

# The Delray Democrat

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## Democratic Gardens; Republican Jungles

Michael K. Cantwell

It's said that anything put in the ground in Florida grows. But gardens need to be cared for. Otherwise, as the Bard wrote, they go to seed, and "things rank and gross in nature" consume them utterly.

The same may be said of government. From the New Deal through the Great Society, from Obamacare through Build Back Better, Democrats have tended to the needs of the American people.

In stark contrast, from Nixon's Southern Strategy through Reagan's Raw Deal, from Newt Gingrich's Scorched Earth through Trump's Unapologetic Racism, Republicans have sown hatred and ignored the needs of Americans.

They've starved government and brag that their ultimate goal is to cut it "down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub." They don't care that when

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## DeSantis Moves to Quell Political Dissent

Florida Senator Lori Berman

Freedom of speech, the linchpin of any democracy, is under attack in Ron DeSantis' Florida. The Governor's Department of Management Services (DMS), which oversees the Capitol complex, has proposed new rules that would empower Capitol Police to remove individuals exercising their first amendment right. Under the rules, protestors can be removed and charged with trespassing if police believe their "displays and sounds are indecent, material arouses prurient interests... or their behavior creates a hazard or disruption to performance of official duties."

On December 1, DMS held a meeting to discuss the proposed rules, and many Floridians – lawyers, ministers, historians, lobbyists, university students, and mothers included – attended and voiced their disgust with this blatant attempt to chill their speech. Questions regarding whether organized advocacy groups would be able to attend press conferences, meet with legislators at their offices and outside the House and Senate chambers, and simply speak during public comment in committee rooms all arose. The goal of Republicans is clear: to create confusion, fear, and silence as they ram their extreme agenda forward.

It is not enough for Florida Republicans to have a gerrymandered supermajority in both the House and

Senate, with which they can do whatever they'd like. Now, they don't even want to hear criticism either. That's not democratic, it's authoritarian. Florida history is replete with its citizens peaceably assembling at the seat of their state government to give voice to the voiceless and to the powerless. Freedom of speech in the halls of our Capitol allowed for citizens to protest against racial segregation in the 1960s, against the dangerous "Stand your Ground" law in 2013, and for substantive gun safety reform in the wake of the Parkland massacre. If anti-speech rules were in place at the time, these protests might not have occurred and might not have led to any change at all. With freedom of speech comes public pressure and accountability. Without that pillar of accountability, government no longer acts in the interests of its people, but in the interests of itself.

Republicans are preparing a vicious assault on our civil rights and liberties as we speak. More anti-LGBTQ policies, further restrictions on abortion, voter suppression laws, and dangerous gun laws are all in the works. Irrespective of the anti-speech rules promulgated by DMS, Floridians will protest – as is their constitutional right. The only question is whether DeSantis will follow through with his authoritarian crackdown.

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government is drowned, people drown, as we saw when Katrina battered New Orleans.

They don't care that when government fails to protect the public from rogue actors, people lose their homes and life savings, as we saw when Republicans let the banksters crash the economy in 2008. And Republicans don't care that when sociopaths and incompetents are the gardeners, people are choked, as we saw when the pandemic arrived in 2020.

*But when the rankest and grossest of those things was chosen to manage the garden, that personification of pestilence actively sought to rid the garden of anything remedial or healthful.*

When that happens, Democrats are summoned to clean up the garden. Perversely, Republicans are still able to benefit because the catastrophes they create are so enormous as to defy quick fixes.

Putting party before people and country, Republicans then kneecap Democrats' rescue efforts. It's not long until the public begins to blame Democrats for the economy wrecked by Republicans. Rinse and repeat.

Only three Republicans voted for the Obama stimulus. It averted another Great Depression, but the recovery was slow and uneven, helping Republicans to flip first the House and then the Senate.

Americans soon forgot that Obama created 11 million jobs while in office or that his signature achievement, the Affordable Care Act, saved tens of thousands of lives every year.

Not until Republicans were finally in a position to repeal the Affordable Care Act did the public begin to appreciate Obama's stewardship of the garden. Obamacare was saved, but a madman was in charge of the garden and a pandemic was coming.

Trump left office with an economy more devastated than the one inherited by Obama, with more than 9 million jobs lost in 2020. And Biden was also faced with the worst public health crisis over in a century.

Once again putting party before people, not a single Republican supported the Biden stimulus. At first that seemed to be a bad bet, since the Biden recovery was the fastest ever recorded. Jobs had returned to pre-pandemic numbers within 6 months, and more than 11 million jobs were added by November 2022.

