner I hosted at the conclusion of Vice President Xi's visit to the World Food Prize in February, I first put forward this idea as part of a toast, remarking what a magnificent achievement it would be "if 20 years from now, an American and a Chinese expert were to be jointly honored with the World Food Prize for having led the successful bilateral effort to reduce hunger in the world." At that point, one of the Chinese guests shouted out from the back of the room "No. Even sooner — make it 10 years!"

In that spirit, I extend this invitation to the next president of the United States and the next president of China to come to Des Moines on Oct. 16, 2013, and, at the World Food Prize on U.N. World Food Day, join in committing your two countries to alleviating hunger in the world.

We want a world that champions all of God's children

I have already voted by absentee ballot. When elected bishop in 2008, I was informed that for years to come I would be in attendance at the fall meeting of the United Methodist Council of Bishops in early November when the U.S. elections are held.

Iowa View



JULIUS C. TRIMBLE is bishop of the Iowa United Methodist Church. Contact: dkbrockmeyer@iaumc.org

human family. In the United States with all of its diversity, we are all part of one nation.

I am in agreement with the Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann. He raises a concern about the great crisis of the common good. We must not lose the sense of community solidarity that

yond my own private interest and short term self-interest.

I am not willing to tolerate acute and sustained generational poverty, neglect and abuse of the environment. Brueggemann asks the question, can the simple "concept of neighborliness" show us the way

traveled from other communities to collect candy.

When I ran out of candy at 7:15, my wife directed me to some additional candy that was reserved for a later event. When all the candy was gone the children continued to visit houses that had not run out. The spirit