

# Person of the Year

Pity Ben Bernanke. The guy was named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year and the reaction rivaled fish sticks in the enthusiasm category. Old Ben might well be the guy of 2009, but few know who he is or understand what he does. Being chairman of the Federal Reserve may have advantages, but public visibility is not among them.

Here's all you need to know: After being honored by *Time*, Oprah did not call Ben.

When you think about persons of the year the list is short. Perhaps Lady Gaga, Nancy Pelosi... maybe the late Edward Kennedy who drove the health care bill. This was not a good year for actual people.

My person of the year is Senator John McCain. He iced the honor last week when he hammered the insipid Al Franken for being disrespectful to Joseph Lieberman on the Senate floor. McCain smacked Franken good because the former actor known as Stuart Smalley would not give Lieberman a few extra moments to finish his remarks on health care, a major breach of Senate etiquette.

Earlier this year, McCain told the world the Iranian government was punishing its own people and urged President Obama to support dissidents inside Iran. The president did not and McCain made a big deal out of it. Good for him.

Also, McCain has been articulate in warning Americans that the new health care legislation will lead to financial and medical chaos. McCain may be wrong, but he's been clear and consistent about his opposition to the bill, giving Americans another side to consider.

So where was this John McCain during the campaign last year?

There are some Americans who now have buyer's remorse because they voted for Barack Obama. But, really, John McCain did not do much to inspire confidence. The former fighter pilot refused to launch aggressive attacks on the liberal positions of his opponent (like government-driven health care), and he shied away from raising questions about Obama's dubious associations (Jeremiah Wright, Bill Ayers). If you believe Sarah Palin, she was salivating to make Wright the poster boy for Barack's campaign. McCain shot Palin down—sorry for the choice of words.

But in 2009, McCain became unleashed, using his credibility and visibility to urge the president to commit more troops to Afghanistan and to stop putting America last in his foreign speeches. Unburdened by expectations, McCain seemed almost gleeful to debate the Howard Deans of the world over fiscal responsibility. He also led the exposure of bribes to Democratic senators to vote for health care. It could not have been easy for McCain to lay out his colleague Ben Nelson of Nebraska, basically a good man, for accepting a unique Medicare deal for his state. If that wasn't a vote bribe, nothing is.

Thus, John McCain is my person of year. His ascendancy might have come a little late, but at least we know there's an honest guy in the Senate who is taking no prisoners. (Sorry, again.)