But then inflation spiked, and Republicans once again seized the opportunity to attack Democrats' stewardship of the economy that they themselves had just trashed. In a gross oversimplification, echoed by the media, they claimed that the ARPA stimulus was responsible for the worst inflation in four decades.

Completely ignored in this analysis was a Perfect Storm consisting of choked supply chains, corporate profiteering, the unexpectedly slow reopening of the service economy, and oil company gouging, not to mention the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

At worst, stimulus payments played a minor role, and at best they helped ensure there was enough food for everyone in the American garden following the worst economic collapse in nearly a century.

As to the small role played by the stimulus, it's worth reciting FDR's response to Republican accusations *he* had been too generous:

"Better the occasional faults of a government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference."

### The Republican Jungle Emerges

The only thing that prevented Republicans from duplicating the Red Wave of 2010 was a slow public awakening to the Republican approach to gardening.

Republicans have always been content to starve the garden and ignore the presence of things "rank and gross in nature." But when the rankest and grossest of those things was chosen to manage the garden, that personification of pestilence began ridding the garden of anything remedial or healthful.

Republicans celebrated as he applied pesticide to personal rights protected for a half-century. They were silent as he launched an insurrection and sought to destroy the foundational document that governed the garden. It became increasingly clear to all but the blind and the brainwashed that his ultimate goal was to destroy the garden itself.

The choice facing American over the next two years is whether they want to live in a garden or a jungle.

## The Republican “Not See” Party Threatens America

Rabbi Barry Silver

The Republican “Not See” Party threatens America as it pretends to “not see” that Trump’s “America First” slogan was first used by fascists and Nazi sympathizers such as Charles Lindbergh who sought to keep America out of WWII so Hitler could slaughter the Jews. They also choose to “not see” that “America First” is the American equivalent of “Deutschland Uber Alles”.

The Republican “Not See” Party pretends to “not see” that Trump’s favorite President, whose picture

Jewish Republicans try to “not see” overt anti-Semitism within its ranks as Trump collaborates with anti-Semitic hate groups, disparages most Jews as “disloyal,” promotes QANON’s anti-Semitic blood libel of a global conspiracy of child molesting, devil worshippers who want to take over the world and criminalizes Jewish law on abortion, replacing it with a Christian nationalist theocracy.

In the 1920s, the Nazi Party arose in a formerly cultured, refined nation. The people of Germany

*Hitler didn’t start out as a mass murderer and didn’t begin his career with the Holocaust. The lesson of history is that we must not wait until six million innocents have died or a world war has been unleashed, before we respond to hate.*

he hung in the oval office was Andrew Jackson, a slave owner who defied the Supreme Court with his Indian Removal Act, which led to a genocidal death march of Native Americans known as the “Trail of Tears.”

The Republican “Not See” Party pretends to “not see” that their leader imitated Hitler’s beer hall putsch with Trump’s attempted armed insurrection of the Capitol and like Hitler, Trump is planning to try again. They also choose to “not see” that Trump shares the view of Joseph Goebbels: “Repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth”, with his big lie of a stolen election and countless other lies.

As the Nazis led a Holocaust of a people, the Republican “Not See” Party, leads a Holocaust of our planet by denying climate change, fiddling while forests burn and chanting “burn baby burn” as trees and our children’s future go up in smoke.

The Republican “Not See” Party and their MAGA (Mutinous Anti-Government Anarchists) supporters try to “not see” that “Make America Great again” is borrowed from a similar slogan used by the Italian fascist Benito Mussolini. Like all fascists, the Republican “Not See” Party blindly follows a leader who attacks those who refuse to swear blind obedience, who makes common cause with other tyrants and who surrounds himself with corrupt, incompetent sycophants, whose loyalty to the leader “trumps” loyalty to the country and competence.

wanted a strong leader so they pretended to “not see” Hitler’s insane hatred and fascism and/or mistakenly thought they could control his excesses. Similarly, today’s Republican “Not See” Party pretends to not see Trump’s ominous warning signs. Like Sergeant Schultz on Hogan’s heroes whose catch phrase, “I see nothing, I know nothing” epitomized his effort to feign ignorance of Nazi wrongdoing that swirled around him, with rare exceptions, today’s Republicans serve as Trump’s useful idiots, ignoring his every outrage.

Hitler didn’t start out as a mass murderer and didn’t begin his career with the Holocaust. The lesson of history is that we must not wait until six million innocents have died or a world war has been unleashed, before we respond to hate. We must be ever vigilant to protect our freedom from what Einstein called the “measles of mankind” a mindless nationalism that can destroy any nation. As writer and philosopher Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.”

