A Mixed Bag

By Mel Lavine

Special to the Times

It wasn't close. The president won handily in electoral and popular votes. Now that that's over we can brace ourselves for 2016.

 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is in need of a good rest. But not so long as to keep her out of the public eye. After all there's talk of her picking up where she left off in 2008. Or is she contemplating the Supreme Court? One thing's certain. She'll not be baking cookies.

 And then there's the career of Paul Ryan to consider. While some of us are relieved he's not a heartbeat away from the presidency, he is already in the loop for 2016. It may be a crowded field, with Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush also creating a buzz.

 And let’s not forget Joe Biden who may have other plans for Hillary – say a seat on the Supreme Court.

 And let’s not forget Mitt. We’re all too quick to consign the loser to the dustbin of history. He was a gracious loser. But I don’t think I’d sleep easy knowing he’s in the White House.

 Last but not least, there’s Barack Obama. As the New York Times reminded us last week, presidents often don’t fare well in a second term.

 FDR lost face with Congress for his attempt to pack the Supreme Court in 1937, the year after he’d been re-elected in a landslide.

 The Iran-Contra scandal diminished Ronald Reagan’s stature in 1986.

 Who can forget the impeachment of Bill Clinton in 1998?

 Richard Nixon, who was re-elected in a landslide in 1972, was forced out of office two years later in the Watergate imbroglio.

 Despite the political fallout in second terms, there’s a bright side.

 FDR persuaded an isolationist country to recognize Hitler’s conquests as a mortal threat to civilization. Nixon began the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. Reagan cut a deal with Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union on arms control. Clinton – with Republican cooperation – delivered the first balanced budget in decades.

 A mixed bag.

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