The New President, and a New AIDS Czar

November 5, 2008 By Shawn Decker

Obama won handily and currently holds 348 electoral votes to McCain's 173 finish: Barack Obama will be the next president of the United States.

In his last Mavericky move, McCain quietly submits his write-in vote for "Daffy Duck".

My homestate of Virginia went a bit Daffy Duck, going blue for Obama. I wasn't entirely surprised only because I had the opportunity to drive around rural Virginia with Gwenn, reminding "sporadic Democrats" to vote. There were more Obama/Biden signs out in yards in the sticks than I was expecting to see, which was refreshing, especially since I live in the liberal-minded Charlottesville.

McCain’s concession speech was very gracious and, coming down the stretch, he was able to show signs of why he was so well-liked back in the 2000 race, in oddball ways like his hilarious visit to Saturday Night Live. (I think he was “reverse Gored”, in the same way Al Gore was handcuffed by his Democractic advisors in 2000.) During Obama’s acceptance speech, he made it clear he’s going to do his best to accomodate the more than 50 million voters who supported McCain. I remember Bush saying the same thing in 2000 and, being anti-Bush, I felt like I needed to not be a dick and take the man at his word.

Then, a couple of days after he was sworn in, I was walking through the Charlotte airport with Gwenn, on the way to one of our talks, and we passed a newstand. USA Today had a headline, “Bush to Close White House Office on AIDS”, the story lhad been eaked to the press.

The AIDS community went nuts. Bush retracted the statement, then silently killed the office by placing incompetents and condom-doubters in high positions of influence and power. I was free to be as much of a dick as I wanted in terms of how I viewed the new president.

Now, we have the highest voter turnout since 1908. People will be watching and, hopefully, letting their voices be heard as we all do our parts to support this country that we love- AIDS, warts, and all.

I have a lot of hope as to how Barack Obama will handle the domestic AIDS crisis. If nothing changes, his young daughters, in twenty years time, will be in a demographic where HIV is the leading cause of death. It’s time to get real about the epidemic, and utilize people who *get it*.

Which leads me back to the White House Office on AIDS and, ultimately, the AIDS Czar. I know who would make a perfect one: Sean Strub, founder of Poz Magazine.

He’s from Iowa, a rural guy who moved to the big city of New York and started an AIDS magazine in the 90’s, which gave information to rural positoids in doctor’s office all across the country, empowering people to get knowledgeable about their own health. Sean knows the AIDS community inside and out, is politically active and aware and has a unique combination that Obama shares: an inspiring mix of intelligence and heart.

Oh, and he’s a gay man. And after the passage of the anti-gay Proposition 8 in California, as well as in other states, the gay community needs to be elevated into as many positions of influence and power. I was very happy to hear Obama include the gay community in his acceptance speech.

Sean Strub’s rise to the position of AIDS Czar will come to be known as Proposition AIDS. By putting someone with over twenty years of experience living with HIV in there, we’d have a real voice looking out for the concerns of those living with HIV, while doing everything possible to prevent the spread of the virus.

Please join me as I wholeheartedly support Sean Strub for AIDS Czar.

Positively Yours,

Shawn

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.