In French, trompe means deception and in old English trumpery means foolishness and deceit. Founding father John Adams warned "The divinity of Jesus is made a convenient cover for absurdity. Nowhere in the Gospels do we find a precept for Creeds, Confessions, Oaths, Doctrines, and whole cartloads of other foolish **trumpery** that we find in Christianity." (emphasis added)

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Carl Sagan observed “One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we’ve been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We’re no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It’s simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we’ve been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back.”

Trump bragged that if he shot someone on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, his mindless minions would remain loyal. As this appears to be true, it is up to the rest of us who still have a moral compass and love Democracy

to stand against fascism and hate. Let us replace hubris with humility, servility with civility and mindless faith with a mindful fate based on love, kindness and reason, to guide our nation’s future.

If I have offended anyone by this message, I assure you it is purely intentional. Political correctness is our biggest enemy and silence to evil our gravest threat.

*Rabbi Barry Silver is the founder of Cosmic Judaism and the local chapter of the Temple of Understanding. To learn more about rational, activist faith, go to [www.rabbibarrysilver.com](http://www.rabbibarrysilver.com)*

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**Editorial Board:** Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Sandra Elaisen-Cantwell, David Kulick, Char Lane, June Neal, and Rob Resnick.

# Godwin's Law of Nazi Analogies

Michael K. Cantwell

Long before Twitter, and years before the World Wide Web was launched, local bulletin boards and Usenet groups offered a platform from which people could anonymously demonize others from the safety of their own homes.

A young Texan named Mike Godwin who frequented those online forums became disturbed by the frequency with which debates devolved into name-calling, the ultimate trump card being to label one's opponent a "Nazi" or compare him or her to Hitler. As Godwin later recalled, "I wanted folks who glibly compared someone else to Hitler to think a bit harder about the Holocaust."

*Does merely adopting Nazi tactics justify the "Nazi" epithet, or must we wait to see what they do if they seize power, as they have tried once already?*

Realizing that simply asking or lecturing people to be more thoughtful would be fruitless, he half-seriously proposed the following "law":

*As an online discussion continues, the probability of a reference or comparison to Hitler or to Nazis approaches one.*

Godwin later [allowed](#) that he never intended an "actual law," but rather "a meme or a kind of contagious idea." He wanted "folks who glibly compared someone else to Hitler to think a bit harder about the Holocaust."

Some online forums then introduced a corollary that provided all debate ended once the Nazi analogy was made and the one making it was deemed the loser. As this applied without regard to whether the analogy was appropriate or thoughtfully argued, it actually operated contrary to the intent and spirit of Godwin's Law, namely, to encourage thoughtful debate and call out mindless name-calling.

After Trump announced his candidacy, Godwin published an [editorial](#) in *The Washington Post* explaining that, "If you're thoughtful about it and show some real awareness of history, go ahead and refer to Hitler or Nazis when you talk about Trump. Or any other politician."

Let's apply this corollary to other one-word epithets designed to foreclose further discussion, such as fascism/fascist and socialism/socialist.

## "Who Da Cap Fit, Let Them Wear It"

This corollary was tested recently when President Biden likened the philosophy underpinning Trump and his supporters to "semi-fascism."

Republicans were, predictably, outraged, as were the usual suspects in the unhinged media, demanding an apology. The so-called liberal media acquitted itself well, however, concluding that the label fit. See, e.g., [Biden Shouldn't Apologize to Republicans](#), by Charles Blow, in *The New York Times*; [If the semi-fascist shoe fits, wear it!](#), by Bill Press, in *The Hill*; [Biden called Trumpism 'semi-fascism.'](#) The term

[makes sense, historically](#), by Federico Finchelstein in *The Washington Post*; [Biden's 'soul of the nation' speech and the battle against MAGA 'semi-fascism' in America](#), by Jason Stanley, NBC.

Indeed, "semi-fascism" falls far short of the mark. Comparing Trump and the Trumpian Republican Party to Hitler and the Nazis is more appropriate and equally defensible.

Like Hitler, Trump was perceived as an object of ridicule and not as a threat to democracy. Both men rose to power on the strength of Big Lies. Both men referred to the media as "the enemy of the people." Hitler called them *Lügenpresse*, which translates as "lying press" or "fake news."

The Biggest of the Big Lies circulated by Donald Trump and his Republican enablers is the claim that the 2020 election was stolen. Fully 147 Republican members of the House and 8 Senators (including the loathsome Rick Scott) voted to not certify an election that had incontrovertibly been won by Joe Biden. Some of them took part in the January 6 insurrection that sought to violently overturn the election results and keep Trump in [office](#).

Trump's Big Lie was built on the Big Lie of "Voter Fraud," one that Republicans have been spewing for decades, long before Trump became a Republican, one that has been thoroughly debunked, time and time again. See [The Fraud of Voter Fraud, the](#)

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[Reality of Voter Suppression](#), by Michael K. Cantwell, *Palm Beach Post*, for a summary of failed attempts to establish voter fraud.

Other Big Lies propounded by Trump are also retreads of longstanding Republican lies, such as claims that immigrants are violent and stealing American jobs or that the sorry state of the uneducated white working class is due to advantages given to Black Americans. In reality, immigrants are taking jobs no American would want (which is why two of Trump's three wives were immigrants) and commit fewer crimes than native-born Americans.

As to jobs, the reality is that workers of all colors have been victims of a half-century-long class warfare led by Republicans and fueled by increased automation, jobs shifted offshore and the destruction of unions. Ronald Reagan told unskilled white workers the Big Lie about "strapping young bucks using food stamps to buy T-bone steaks while you're waiting in line to buy hamburger."

Does merely adopting Nazi tactics justify the "Nazi" epithet, or must we wait to see what they do if they seize power, as they have tried once already? German industrialists and conservatives thought that

they could control Hitler . . . until they learned they couldn't. Republicans are learning the same but have ignored the problem because they place party over country, party over democracy. I repeat, Must we wait to see what Trump and his minions do if they manage to seize power again?

### *It's Time to Invoke Godwin Against Little Marco*

When Biden's original \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better plan was being debated, Marco Rubio said, "it isn't socialism, it's Marxism." Now Rubio may not be a genius, but he's neither a moron nor an ignoramus and only a moron or an ignoramus would believe that.

Nothing advocated by any Democrat even begins to approach the actual definition of socialism, namely, "collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods."

So get in Rubio's face. You can send him webmail at <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/>

Links on that page provide telephone numbers for his various offices. Ask his staffers how it feels to work for a cheap huckster. And invoke Godwin's Law.

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## **The Greatest Speaker of the Modern Era**

*Michael K. Cantwell*

As we welcome a new Democratic leadership team in the House, we should also give heartfelt thanks to Nancy Pelosi, the greatest speaker of the modern era.

She spearheaded the effort to save Social Security in 2005 after George W. Bush claimed a "mandate" for privatization. She shepherded the Affordable Care Act through the House in 2010, savings tens of thousands of Americans from untimely, unnecessary deaths.

After she reclaimed the Speaker's gavel in 2018, she became the most effective opponent of Donald

Trump. And over the past two years she has, with a bare majority in the House, overseen the most progressive legislation enacted since LBJ.

And now, in her final curtain call, she shows the world when and how to leave the stage. She chose to remain in Congress but not to run for minority leader, instead spending her final term mentoring the next generation of leaders – a black man, Hakeem Jeffries; a white woman, Katherine Clark; and a Latino, Pete Aguilar.

Bravo, Nancy. Bravo, Democrats.

### **Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors**

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# THICH NHAT HANH

1926-2021



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Thich Nhất Hạnh was a Vietnamese Thiền Buddhist monk, peace activist, prolific author, poet and teacher known as the "Father of Mindfulness" and was a major influence on Western practices of Buddhism.

# 2023 Membership

Char Lane

We are fast approaching the end of 2022 and it's time to renew your DCDB membership for 2023. Membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as The Delray Democrat, our meetings, other working supplies and signage for our sign waving events. Meetings are the third Thursday (note change of day) of each month at the Pompey Park Recreation Center. We met via zoom from April 2020 through September 2022 and finally resumed live meetings at Pompey Park in October. Our change of meeting day is due to room availability.

Our goal is to educate people as to why they should vote Democratic and use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal. We'll have to work hard to help keep our democracy intact and protect it from the manifesting lunacy. We planned to help turn Florida BLUE in 2022, but were thwarted by the circumstances as noted in November's *Delray Democrat* by Jeff Kash.

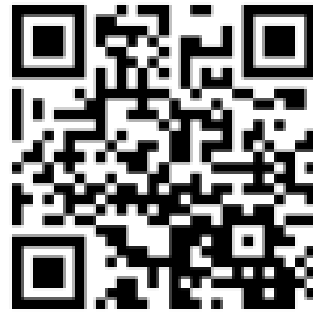
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Read our monthly publication *The Delray Democrat* at [www.thedelraydemocrat.com](http://www.thedelraydemocrat.com),

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Become a member of the DCDB by going to <https://www.demclubofdelray.org/membership> or filling out and mailing the application below or by scanning the QR code below:



## Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2023 Membership Application and Renewal



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